Iceland Liechtenstein Norway **Civil Society** Fund

CIVIL SOCIETY FUND

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS #04 – ORGANISATIONAL GRANTS

CSOS THAT PROMOTE DEMOCRACY, THE RULE OF LAW, AND HUMAN RIGHTS, STRENGTHENED

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

The Civil Society Fund aims to support a vibrant and resilient civil society protecting and promoting democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF), in consortium with the Bissaya Barreto Foundation (BBF), has been selected as the Fund Operator of the EEA Civil Society Fund in Portugal, following an open and public tender procedure launched for that purpose.

This call, contributing to Output 3.1: "Organisational development supported", targets Civil Society umbrella organisations whose mission aligns with the Fund's objective. It seeks to improve their organisational capacity under the Civil Society Fund's *Outcome 3: "CSOs that promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights strengthened"*, by reinforcing their ability to support, represent, and coordinate the broader civil society sector.

These grants constitute the Fund's largest and longest-term support mechanism and are designed to enable umbrella organisations to pursue their own long-term goals and missions. Organisational Grants provide multiannual, flexible financial support based on the organisation's existing strategic or organisational work plan, funding both capacity-building and core activities essential to fulfilling their role within the sector.

This approach responds to persistent challenges faced by civil society, including fragmentation, weak coordination, and the absence of a strong, unified voice advocating for an enabling environment for civil society. Umbrella organisations often face constraints in their operational capacity, financial sustainability, and ability to effectively support their members, limiting their potential to foster cooperation, amplify civil society voices, and influence policy and decision-making processes. By supporting umbrella organisations, the Fund seeks to strengthen sector-wide coordination, reduce duplication of efforts, and enhance collective impact.

These grants are grounded in trust and partnership: the Fund does not seek to interfere with or redefine organisations' established strategies, but rather to support them in doing what they do best, with lighter oversight and closer relations.

Through this support, the Fund expects to contribute to stronger, more resilient umbrella organisations, improved support and services to member NGOs, enhanced cooperation and knowledge exchange across the sector, and increased capacity to advocate for a more enabling legal and policy environment for civil society. Ultimately, this is expected to lead to a more cohesive, effective, and sustainable civil society sector, better equipped to promote democratic values, the rule of law, and human rights.

Applications shall be submitted online through the website: eeagrants.org/pt/eea-civil-society-fund-portugal and shall follow the evaluation and selection procedures detailed in this notice.

Without prejudice to the specifications contained in this notice, the provisions of the Fund Rules shall apply to this call for applications and should therefore be consulted by applicants, especially regarding the rules on eligibility of applicants and the selection procedures. The Fund Rules, the Manual and other useful information can be found on the Fund's website.

Iceland Liechtenstein Norway **Civil Society** Fund

Table of contents

1. Objective 5

2. Eligible Applicants 5

3. Size and duration of projects 6

4. Submission of applications 6

5. Administrative and eligibility criteria 7

6. Support to Applicants 7

7. Methodology of analysis, evaluation and scoring of applications 8

8. Selection process and reserve list 9

9. Grant contracting 10

10. Eligible costs and budget, grant form, and payment system 10

11. Budget Allocation 10

12. Publicity and additional information 11

13. Contacts 11

SUMMARY OF THE CALL	
Title of the call	CALL FOR APPLICATIONS #04 – ORGANISATIONAL GRANTS
Purpose of the call	Enable umbrella organisations to pursue their own long-term goals and missions. Organisational Grants provide multiannual, flexible financial support based on the organisation's existing strategic or organisational work plan, funding both capacity-building and core activities essential to fulfilling their role within the sector.
Outcome(s)	Outcome 3: CSOs that promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, strengthened
Output	Output 3.1: Organisational development supported
Eligible project applicants	Civil Society umbrella organisations in compliance with number 2 of this call notice
Project duration	36 or 48 months
Project grant amount	150,000 euros
Co-financing	No co-financing required. Project funded at a rate of 100%.
Application deadline	29 October 2026, at 12:00 (GMT/Lisbon time).

