Iceland
Liechtenstein
Norway

Civil Society Fund

OPEN CALL FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOs) IN ROMANIA

Call #5 - Roma Inclusion and Empowerment through the Development of Interethnic Communities

SMALL & LARGE GRANTS

Guidelines for Applicants

AVAILABLE FUNDING: € 6,500,000

DEADLINE: 08 OCTOBER – 16:00 ROMANIA TIME

Civil Society Development Foundation

environmental partnership foundation

Resource Center for Roma Communities Foundation

Frivillighet Norge

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 **Romania**. 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 **Romania** (hereinafter referred to as the CSF Romania or the "Programme") has a total allocation of **€ 53,811,718.** A consortium of Civil Society Development Foundation, Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation, Resource Center for Roma Communities and Civil Society Norway (Frivillighet Norge), operates the EEA Civil Society Fund in **Romania** on behalf of the Donor States.

This call targets Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), mainly **Roma-led and/or Roma-focused CSOs, working in human rights, anti-discrimination, and social justice, as well as other organisations addressing interethnic issues and actively working in communities with diverse ethnic populations, including Roma and has a total allocation of € 6,500,000.**

SUMMARY OF THE CALL	
Title of the call	Call #5 –Roma inclusion and empowerment through the development of interethnic communities
Purpose of the call	See section 3.3 of this Call
Outcome(s)	Outcome 2. Human rights strengthened
Output(s)	Output 2.1: Human rights, including anti-discrimination, and social justice supported
Relevant project activities	Recommended activities - See section 3.5 of this Call
Eligible project Applicants	See section 5 of this Call
Project duration	Between 4 and 9 months for small projects and between 36 and 48 months for large projects
Final date of eligibility of expenditures	No later than 30 April 2031
Project grant amount	Between € 15,000 and € 25,000 for small projects and between € 200,001 and € 350,000 for large projects
Co-financing	No co-financing required
Partnerships	Partnership is encouraged but not mandatory
Call available in the following language(s)	Romanian, English
Questions deadline	No later than 7 working days before closing date of the Call
Application deadline	08 October 2026 16:00 (Romania time)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS 3
1. BACKGROUND FOR THE EEA CIVIL SOCIETY FUND IN ROMANIA 4
2. OUTCOME 2. HUMAN RIGHTS STRENGTHENED 5
3. FOCUS OF THIS CALL 6
3.1. Financial allocation, types of grants and deadline 6
3.2. Current social context and rationale 7
3.3. Purpose of this call 8
3.4. Expected project approach 9
3.5. Project activities and Programme indicators 11
3.6. Organisational development allocation 14
3.7. Monitoring and rapid response mechanism 15
3.8. Information and communication activities 16
4. PROJECT BUDGETING RULES 17
4.1. Principles of project budgeting by grant type 17
4.2. Eligible expenditure 18
4.3. Excluded costs 20
5. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND PARTNERS 21
5.1. Eligible Applicants 21
5.2. Eligible Project Partners 25
5.3. Limitations 26
6. HOW TO APPLY: PREPARATION, SUBMISSION AND REGISTRATION 26
7. ADMINISTRATIVE, ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA 28
7.1. Evaluation and project selection process 28
7.2. Verification of administrative compliance and eligibility 28
7.3. Technical and financial evaluation 29
7.4. Selection Committee 31
7.5. Steering Committee 32
7.6. Announcing the results 32
7.7. Complaints Committee 32
8. CONTRACTING 32
9. RULES APPLICABLE FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION 35
9.1. Reporting 35
9.2. Payment's procedures 35
9.3. Proof of expenditure and audit 37
10. CONTACT DETAILS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION 37
Annexes 38

1. BACKGROUND FOR THE EEA CIVIL SOCIETY FUND IN ROMANIA

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 Beneficiary States.

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 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 **Romania** is € 53,811,718.

Through an open tender process, the secretariat of the Donor States – the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) has selected a consortium composed of Civil Society Development Foundation, Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation, Resource Center for Roma Communities and Civil Society Norway (Frivillighet Norge) as Fund Operator of the EEA Civil Society Fund in **Romania**. The Fund Operator manages the EEA Civil Society Fund in **Romania** on behalf of the Donor States. This includes the selection, contracting and follow-up of projects.

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 **Romania** will include **ten** open calls, contributing to the following outcomes[1]:

- Outcome 1: Democratic values and rule of law strengthened
- Outcome 2: Human rights strengthened
- Outcome 3: 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

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

The Programme uses a results-based management approach[2]. 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 in this results framework.

An overview of all open calls as well as other activities supported by the Programme can be found on the website of the EEA Civil Society Fund in **Romania**: **www.eeacivilsocietyfund.ro**

[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.

