Iceland Liechtenstein Norway Civil Society Fund

OPEN CALL FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOs)

IN SLOVAKIA

OPEN CALL No 3.

To be the Project Promoter for Pre-Defined Project (PDP) 1 “Legal and Crisis Management Support for Civil Society Organisations”

AVAILABLE FUNDING: EUR 140 000

DEADLINE: 31 May 2026 23:59 CET

The EEA Civil Society Fund is part of the contribution of **Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway** to 15 EU Member States under the EEA and Norway Grants, including Slovakia. The aims of the EEA and Norway Grants are to reduce social and economic disparities in the European Economic Area (EEA) and to strengthen bilateral relations between the Donor States and Beneficiary States.

The EEA Civil Society Fund aims **to support a vibrant and resilient civil society protecting and promoting democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.** The EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia has a total allocation of EUR 9,7 million. A consortium of Ekopolis Foundation, Open Society Foundation Bratislava, and Carpathian Foundation operates the EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia on behalf of the Donor States.

This call is to select a **Project Promoter to implement the pre-defined project (PDP) 1 "Legal and Crisis Management Support for Civil Society Organisations".** The project aims at **safeguarding civic space by enhancing legal protection and crisis preparedness through improved organisational resilience, sustainability, and operational capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)**. Through strengthening the conditions in which civil society operates, the project seeks to ensure that CSOs can function independently and effectively and continue to promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

The total allocation for the selected project promoter to implement the pre-defined project under this call is EUR 140 000.

SUMMARY OF THE CALL	
Title of the call	Call No.3 to be the Project Promoter for the Pre-Defined Project (PDP) 1 "Legal and Crisis Management Support for Civil Society Organisations"
Purpose of the call	See section 2.1 of this Call
Outcome(s)	3. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, strengthened
Output(s)	3.2 An enabling environment for civil society supported
Relevant project activities	Recommended activities under the Output (See section 2 of this Call)
Eligible project applicants	See section 3.1 of this Call
Project duration	Between 30 and 36 months
Project grant amount	Maximum of EUR 140 000
Co-financing	No co-financing required
Partnerships	Applications may be submitted in partnership
Call available in the following language(s)	Slovak, English
Questions deadline	No later than 5 working days before the deadline for application
Application deadline	31 May 2026 23:59 CET

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1. BACKGROUND FOR THE EEA CIVIL SOCIETY FUND IN SLOVAKIA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. FOCUS OF THIS CALL

2.1 Purpose of this Call

The purpose of this call is to select one Project Promoter to implement the pre-defined project (PDP1) "Legal and Crisis Management Support for Civil Society Organisations" under the EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia.

While the project framework encompasses three mutually reinforcing dimensions — **legal protection, crisis preparedness, and institutional resilience** — the **primary and strategic priority of this intervention is legal protection**. Crisis preparedness and institutional resilience are understood as complementary pillars that strengthen and operationalise this core objective.

The project responds to a documented and growing pattern of legal, administrative, and reputational pressure targeting civil society organisations in Slovakia, particularly those engaged in advocacy, watchdog activities, human rights protection, gender equality, and minority rights. These pressures include abusive legal proceedings, retaliatory actions, strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP-type lawsuits), administrative harassment, and reputational attacks.

Within this framework, particular emphasis is expected to be placed on the provision of **specialised legal services**, including expert consultations and legal representation where necessary. This may encompass the preparation and, where appropriate, the conduct of **strategic litigation** aimed at clarifying, defending, or safeguarding fundamental rights and civic freedoms. It also includes legal defence in cases of abusive or retaliatory proceedings, including **SLAPP-type lawsuits**, depending on needs identified during implementation.

As this is a pre-defined project, the overall thematic scope, objectives, and expected results are fixed by the Fund Operator and approved by the Donors. However, applicants for the role of Project Promoter are expected to propose:

- a coherent implementation methodology,
- clear operational mechanisms for providing legal protection and crisis support,
- criteria and procedures for selecting beneficiary CSOs,
- a sustainable delivery model,
- and appropriate partnership arrangements.

The Project Promoter has flexibility in designing the operational model and delivery tools, provided that the proposal remains clearly anchored in the defined priority of strengthening legal protection as the central intervention logic of PDP1.

2.2 Expected results

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

The pre-defined project in this call is defined to contribute to **the following outcome** and its related output:

- Outcome 3: CSOs that promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, strengthened
  - Output: 3.2: An enabling environment for civil society supported

The selected Project Promoter is expected to **ensure that the pre-defined project is aligned** with these main expected results.

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

All programme-level indicators marked as relevant for the expected results of PDP1 are mandatory. The Project Promoter is required to collect data and report against each of these indicators in accordance with the Programme's reporting requirements.[5]

2.3 OUTCOME 3: Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that promote democracy, the 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.