1. Objective

1.1 Projects to be selected under this Call shall aim primarily at strengthening civil society organisations and shall consider the overall objective of the Fund as set forth in Article 3 of the Fund Rules.

1.2 The Output Area for this call is Output 3.1: Organisational development supported.

1.3 Organisational Grants are financial support provided by the Fund to civil society umbrella organisations, according to the definition set in number 2 of the call notice, over a longer period, with the purpose of enabling them to pursue long-term goals.

1.4 Projects under this call shall be implemented in the territories referred to in Article 6 of the Fund Rules.

1.5 The above-mentioned projects shall be based on the organisation's own multiannual organisational work plan or strategy.

1.6 To measure results, each supported project shall contribute to and report against all the indicators set by the Fund under Outcome 3 and Output 3.1. Each supported project shall also, for all indicators, identify quantified, project-level target values according to its nature, objectives and expected results. The indicators become a reporting tool during implementation.

1.7 The output indicators established for this call are:

a) Number of CSO staff who have completed a capacity-building programme;

b) Number of CSOs that completed a capacity-building programme.

1.8 The outcome indicators established for this call are:

a) Number of CSOs with improved overall organisational strength;

b) Number of employees with improved skills.

1.9 The indicator definitions, results-counting procedure and causal links are pre-established and defined in the manual, and aggregated by Output Area, facilitating their comprehension and usability.

2. Eligible Applicants

2.1 Project promoters must comply with the general conditions of eligibility of the Fund established in Article 7 of the Fund Rules.

2.2 In addition to the conditions defined in the previous number, promoters submitting an application to this call must be an umbrella organisation established in Portugal. For the purposes of this call notice, an umbrella organisation is a legally established entity that represents, coordinates, or provides services to a network, federation, or association of multiple independent member organisations operating within a common sector, theme, or purpose relevant to the Fund. The organisation shall cumulatively:

a) Have a mission that aligns with the Fund's areas of support, as defined in the Fund rules;

b) Have a formal membership base comprising at least five distinct legal entities, the majority of which must be non-governmental organisations;

c) Be able to demonstrate that its activities primarily serve and benefit its member organisations;

d) Be registered and compliant with applicable legal and regulatory requirements;

e) Be able to demonstrate previous work with the Fund's areas of support and a membership base comprising of at least 60 % active member organisations with a primary statutory purpose that falls within one or more of the Programmes areas of support:

i. promoting civic participation in democratic processes;

ii. promoting information integrity and media literacy;

iii. protecting human rights, including antidiscrimination and social justice;

iv. promoting gender equality, including SRHR (Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights) and LGBTIQ+ rights;

v. promoting climate action, environmental protection, and just green transition;

f) Have a multiannual work plan and/or strategy;

g) Have been legally registered for at least 48 months prior to the submission deadline;

h) Demonstrate an average annual turnover over the last three completed financial years of at least twice the annualised value of the grant amount applied for;

i) Be in compliance with its payment obligations with regard to taxes, social security contributions and health insurance.

2.3 Organisational grants under this call shall not include project partners.

2.4 In derogation of Article 15 of the Fund Rules, each entity (as a promoter) may only submit one application to this call.

3. Size and duration of projects

3.1 Projects under this call shall be supported by a total grant of 150,000 euros, with the eligible costs of the project funded at a rate of 100%.

3.2 The duration of projects to be selected under this call for applications shall be either 36 or 48 months, with an expected start date between January and March 2027.

3.3 Regardless of the duration referred to in the previous number, the project's final date of eligibility shall be no later than 30 April 2031.

4. Submission of applications

4.1 The applications shall be submitted, electronically, through the MyGulbenkian application form, available through eeagrants.org/pt/eea-civil-society-fund-portugal.

4.2 In addition to the attachments foreseen in number 6 of Article 16, the application to this call will also require the submission of the organisation's multiannual organisational work plan or strategy and its organisational chart.

4.3 Applications must be prepared and submitted exclusively by the project promoter. External consultants are prohibited from designing or submitting applications on behalf of others. Any consultant found advertising or providing such services will be disqualified from participating in or delivering services for supported projects.