[2] See more information about Results based management in Programme Indicators Guidance, document available at www.eeacivilsocietyfund.ro

2. OUTCOME 2. HUMAN RIGHTS STRENGTHENED

Outcome 2. Human rights strengthened covers three areas of support in the Civil Society Fund Romania: (1) Human rights, anti-discrimination, and social justice; (2) Gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and LGBTIQ+ rights; (3) Climate action, environmental protection, and a just green transition. **Call #5 – Roma inclusion and empowerment through the development of interethnic communities** is implemented under Outcome 2: Human Rights Strengthened, contributing directly to its achievement.

Aims	• To address the specific needs and challenges of diverse beneficiary groups, particularly underserved communities experiencing persistent rights violations rooted in historical exclusion and socio-economic disparities. • To contribute to reducing structural discrimination and marginalisation, including barriers caused by limited institutional accountability and restricted access to legal remedies. • To enhance public awareness and policy engagement regarding the human rights to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment by strengthening the advocacy capacity of CSOs to contribute to inclusive, and coherent sustainability policies. • To support CSOs in effectively mainstreaming human rights across all stages of project design, fostering a sustainable human rights-based culture and maximizing positive impact on beneficiaries.
Approach	• Prioritising the needs of underserved and marginalised communities through targeted and context-sensitive interventions. • Increase awareness and engagement in promoting the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment by strengthening the advocacy capacity of civil society organizations to contribute to the development and implementation of inclusive and coherent sustainability policies. Applying an intersectional approach that considers the combined effects of ethnicity, gender, disability, and other relevant variables to better respond to the realities of diverse beneficiary groups. • Building on and aligning with existing national and European Union (EU) strategic frameworks to enhance coherence, relevance, and long-term impact of the projects.
Special focus & allocations	• In addition to the Programme support areas, Outcome 2 includes three country-specific focus areas, for which dedicated financial allocations are provided within the total Outcome 2 allocation: • **Addressing challenges arising from the invasion of Ukraine** – € 1,555,624 • **Inclusion and empowerment of Roma**, including targeted support for Roma-led organisations and Roma women and girls – € 6,500,000 • **Countering gender-based violence (GBV)** – € 1,500,000
Financial allocation	• The total allocation available for open calls under Outcome 2 is **€ 23,278,018.**

3. FOCUS OF THIS CALL

3.1. Financial allocation, types of grants and deadline

Under this Call, funding is available to support civil society initiatives contributing to **Output 2.1: Human rights, including anti-discrimination, and social justice supported**.

Available allocation / Grants / Deadline		
Type of grants	**Small grants**	**Large grants**
Total Financial Allocation	€ 6,500,000	
Publication date of the Call	08 July 2026	
Application opening date (online platform only)	08 July 2026	
Application deadline	08 October 2026; 16:00 (Romania time)	
Project duration (minimum and maximum)	4 - 9 months	36 - 48 months
Grant amount (minimum and maximum)	€ 15,000 - 25,000	€ 200,001 - 350,000
Total Financial Allocation per grant type	€ 400,000	€ 6,100,000
Co-financing	The grant rate of the project is 100%.	
Organisational development allocation	The allocation of up to 20% of the total project budget to organisational development activities **is not available** under this type of grant.	Possibility to allocate **up to 20%** of the total project budget to organisational development activities **is available only for large grants**.
Monitoring and Rapid Response Mechanism	The allocation of project funds to rapid response activities **is not available** under this type of grant.	Possibility to allocate **3-5%** of the total project budget to rapid response activities **is available only to large grants.**

! Important	**The final form of the project proposal is considered the one uploaded on the online platform (https://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro) and validated until the deadline.** The deadline for completing and validating the online Application form and attaching the required documents is **08 October 2026; 16:00 (Romania time).** After this date, it will no longer be possible to fill in a new project Application and modify / fill in the project Application already submitted for the **Call #5 – Roma inclusion and empowerment through the development of interethnic communities**. Access will be automatically limited by the online platform server.

	We recommend submitting the Application(s) earlier than on the deadline set in the Guidelines. Postponing the Application(s) submission for the last day may cause problems due to the system overloading that would not enable to complete and validate the Application on time.

3.2. Current social context and rationale

Despite the certain progress registered in the Romanian society, the persistent poverty and extensive inequalities have significantly affected the achievement of the social justice and inclusion of disadvantaged/vulnerable groups. Major challenges for Romanian society remain in terms of progress reaching equitably disadvantaged groups largely affected by poverty and social exclusion (27.9% of the population). Children (38.1%) and youth aged 18-24 years (36.7%) remain the groups most affected by poverty and social exclusion (Eurostat, 2024). Specific challenges concern the rural-urban gap in access to and availability of social services offer, which are almost unavailable in rural communities, as well as the focus of State support on cash benefits as opposed to active measures such as community services. There is a limited involvement of local authorities, communities as well as disadvantaged/vulnerable groups in implementing local solutions to reduce inequalities.

The gap between the Roma and non-Roma population in terms of education, access to social and medical services, housing conditions, occupation/ inclusion on the labour market, quality of life, still exists (Romanian Government Strategy for the inclusion of the Romanian citizens belonging to Roma minority 2022 – 2027).