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

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

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

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

Output 3.2: An enabling environment for civil society supported

Responsible Partner: Ekopolis Foundation

Financial allocation: EUR 140 000

Needs addressed:

In recent years, civil society organisations in Slovakia have been facing intensifying legal and regulatory pressure, including the misuse of legal instruments to deter public participation, silence advocacy actors, or create financial and psychological strain. Strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP-type lawsuits), retaliatory legal actions, and administrative harassment represent a growing risk to civic actors, particularly those engaged in watchdog, human rights, anti-corruption, environmental, gender equality, and minority rights work.

Many CSOs lack access to specialised legal expertise capable of addressing complex litigation, defending fundamental freedoms, or pursuing strategic litigation to clarify legal standards. Smaller organisations and those operating outside major urban centres face structural disadvantages in accessing qualified legal defence and preventive legal advice.

Beyond immediate legal threats, CSOs also face increasing crisis situations — reputational attacks, coordinated disinformation, security incidents, and operational disruptions — for which many organisations are insufficiently prepared. The absence of coordinated protective mechanisms and sector-wide responses further weakens the resilience of the civic space.

This intervention therefore prioritises the strengthening of legal protection mechanisms as the first line of defence of civic space, complemented by crisis preparedness and institutional resilience measures that ensure continuity and sustainability of CSO operations.

Expected results:

The project is expected to contribute to Output 3.2 by reinforcing legal safeguards and protective mechanisms for civil society organisations in Slovakia.

More specifically, it **is expected that:**

- CSOs at risk have access to specialised legal and crisis consultations and, where necessary, legal representation.
- Strategic litigation cases are identified and, where appropriate, initiated to clarify or safeguard fundamental rights relevant to civic space.
- CSOs facing abusive or retaliatory proceedings, including SLAPP-type lawsuits, receive structured legal defence support.
- Participating organisations demonstrate improved legal literacy, risk anticipation capacity, and crisis preparedness.
- Sector-level cooperation and coordinated responses to systemic legal threats are strengthened.

As a result, civil society organisations promoting democracy, the rule of law, and human rights will be better equipped to defend their operational space, maintain independence, and continue their public interest work without disproportionate legal intimidation.

The strengthened legal resilience of the sector will contribute to a more predictable, secure, and enabling environment for civic engagement in Slovakia.

Target groups of the project:

- Primary target groups:

- Civil society organisations and civil society support structures, including advocacy organisations and human rights defenders
- Organisations working to develop civil society infrastructure, such as networks, platforms, and umbrella or membership-based associations, whose role is to strengthen the overall functioning and resilience of the civil society sector

- Secondary target groups:

- Public authorities and institutions at local, regional, and national levels, as counterparts in dialogue on the legal, administrative, and policy conditions affecting civil society.
- Academic and media organisations, as key partners contributing to evidence-based dialogue, public understanding, and trust in civil society.

Relevant activities: This pre-defined project is structured around a primary pillar of legal protection, complemented by crisis preparedness and institutional resilience measures. Legal protection constitutes the core and mandatory component of PDP1.

The Project Promoter shall establish and operate a structured legal support mechanism for civil society organisations (CSOs), particularly those engaged in democracy, rule of law, human rights, watchdog, and public interest activities.

The mechanism must include:

- Provision of specialised legal consultations;
- Legal defence in cases of abusive or retaliatory proceedings, including SLAPP-type lawsuits;
- Access to legal representation where necessary;
- Capacity to identify and, where appropriate, pursue strategic litigation aimed at safeguarding fundamental rights and protecting civic space.

Strategic litigation is not required as a fixed output but the operational capacity to initiate such cases must be demonstrated.

In addition to the mandatory legal protection mechanism, the project may include:

- Crisis preparedness and rapid response support;
- Legal literacy and preventive governance guidance for CSOs;
- Organisational risk assessment tools;
- Sector-level advocacy related to civic space protection;
- Cooperation with pro bono legal networks or other relevant actors;
- Documentation and analysis of legal threats to civil society.

All additional activities must remain clearly aligned with the primary objective of strengthening legal protection and safeguarding civic space.

Indicators: The project is **required to use all the following 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
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

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

3. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND PARTNERS

3.1 Eligible applicants

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.

The applicant is the entity responsible for the overall initiation, preparation and implementation of the project (the Project Promoter).