4.4 Applications to this call must be submitted from 3 July 2026 until 29 October 2026, at 12:00 (GMT/Lisbon time).

4.5 Clerical errors made during the online submission of documents may still be corrected within two working days, as mentioned in number 4 of Article 18 of the Fund Rules, following the procedure indicated in the manual.

4.6 Applicants are responsible for the truthfulness and authenticity of all submitted documents and are expressly informed that they may be required to present additional and/or original documents to the Fund Operator at any stage of the application process.

5. Administrative and eligibility criteria

5.1 Applicants must comply with the eligibility requirements stipulated in Article 7 of the Fund Rules and in number 2.2 of this call notice. The Fund will conduct comprehensive verifications of compliance with the formal and administrative eligibility requirements, particularly regarding:

a) Scope of the application falling within the scope of the call notice;

b) Respect for the maximum number of applications each entity (as a promoter) may submit in line with number 2.4 of this call notice;

c) Non-applicability of paragraph 6 of Article 7;

d) Qualification of the promoter as CSO under Article 7 and as umbrella organisation under number 2.2 of this call notice;

e) Submission of applications with the attachments referred to in number 6 of Article 16, and number 4.2 of this call notice within the defined deadline;

f) Full completion of the application form.

5.2 Applicants whose applications are rejected due to noncompliance with the requirements referred to in the previous number shall be informed and have a period of 10 days to appeal, counted from the day after the notification. Appeals shall follow the procedure established in number 7 of Article 18 of the Fund Rules.

6. Support to Applicants

6.1 In order to support the submission of applications aligned with the objective of the Fund, ensure equal opportunities to all applicants and to improve chances of success, the Fund makes available the following support to applicants:

a) A manual containing all relevant information and required documentation;

b) A set of dissemination workshops across the country to mobilise local organisations and stakeholders, explain the calls and support the preparation of projects and applications, clarify available support and capacity-building facilities;

c) A helpline, via e-mail and phone, for the clarification of queries;

d) Online information, namely, through FAQ published on the Fund's website;

e) A specific mechanism with individual support on project preparation, provided by external experts, made available during the application process. This mechanism will consist of two different facilities:

i. Revision of the application form draft, providing advice on what should be improved, which can be requested up to 12 days before the deadline for the submission of applications;

ii. Consultancy to support applicants in turning their idea into a project, which can be requested up to 25 days before the deadline for the submission of applications.

6.2 The eligible applicants for the specific mechanism mentioned in paragraph e) of number 6.1 are limited to CSOs with an annual turnover of up to 250,000 euros for the i. Revision of applications and up to 150,000 euros for the ii. Consultancy to support applicants.

6.3 In addition to the condition mentioned in number 6.2, applicant CSOs can only receive this specific support if one of the following conditions is met:

a) They are located in underserved geographic areas (outside the Greater Lisbon and Porto Metropolitan Areas);

b) They have been created and/or are composed of refugees, migrants, Roma or victims of gender-based violence, regardless of where they are headquartered.

7. Methodology of analysis, evaluation and scoring of applications

7.1 As defined in Article 20 of the Fund Rules, the scores are assigned by five experts on a scale between 0 and 100 points. Each application receives five scores. For the final score, the highest and lowest scores for each application are excluded, and the final score is calculated from the average of the remaining three scores.

7.2 The evaluation and scoring of the applications shall be performed according to the selection criteria and the weights set in this notice as follows:

Criteria	Weight
1. **Quality of the plan or strategy**: clear mission alignment with the areas of support/expected results of the programme, well-articulated objectives, logical theory of change, well-founded context, explicit positioning, clear focus and prioritisation, alignment with organisational capacity, translates into operations and actionable measures, proposed spending proportionate and necessary	25
2. **Alignment and contribution to the Fund's objective**: level of alignment of the organisation's mission with the Fund's objective, priorities and expected results; relevance for the subsector and the sector; value added by the project; appropriateness of proposed focus areas	25
3. **Organisation's experience and implementation capacity:** organisational and financial management capacity; experience with managing grants and results-based management; governance and decision-making clarity; risk management	25
4. **Systemic change potential**: expected results; and dissemination potential, for broader and more sustainable change, beyond its direct implementation;	15
5. Quality of evaluation and monitoring framework: defined indicators and criteria for results, monitoring and reporting procedures, regularity of monitoring actions, assigned roles and responsibilities	10
Total	**100**