The FRA (2025) reports that 68% of Roma are at risk of poverty, compared to 19% of the general population of Romania. While 45% of the Roma lived in severe material deprivation in 2024, this marks a decreasing trend from 70% in 2016 (53% in 2021), yet still much higher than the 15% rate for the general population. Two thirds (75%) of the Roma children in Romania are at risk of poverty, an insignificant change from 2016 when the proportion was 78%. The risk of poverty and social exclusion is higher in rural and smalltown areas, while in urban areas there are compacted communities with low access to services.

Housing Deprivation is another challenge for the Roma in Romania, more than half of them (56%) are lacking basic amenities, 86% of Roma in Romania live in overcrowded housing, while only 59% of Roma in Romania are in paid work (not employed)[3], an improvement from 45% in 2016, though still below the general population's employment rate of 69%.

Residential and school segregation of a discriminatory nature, forced evictions, limited or non-existent of consultations with Roma people on issues concerning them, material deprivation, the fact that statistics related to Roma population are worse off than the rest of the population in almost every aspect of life are among the issues signalled both by the EU FRA Roma survey report (2021-2025) and the EC Communications on Roma (2023-2024) and by the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. All these barriers in achieving social justice and social inclusion needs to be addressed through integrated, inclusive and participatory approaches and with priority in underserved areas and for underserved target groups, in rural inter-ethnic communities where one of the groups is Roma.

[3] FRA report. The paid work rate is based on the questions 'Please look at this card and tell me which of these categories describes your current situation best' and "Did you do any work in the last four weeks to earn some money?

3.3. Purpose of this call

Objectives of the Call	• To support the medium and long-term inclusion and empowerment of Roma within the broader context of interethnic communities. • To strengthen social cohesion and trust between ethnic groups through inclusive community development processes. • To reduce structural inequalities and discrimination affecting Roma and other disadvantaged/vulnerable groups in interethnic communities. • To promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, particularly Roma women and girls, as a cross-cutting priority.
Programme Areas of support targeted	• Human rights, anti-discrimination, and social justice
Country-specific focus areas	• Inclusion and empowerment of Roma, including targeted support for Roma-led organisations and Roma women and girls.
Underserved areas	**Limited to this Call, the underserved areas should also be interethnic communities that <u>must cumulatively fulfil the following conditions:</u>** • **Geographical Location: must be in a rural area (village, commune) or small urban (cities up to 50,000 inhabitants[4]), and/or within segregated urban neighborhoods*.** • **Ethnic Composition: must consist of at least two ethnic groups (e.g., Roma and the majority population or other minorities).** ***Special Provision:* In the case of highly segregated areas where a single ethnic group (Roma) is predominant due to historical or social exclusion, the requirement for "two ethnic groups" is considered fulfilled if the project activities involve/impact the surrounding majority population or if the intervention directly targets the desegregation process.** **Roma Representation: At least one of the targeted ethnic groups must be Roma.**
Target groups	**End beneficiaries:** Roma-led and/or pro Roma CSOs, disadvantaged/vulnerable groups from underserved interethnic communities such as women, children and youth at risk, other ethnic minorities, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, living in marginalized areas or segregated environments, other groups impacted by socio-economic inequalities (elderly, people with disabilities, unemployed, homeless, ex-inmates etc.). The presence and the condition of the Roma population will have to be demonstrated in the description of the project proposals. **Intermediate groups:** public, law enforcement (police, judges, etc.), public services employees (teachers, social workers, physicians, nurses, etc.), media, academia etc.
Social service provision	Social service provision shall not be eligible as a stand-alone activity/project. It can only be supported if they are necessary for enhancing advocacy, community participation, and/or civic engagement.

[4] To verify whether an urban locality falls within the limit of under 50,000 inhabitants, the official data from the 2021 census will be used - (https://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-rpl-2021/rezultate-definitive/ – Table 1.05)

Partnerships	Under this Call, **for large grants applications**, partnerships with CSOs that possess complementary expertise addressing the development of interethnic communities, small CSOs from underserved areas, informal groups and other eligible public entities are **encouraged to ensure an integrated approach and a sustainable intervention**. For **small grant applications**, partnerships are not expected, but may be included for the implementation of specific activities.

3.4. Expected project approach

The following section defines the framework and the relevant types of projects supported under this Call. Proposals are not required to address all the elements listed below. Each project should be designed and adapted to the identified needs, target groups, and specific objectives etc.

All the projects should integrate gender equality as a mandatory principle across all project activities, design, and implementation. Applicants are also encouraged to address **intersectionality** where beneficiaries face multiple, overlapping barriers and adapt project activities to meet these specific needs.