Eligible applicants are CSOs that are established in Slovakia and fall within the following definition:

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

Eligible candidates must meet the following general conditions:

- Are non-profit, being organisations that have not been created nor operate to generate personal profit. Although it may have paid staff and may engage in revenue-generating activities, it does not distribute profits to its members nor to its board. Where revenue-generating activities are undertaken, these do not represent the purpose of the non-profit organisation, but are a means to support its mission and values;
- Have members who do not have any direct commercial interest in the outcome of the work of the organisation or of its activities, and the organisation does not pursue the commercial or professional interests of its members. This definition therefore excludes trade- and professional chambers and associations, where the aims and purposes of the association is to further the specific interests of its members only;
- Are voluntary in nature, formed voluntarily by groups or individuals, and where the organisation is membership based, membership is not compulsory for any group or individual.
- Any applicant must agree to the principles and procedures of the Programme's *Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Persons and Children under the EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia* and commit to complying with them by signing the Declaration of Honour when submitting the application.

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

a) Civic Association according to the Act No. 83/1990 Coll. on the Association of Citizens;
b) Foundation according to the Act No. 34/2002 Coll. on Foundations;
c) Non-profit Organisation Providing Public Beneficial Services according to the Act No. 213/1997 Coll.
d) Non-investment Fund according to the Act No. 34/2002 Coll. on Non-investment Funds;
e) Non-profit Organisation according to the Act No. 116/85 Coll. on terms for activities of organisations with international aspect;
f) Association of Legal Entities under the Act no. 40/1964 Coll. - Civil Code;
g) Slovak Red Cross under the Act no. 460/2007 Coll. on the Slovak Red Cross.

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

3.2 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 partner organisations that share the applicant's economic and social objectives to be achieved through the project. The Fund Operator recommends involving no more than two partner organisations in order to ensure effective coordination and meaningful collaboration.

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

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

[6] Proselytism is the practice of attempting to convert people to another religion or belief system; any effort to persuade someone to change their beliefs
[7] Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.
[8] Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

- they are independent of local, regional and national government and other public authorities, as well as of political parties, religious institutions and commercial organisations; and
- they are represented by one single person, with legal residency in Slovakia, who signs the partnership agreement on behalf of the group. An informal group cannot not be a direct recipient of the project grant.

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

4. PROJECT CONDITIONS

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

Project duration	Between 30 and 36 months
Project grant amount	EUR 140 000
Indicative start of project implementation	October 2026
Final date of eligibility of expenditure (depending on the start of project implementation)	no later than 30 April 2031

4.1 Co-financing

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

4.2 Eligible expenditure

Eligible expenditure is regulated by the Cost Eligibility Guidance, which sets out the applicable rules on grant modalities, eligible cost categories, and any relevant Simplified Cost Options as defined in the project contract and call documentation.

Applicants are required to prepare and submit their project budget directly within the e-grant system. The system provides structured budget tables and embedded guidance for completion; however, there is no separate or downloadable budget template. Approval of the submitted budget does not in itself constitute confirmation of cost eligibility.

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

4.3 Payment of the grant

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

Payment Type	Limits	Conditions
Advance payment	20% - 30% of the total	Paid up to 10 working days after signature the Project Contract; intended to cover the first 6 months of activities.

[9] Please see further details on sub-contracting in the Guidelines for Applicants

	project budget	
Interim payment	up to 55% of the total project budget	Paid after approval of interim project reports (within 10 working days after acceptance). Given that PDP grants have an implementation period of up to 36 months, interim payments are typically disbursed around months 8, 14, 20, 26 and 32 of implementation.
Final payment (retention)	15% - 20% of the total project budget	Paid after approval of the final report (within 10 working days after approval).

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

4.4 Other conditions

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

5. ADMINISTRATIVE, ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

5.1 Administrative and eligibility criteria

Administrative compliance is checked against the following criteria:

- Compliance with the submission deadline given on the front page and in chapter 7 of this call text. Applications cannot be submitted after the deadline.
- Applications are submitted electronically via e-grant system in Slovak language as per chapter 7 of this call text.
- Applications include all relevant supporting documents and attachments as per chapter 6 and Annex 1 of this call text.
- The duration of the project is in accordance with the information specified in the relevant call for applications – see section 5.2 below on the project implementation period.
- The amount requested is in accordance with the information specified in the relevant call for applications – see section 4 on project financing and expenditure eligibility.

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

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

5.1.1 Appeals

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

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

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

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

5.2 Selection process and criteria

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

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

5.2.1 The Scoring Chart

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

Group of Criteria / Criterion	Maximum Score
1. Understanding, Contextual Relevance, and Added Operational Value	**35**
1.1. Quality of the applicant's understanding of the predefined project's objectives, activities, intervention logic, target groups, and expected results	15
1.2. Understanding of the needs of target groups and the appropriateness of the proposed approach to addressing those needs within the predefined framework	10
1.3. Added value through proposed methodological approaches, measures, or refinements within the predefined scope	5
1.4. Sustainability of project results beyond the implementation period	5
2. Implementation Methodology and Feasibility	**25**
2.1. Quality, feasibility, and coherence of the proposed implementation plan, including work planning, sequencing, risk management, and monitoring arrangements	20
2.2. Quality and feasibility of proposed communication and visibility measures	5
3. Budget and Cost Efficiency	**20**
3.1. Cost-effectiveness and adequacy of proposed expenditure in relation to assigned implementation tasks	10
3.2. Coherence between the budget structure and the proposed implementation methodology	10