8. Selection process and reserve list

8.1 After the evaluation and scoring of all applications, a ranked list is submitted to the Selection Committee for review and for a recommendation to the Steering Committee

8.2 Only applications with a final score equal to or above 60 points may be selected for funding.

8.3 Upon review, the Selection Committee may decide to amend the rating of projects and the ranking of applications resulting from the evaluation mentioned in Article 20 of the Fund Rules.

8.4 Whenever appropriate, the Selection Committee establishes a reserve list from the list of applications selected for approval, to be used in case of withdrawals or savings, composed of the highest-scoring not-selected applications for lack of available budget. The reserve list is ranked according to the score of each application up to a limit of 40% of the budget available for this call.

8.5 The Programme Director may draw applications from the reserve list to be supported, should funding become available due to savings or unused funds in previously approved projects. The reserve list is valid for up to 4 months following the notification decision, meaning that applications that are not selected to receive a grant by that date are automatically considered not selected.

8.6 The Selection Committee draws up a proposal for the final decision by the Fund's Steering Committee, containing the proposed decisions on:

a) List of selected applications and respective grants;

b) Reserve list, as described in number 8.4;

c) List of not-selected applications;

d) List of not-admitted applications.

8.7 The final decision concerning the selection of applications and all other Selection Committee proposals is made by the Fund's Steering Committee.

9. Grant contracting

9.1 Promoters of selected projects shall be notified individually of the Steering Committee's decisions as foreseen in Article 24 of the Fund Rules.

9.2 The contracting of selected projects shall follow the process established in Article 25 of the Fund Rules.

9.3 Grant contracts will necessarily include the elements established in Article 27 of the Fund Rules.

10. Eligible costs and budget, grant form, and payment system

10.1 Applicants shall not be required to provide a separate grant budget; however, the application shall include financial reports and the organisation's general budget.

10.2 For this call, payments shall be based trough lump sums, on the submission of the financial and narrative reporting and the annual meetings set in Article 33 of the Fund Rules, that shall report on the attainment of the project's milestones.

10.3 The amounts for the lump sums referred in the previous number, shall be established ex ante, through an annual budget developed on a case-by-case basis and agreed by the Fund Operator before the signature of the grant contract, as defined in Article 40 of the Fund Rules.

10.4 The inclusion of an expenditure item in a project budget approved by the FO cannot be considered as confirmation of the eligibility of that expenditure item.

10.5 The approved grant is disbursed according to the payment system set in Article 43 of the Fund Rules.

10.6 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.

11. Budget Allocation

11.1 The total budget allocated to this call is 750,000 euros.

11.2 Whenever part of the budget allocated to this call isn't fully used to fund the applications selected and the applications on the reserve list, the remainder budget is transferred to future calls of the same Outcome.

12. Publicity and additional information

12.1 This notice and other relevant information, including the Fund Rules, the application forms and the Manual, are available on the Fund's website: eeagrants.org/pt/eea-civil-society-fund-portugal.

12.2 Any amendments to the terms and conditions set forth in this notice shall also be publicised in the above-mentioned website, with a minimum of three working days prior to the date of its entry into force.

13. Contacts

12.1 The consortium partners are available to answer questions via telephone every workday between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

12.2 Inquiries may also be submitted via email, which shall be answered within three working days. Responses are regularly integrated into a FAQ subpage on the Fund's website.

12.3 Contact information is listed below:

Website: eeagrants.org/pt/eea-civil-society-fund-portugal | https://civilsocietyfund.pt

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation:

Tel.: +351 217 823 360

E-mail: fsc@gulbenkian.pt

Bissaya Barreto Foundation:

Tel.: +351 239 800 437

E-mail: fsc@fbb.pt

Lisbon, 3 July 2026