Small grants	**Projects approach: specific, small-scale interventions in underserved areas, local advocacy, and community activation.** Interventions are expected to promote participation and empowerment of interethnic communities within the broader context of community development processes involving both Roma and non-Roma community members. Implementation should rely on bottom-up, participatory, and community-led approaches that actively engage diverse ethnic groups in identifying local challenges, developing solutions, and contributing to community decision-making. Projects are encouraged to strengthen trust, cooperation, and social cohesion within communities while addressing discrimination, exclusion, and inequalities. Projects may include local advocacy, community mobilisation, awareness-raising, volunteering activities, participatory planning, and small-scale community initiatives responding to local needs. Particular attention should be given to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, especially Roma women and girls, across all project activities. **Expected changes:** • Enhanced social justice in underserved communities as a result of targeted advocacy actions • Increased participation of Roma and non-Roma community members in local development and community-led initiatives • Empowered Roma and non-Roma community members who actively influence local decision-making for community development • Strengthened community cooperation through the use of participatory methods that include all ethnic groups in addressing local needs • Improved capacity to address social inclusion challenges by effectively leveraging existing local human, financial, and material resources.
Large grants	**Project approach: must target underserved areas and achieve systemic changes by linking policy implementation with innovative service models**. Projects should adopt a systemic, rights-based, and intersectional approach aimed at reducing structural

	inequalities, combating discrimination and anti-Roma racism, and strengthening the long-term social inclusion and empowerment of multiethnic communities. Interventions are expected to combine advocacy, awareness-raising, monitoring, documentation, and community engagement activities in order to address institutional barriers, discriminatory practices, and unequal access to rights and services. Projects should contribute to sustainable structural change through policy influence, institutional strengthening, improved implementation of existing legal and policy frameworks, and the development of integrated and scalable community-based models. Particular emphasis should be placed on applying an intersectional perspective that recognizes the multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination experienced by Roma communities, especially Roma women and girls and other vulnerable groups. Projects are encouraged to promote gender equality and strengthen the leadership, participation, and representation of Roma women in community development and decision-making processes. Interventions are expected to support the protection of human rights through monitoring, documentation, reporting, and advocacy actions related to discrimination, exclusion, and rights violations affecting interethnic communities. **Expected changes:** • Achievement of systemic changes, including new or improved policies and legislation at regional or national levels for increasing the social justice • More effective implementation of existing policies by overcoming funding gaps or resistant institutional practices • Positive shifts in institutional practices and public attitudes, specifically addressing institutional racism • Improved gender equality through increased awareness, more equitable practices and reduced gender-based discrimination • Enhanced leadership of Roma women and girls in community development and decision-making • Improved access to fundamental rights, ensuring higher quality education, healthcare, housing, and employment • Reduced disparities between Roma and non-Roma populations through advocacy and campaigns that promote social justice • Strengthened protection of Roma communities via the formal documentation and reporting of human rights violations • Operational integrated and innovative service models that durably reduce social and economic inequalities • Empowered interethnic communities that are actively engaged in local consultation and combating exclusion

Under the **Call #5** the following **types of projects** are **not supported for funding:**
• projects that involve obtaining / awarding individual scholarships;
• refinancing activities (e.g. re-granting or loans given to other organizations or individuals/ legal entities);

• projects that focus on construction or purchase of buildings or offices;
• projects that consist primarily of equipment purchase.

3.5. Project activities and Programme indicators

To achieve the expected results, please see the **below non-exhaustive list of possible project activities** that can be supported under this call. Please note that the activities described below are examples and must be part of a broader project addressing a specific need/ problem, implemented in a logical sequence to achieve predefined targets with available resources.

Type of possible activities:

- Developing new or improved models (methodology, type of services, evaluation tools, research, etc.) to address the needs of vulnerable groups, including Roma;
- Transfer of skills and knowledge to local initiative groups and other members of the local community;
- Exchange of experience between local initiative groups from different interethnic communities;
- Organizing regular community actions, implemented with a broad mobilization of community members, material and financial resources;
- Increasing the economic capacity of disadvantaged/vulnerable groups, including Roma, that could include: entrepreneurial training, training for developing business plans;
- Advocacy actions at local/national level for social justice and inclusion of Roman and other disadvantaged/vulnerable groups, especially regarding equal opportunities and anti-discrimination;
- Activities challenging institutional and structural discrimination, including school segregation situations or residential/ spatial segregation, and pursuing dialogue and co-operation with responsible authorities in view of tackling these issues and identifying and implementing concrete desegregation measures and actions;
- Activities aimed at addressing the issue of gender-based violence and ensuring adequate protection for victims;
- Developing partnerships/networks with local action groups, other CSOs, local authorities, other stakeholders to work together and engage with decision-makers to solve local problems;
- Facilitating and promoting equal access to quality and inclusive, non-segregated education;
- Increasing access to and provision of education and training activities:
    - enrolment in kindergarten and primary education;
    - parental education;
    - school after school and extracurricular activities;
    - tutoring and mentoring for disadvantaged students;
    - adult training/education;
    - community centres;
    - vocational counselling /professional training courses, based on identified needs and oriented towards concrete results and successful transition to labour market;
- Development of local action plans in consultation with local stakeholders, plans that respond to the needs of Roma and other disadvantaged groups; it is expected that the action plans will contain realistic budget projections and will be adopted by the Local Councils, followed by implementation, monitoring and (self)evaluation;
- Developing integrated community programmes that will contribute to diverse and contextualised economic and employment opportunities through sustainable use of local, natural and cultural resources;
- Organizing multicultural/intercultural dialogue activities, which bring together Roma and non-Roma members of the community (sports, cultural and educational events, local holidays, etc.);