4. Organisational Capacity and Institutional Alignment	**20**
4.1. Alignment of the applicant's (and partner's) activities with the values and principles of the EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia	10
4.2. Organisational and professional capacity to implement the predefined project, including relevant experience and staffing	10
Total score	**100**

To be considered for funding, projects will be evaluated and ranked based on the established award criteria. The Fund Operator reserves the right not to award the grant if none of the submitted applications is deemed to meet the required quality standards. Projects that receive a score of 0 under any of the subheadings may be rejected.

5.2.2 Indicative timeline for the selection process[10]

Steps	Indicative timeline
Announcement of call	March 26th, 2026
Applications are accepted	May 31st, 2026, 23:59 (CET)
Administrative / Eligibility Check	Fund Operator conducts administrative compliance check, incl. completion of missing documentation and assignment to 2 evaluators (up to 10 working days).
Expert Assessment and Evaluation	Expert assessment and assessment of eligible applications by 2–3 external assessors, followed by consolidation of results, preparation of ranking and decision-making documentation, and completion of internal approval procedures, leading to final funding decisions. (up to 50 working days).
Publish results	Fund Operator publishes selection results, notifies applicants of approval/rejection decision, and sends draft contracts to successful applicants (up to 5 working days). Announcement of applications awarded funding on the programme's website
Provisional start of project	October 2026

6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (mandatory attachments to application)

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

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

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

These conditions include, inter alia:

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

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

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

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

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

7. HOW TO APPLY

7.1 How to apply

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

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

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

The deadline for applications to be included in the evaluation is **May 31, 2026, at 23:59 CET** (further deadlines for ongoing calls can be found in section 5.2 of this call).

7.2 Support to applicants and frequently asked questions (FAQ)

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

- **Information Webinars and Sessions:** The Fund Operator will host online sessions to outline funding priorities, provide guidance on completing application forms, and explain the full project lifecycle. Dates for these sessions will be announced on the programme website in due course.

- **Telephone Consultations:** The consortium partners are available to answer questions via telephone every Wednesday between 9:00 and 15:00 (contact information is listed in the dedicated section).
- **Written Inquiries:** Inquiries may be submitted via email or through the FAQ portal on our website. Responses from all meetings and consultations are regularly integrated into a comprehensive FAQ subpage on the EEA CSF Slovakia program page.

Important Notice: Inquiries must be received at least **5 working days** before the submission deadline.

Complaints

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

1. Submission and Processing (Fund Operator)

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

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

2. Complaints to the FMO

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

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

8. CONTACT

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

Fund Operator
Ekopolis Foundation
Komenského 21, 974 01 Banská Bystrica
Tel.: +421 48 470 1091
www.ekopolis.sk
Director: Peter Medveď, medved@eea-csf.sk
Financial Manager: Lívia Haringová, haringova@eea-csf.sk
Program Manager: Veronika Záhradníková, zahradnikova@eea-csf.sk
Financial Controller: Jarmila Bibová, bibova@eea-csf.sk

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

ANNEX 1: CHECKLIST FOR APPLICANTS

CHECKLIST FOR APPLICANTS	Yes/No
Administrative criteria	
Submission deadline: Compliance with the deadline given on the front page and in Chapter 7 of the call text.	
Submission method and language: Applications must be submitted electronically via the [e-grant link] in the [language(s) accepted] as per Chapter 7 of the call text.	
Required documents: Applications must include all relevant supporting documents and attachments as per Chapter 6 and Annex 1 of the call text.	
Project duration: The duration of the project must be in accordance with the information specified in the relevant call for applications (see section 4 on the project implementation period).	
Requested amount: The amount requested must be in accordance with the information specified in the relevant call for applications (see section 4).	
Eligibility criteria	
Organisation eligibility: See section 3 on eligible applicants and partners.	
Financial and time limits: The requested grant amount and proposed implementation period must be within the permissible limits provided in the call.	
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	
• Partnership declaration(s) /Letter of Intent (if applicable) • Statutes of foreign partners if not freely available online (if applicable) • Hourly rate calculation attachment (if applicable)	

ANNEX 2: RELEVANT GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

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

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

3. **Policy on the Protection of Vulnerable Persons and Children** for the EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia.

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

ANNEX 3: SELECTION CRITERIA (detail)

The expert assessment of grant applications under the EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia ensures a professional, objective, independent, and transparent assessment of applications against predefined assessment criteria, resulting in a ranked list that serves as the basis for decision-making by the Selection Committee.

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

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