- Promoting solidarity and mutual aid initiatives that provide practice in assuming responsibilities, carrying out cooperative activities, and learning new skills necessary in leading community organizations that maintain and promote employability and participation in the social, economic, cultural and public life of the community;
- Increasing the capacity of disadvantaged women to assert their rights:
- empowering disadvantaged Roma and non-Roma women and girls in identifying the most feasible and impacting course of actions to the problems they face (reproductive rights, domestic abuse and violence, human trafficking, gender-based discrimination, limited access to public services, etc.);
- leadership training, mentorship initiatives, and platforms for Roma women to advocate for their rights;
- facilitate the setting-up of local informal groups of Roma women with the potential to become registered CSOs;
- Documenting and reporting on human rights violations against Roma;
- Litigation regarding social justice and inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable groups (counselling, legal assistance, etc.);
- Capacity building of Roma, including of other disadvantaged groups. This includes (but is not limited to):
    - facilitating access to/promoting fundamental rights and services (excluding the provision of services such as health or formal education, or other services under the responsibility of local administration);
    - stimulating participation in the decision-making process (giving a voice);
    - learning the Romani language or the majority language;
    - participation in cultural activities aimed at presenting and promoting Roma culture;
    - learning advocacy techniques and most impacting advocacy approaches;
- Increasing employability and/or other well-being status of the families (excluding formal education).

! Important	**Analytical activities**, such as research studies, reports, or data collection on are eligible when used to support advocacy, inform policy proposals, or guide public decision-making. **Communication campaigns** are coordinated series of activities with a defined goal, target group, and timeframe, conveying a clear central message. A project may include multiple campaigns, each with distinct objectives, while individual activities (e.g., a single event or social media post) are considered part of a campaign, not separate campaigns. **Training activities** are eligible when included in comprehensive projects that engage beneficiaries in community life or public consultation and decision-making, complemented by follow-up support such as mentoring or coaching to ensure tangible changes in the targeted groups. According to the State aid compliance principles of the Civil Society Fund, the EEA CSF **does not provide any economic advantage** to undertakings. The supported activities are of non-economic nature.

To track progress, projects should also contribute to Programme-level indicators from the selected Outcome and Output(s).[5] 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 listed in the table below are used to monitor progress and measure results at the Programme level for this call. All projects funded under the Call #5 shall contribute to the achievement of:**

Expected Programme results	Indicators	Programme level targets*	Requirements for Applicants
Outcome 2: Human rights strengthened	12. Number of new or improved policy, programme, or strategy documents that incorporate international / European human rights standards	8	**Projects based on large grants** must select and report against at **least one Outcome 2 indicator** [12] and/or [13]
	13. Number of underserved beneficiaries reporting improved access to at least one fundamental right (education, health, employment, housing, justice).	1,500	
Output 2.1: Human rights, including anti-discrimination, and social justice supported	16. Number of advocacy/awareness-raising campaigns carried out	15	**Projects based on large grants** must select and report against at least **two corresponding Output level indicators** **Projects based on small grants** must select and report against at least **one corresponding Output level indicators**
	17. Number of human rights violations against Roma documented and reported by supported CSOs	50	
	18. Number of supported CSOs working on Roma women and girls' inclusion and empowerment	5	
	19. Number of supported Roma or pro-Roma CSOs working on Roma inclusion and empowerment	12	
	22. Number of Roma engaged in project activities	150	

[5] 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.

! Important	* The target values to be reached at Programme level are presented for informative purposes only. Within the project proposals, Applicants will establish the target values proportionally with the project objectives and project budget. For detailed information on the indicators (definitions, measurement, etc.), please consult the *Programme Indicators Guidance,* document available at **www.eeacivilsocietyfund.ro**.

3.6. Organisational development allocation

In recognition of the need to strengthen CSOs promoting democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, the Programme envisages an organisational development component for projects based on medium or large grants, contributing to Outcomes 1 and 2.

Up to 20% of the total project budget can be allocated for activities that contribute to the organizational development of the Applicant and, if the case, of the CSO Partner/s from Romania **(applicable only to large grants). Organizational development activities do not need to have a direct connection with the project activities.** They should be planned according to the needs of the Applicant and, if the case, of the Romanian Partner/s, and must be correlated with **an organizational development objective.** The organizational development will focus on building specific skills and investing in the organization's long-term strategies (planning, internal systems development, human resources, fundraising, etc.).

Type of eligible organizational development activities (non-exhaustive list):

- **Developing and implementing transparent and accountable governance procedures**, such as participatory processes for strategic planning, development of internal regulation documents; establishment/development of an independent governing body; strengthening and professionalizing boards of directors, systems for prevention of conflict of interest; regulations/ codes of conducts;
- **Defining and implementing policies for human resources management** including combating high staff turnover, volunteer management, and anti-burnout/well-being strategies;
- **Developing and diversifying the funding sources**, through fundraising strategies, actions, campaigns;
- **Developing and implementing effective management procedures**, such as financial rules, management system of organization's knowledge and documents;
- **Designing and implementing digital-related policies,** such as data protection, cybersecurity, online engagement, digital advocacy, ethical use of technology etc.);
- **Increasing the capacity to communicate with external audiences** through new or improved communication strategies or plans; diversifying communication channels; increasing media presence; and ensuring continuous transparency through the publication of annual reports or updated webpages;
- **Creating new partnerships or broadening the constituency base**, including through working with informal groups as part of constituency;
- **Designing and implementing policies to integrate human rights principles** into the organization's work;
- **Developing ang implementing an organizational monitoring and evaluation framework**;
- **Increasing the capacity to contribute to policymaking and to implement advocacy initiatives** through training and coaching;
- **Increasing the capacity to monitor** institutional performance, to monitor human rights violations, **conduct watchdog activities** and hold institutions accountable;

- **Increasing the capacity to foster citizen participation** in consultation processes, contributing to more transparent and accountable governance;
- **Developing new tools** for strengthening human rights, democratic values and the rule of law.

Thus, the project will additionally contribute to the following Programme indicators:

Indicators	Programme level targets*	Requirements for Applicants
14. Number of supported CSOs with a new or improved organisational policy on fundraising	15	All projects based on large grants must select and report against **at least one indicator.**
15. Number of CSO staff who have completed a training course	400	

Important!	For **detailed information on the indicators** (definitions, measurement, etc.), please consult the *Programme Indicators Guidance,* document available at www.eeacivilsocietyfund.ro An **Organizational Development Matrix** (self-assessment tool) is available at https://app.crestem.ong/. Applicants are encouraged to use it to assess their organisational capacity and, where relevant, include tailored capacity-building objective and activities in their applications. **Costs for equipment under organisational development** are eligible only if they directly support the organisational development objective and results described in the project application and comply with the eligibility rules set out in Section 4.2: Eligible expenditure. In case the projects contributed also to diversifying funding sources, the amount raised through fundraising activities during the project duration must be spent for the cause it was raised and in accordance with CSF principles and values. At the end of the project, it will have to be submitted by the respective organisation a declaration in which it will be specified the size of the raised amount, the aim for which it is going to be spent and the acknowledgement that the funds will be spent according to this aim.

3.7. Monitoring and rapid response mechanism

The Monitoring and Rapid Response Mechanism is a Programme level instrument available for projects based **exclusively on large grants**. It is designed as an exceptional and adaptive tool to respond to unforeseen developments arising during project implementation that could not reasonably have been anticipated at the application stage. This approach aims to strengthen the ability of supported CSOs to protect civic space effectively, transparently and in a timely manner. **Thus, between 3% and 5% of the total project budget may be allocated to monitoring and rapid response actions** (addressing developments that affect civic space and the Programme's areas of intervention in Romania, in particular democracy, rule of law, human rights, inclusion, organisational resilience, including actions to advance climate action and a just green transition).

Rapid Response actions do not need to be defined in detail at the application stage. They may be implemented only when an unforeseen situation arises during project implementation that requires immediate action and falls within the Programme's objectives. Such actions do not have to be directly linked to pre-planned project activities but must respond to emerging developments, risks, restrictions or decisions occurring in the public, policy or civic space that require timely intervention within the Programme's areas of intervention.

Type of possible rapid response activities (non-exhaustive list):

- targeted, time-limited support to activists, communities or vulnerable groups facing risks linked to their civic engagement (e.g. emergency counselling, temporary relocation, security or protection measures etc.)
- urgent legal, advocacy or communication measures related to the protection of civic space, fundamental rights, environmental justice, participation, democracy or rule of law;
- rapid monitoring, data collection, documentation, or reporting on legislative, policy, administrative, or social developments that emerge during project implementation and could not have been anticipated;
- short-term mobilisation, coalition-building or watchdog actions triggered by sudden developments affecting target groups, climate and environmental protection, public discourse etc.

Use of the mechanism is subject to the FO's approval. The request for approval shall describe the triggering situation, the urgency, the proposed actions, and the expected results. The FO will carry out a fast-track assessment to verify the proposed actions' alignment with the Programme objectives, the eligibility of the actions and associated costs, and compliance with the Programme rules. **If no rapid-response action has been triggered and no such need has emerged by the midpoint/ late stage of project implementation, the corresponding resources may be reallocated to other eligible project activities** to bring added value, to strengthen project results or sustainability (also subject to FO approval).

3.8. Information and communication activities

When developing project proposals, the Applicants should describe information and communication actions aiming to create awareness of the project and its objectives, any bilateral cooperation with entities in Iceland, Liechtenstein and/or Norway, as well as of the implementation, results and the impact of support from the Donors to the project. Applicants should consider the following minimal obligatory requirements that have to be planned, developed, budgeted, implemented and reported to the FO:

- to provide information to relevant audiences and stakeholders on the existence of the project, its objectives, progress and results, as well as the support from the Programme and Donor support;
- to clearly highlight the contributions from Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants, and emphasize the EEA Civil Society Fund as an integral part of the EEA and Norway Grants;
- to emphasize any bilateral cooperation with entities from the Donor States (DS);
- to ensure that those taking part in the project have been informed of the funding from the Programme and the Donor States;
- **to make information about the project available on the web and/or on social media**, in accordance with the web requirements established the EEA Civil Society Fund **Communication and Design Manual**;
- to ensure that partnership agreements between the Project Promoter and any Donor project Partners contain an obligation of the Partner to provide information on their involvement and the

results of the project to relevant audiences and stakeholders in the Donor State. Information about the project shall be available on the website and/or the social media channels of the Partner;

- **for projects with a budget larger than € 100,000 and whose project finances a physical object, infrastructure or construction:** to put up a billboard at the site during implementation and replace it with a permanent commemorative plaque no later than six months after completion, ensuring both comply with the requirements and designs set out in the EEA Civil Society Fund **Communication and Design Manual**;
- to provide the FO with at least **one video** and a **selection of at least 10 representative photos** from project activities, all with a minimum resolution of **1920x1080p** (Full HD), optimized for web and digital platforms.

! Important	Applicants should describe how they will fulfil all these minimal requirements in the Application form (Annex 1), under A2 Information and Communication, and budget them accordingly, if the case. The proposed information and communication actions should be closely connected and adapted to the project activities. All information and communication materials related to projects carried out with CSF support must be in line with the EEA Civil Society Fund Communication and Design Manual, available at www.eeacivilsocietyfund.ro. Please note that, if the Application is selected for funding, Applicants shall develop a Communication Plan in a format to be provided by the FO. During project implementation, the Fund Operator may, in well justified exceptional cases, waive the requirement for information and communication activities if these could jeopardise the project or put stakeholders at risk.

4. PROJECT BUDGETING RULES

4.1. Principles of project budgeting by grant type

Financial management is not just about keeping accounting records. It is an important part of project management and must not be seen as a separate activity. This chapter is supplemented by the provisions of Annex 2b – Guidelines for budgeting, which forms an integral part of the Guidelines for Applicants. In the event of discrepancies between this Guidelines and Annex 2b – Guidelines for budgeting, the provisions of Annex 2b shall prevail. Depending on the type of grant, expenditure will be reimbursed as follows:

Large Grants		
Category of cost	**Budgeting/reporting method**	**Required documents**
Project personnel	Unit cost	Timesheets, activity report
Other costs than personnel costs	Real costs	Supporting documents (contracts, invoices, proof of payment, deliverables, etc.)
Indirect costs	Flat rate (15% of personnel costs)	No specific supporting documents required

Thus, for the personnel involved in the project, unit costs established at the beginning of the project will be used. The unit cost for each individual will be determined by dividing the most recently documented annual

gross cost (from the employment contract / addendum) by **1,720 hours for full-time employees**, or by a corresponding proportion of 1,720 hours for part-time employees.

This figure of 1,720 is based on the European Commission's average weekly working hours multiplied by 52 weeks, minus annual paid leave and the average number of public holidays per year. This figure may be used for all full-time employees and is based on a 40-hour working week.

"Most recent" annual gross cost means that the latest available data must be used. However, these do not need to correspond to a calendar or financial year. The important requirement is that the data cover a 12-month period (i.e. the 12 months preceding the submission of the funding application). Annual gross costs may be based on the actual costs of the individual concerned. They may also be based on the average costs of a larger group of employees, for example those performing similar work, in order to determine a unit cost for new staff members.

At the reporting stage, it will not be necessary to demonstrate the actual cost through payslips/ bank statements for each cost item, but rather to prove the implementation of the activity (e.g. timesheets confirming the number of units worked).

Indirect costs are budgeted and reported based on salary costs as the calculation base. Therefore, **a percentage of 15% of reported salary costs will be applied.** No supporting documents will be required at the reporting stage.

The remaining budget categories shall be budgeted taking into account that they will be reported as actually incurred costs, supported by supporting documents (contracts, invoices, bank statements, etc.).

Small Grants. For projects whose total value does not exceed €25,000, a simplified budgeting/reporting method applies:

- Mechanism: direct staff costs (based on unit costs) are budgeted.
- 100% rate: all other project costs (equipment, logistics, travel, indirect costs etc.) will be covered by 100% flat rate applied to direct staff costs.
- Calculation example: if the direct staff budget amounts to €12,500, the beneficiary will automatically receive an additional of €12,500 for the remaining activities, without the need to justify its use through invoices.

Errors in determining staff costs, may lead to a reduction in the flat-rate amount. During the evaluation & contracting stages, it will be checked whether direct staff costs are adequate for achieving the project results.

Although supporting documents are not required for the costs covered by the flat-rate amount, the promoter must be able to demonstrate through physical evidence (photos, participant lists, deliverables, etc.) that the related activities have taken place.

4.2. Eligible expenditure

Eligible expenditures of projects are those actually incurred by the Project Promoter and/or the project Partner, as well as the expenses covered by simplified cost options (unit costs and flat rates) which meet the following criteria:

• they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the Grant Contract;
• they are incurred no later than the final date of eligibility of costs at the Programme level which is 30 April 2031;
• they relate to the subject of the Grant Contract, and they are indicated in the detailed budget of the project;

• they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
• they are used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective(s) of the project and its expected outcome/s, in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
• they are identifiable and verifiable, through being recorded in the accounting records of the Project Promoter and determined according to the applicable accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles;
• they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social security legislation.

! Important	• Where reimbursement of expenditures takes place on the basis of **unit costs** the actions constituting the basis for reimbursements are to be carried out between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the Grant Contract. • Where reimbursement of expenditures takes place on the basis of **flat rate**, the basis costs must be incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the Grant Contract. • Please note that the inclusion of a cost in the project budget approved by the Fund Operator cannot be considered as confirmation of eligibility of that expenditure item.

Expenditures are considered to be incurred when the cost has been invoiced, paid, and the goods delivered or the services and works performed. By way of exception, costs for which an invoice was issued in the last month of the project's eligibility period are considered incurred within the eligibility period if they are paid by the end of the next month after the final date of eligibility. Overheads and the depreciation of equipment are considered to have been incurred at the time they are recorded in the accounting records of the Project Promoter and/or Partner(s).

The internal accounting and auditing procedures of the Project Promoter and Partner(s) must allow for the direct reconciliation of expenditures and revenues recorded in the project's analytical accounting/ cost centers with the amounts reported in the project's financial statements on the project and supporting documents.

Direct costs. The eligible direct costs for a project are those costs identified by the Project Promoter and/or its Partner(s), in accordance with general accounting principles and standard internal rules, as specific costs directly linked to the implementation of the project and which can therefore be directly recorded in the project's analytical accounting/cost center.

The following direct costs are eligible only if they comply with the eligibility principles set out above:

• personnel costs allocated to the project;
• travel and subsistence allowances for personnel and volunteers taking part in the project, if they are in line with the Project Promoter's and project Partner's usual practices on travel costs;
• costs related to new or second-hand equipment, provided that the equipment is an integral and necessary component for achieving the project objectives
• costs of consumables and supplies, if they are identifiable and assigned to the project;
• costs entailed by other contracts awarded by the Project Promoter and/or project Partner for the purposes of carrying out the project, provided that the awarding complies with the applicable rules on public procurement;

• costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the Grant Contract.

! Important	Costs related to reconstruction, renovation, or refurbishment of real estate **shall not exceed 50%** of the eligible direct cost of the project. If these costs exceed € 50,000, the PP must take all reasonable measures to ensure that the relevant immovable property is used for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for at least three years after the completion of the project.

As a general rule, for procurement and contract award procedures under grant agreements, national and European Union legislation shall be observed. For purchases with **a value of € 15,000 or higher**, the Project Promoter/Partner shall invite at least three suppliers/service providers to submit offers. The contract should be awarded to the bid offering the best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate). The entire selection procedure should be documented.

Indirect costs are all eligible costs that cannot be directly attributed to the project. They may not include any eligible direct costs.

On a case-by-case basis, in case of Partners that are international organisations, or bodies or agencies thereof, indirect costs may be identified in accordance with the relevant rules established by such organisations.

4.3. Excluded costs

The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

• interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges (e.g. costs for loans taken in connection with the project, penalties / taxes related to late payment of invoices, penalties and interest for late payment of contributions and taxes to the state budget, etc.);
• charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to the special accounts of the project requested by the Fund Operator, provided they are mentioned in the Grant Contract and the costs of the financial services imposed by the Grant Contract;
• costs related to purchase of land or real estate: **ONLY** the costs related to reconstruction, renovation, or refurbishment of real estate can be considered eligible, but shall not exceed 50% of the eligible direct cost of the project;
• costs related to reconstruction, renovation or refurbishment of real estate are not considered eligible for small projects;
• provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
• losses due to exchange rate differences;
• recoverable VAT, according to the legal regulations in force;
• costs that are covered by other sources; double financing must be avoided (e.g. if the full value of a previously purchased equipment was financed from another grant, the depreciation of this equipment cannot be the eligible expenditure within the project);
• fines, penalties (ex. fines imposed by public bodies due to the lack of security measures on the site of a building, parking fines, fines for late payment) and costs of litigation, except where litigation is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project;

- excessive or reckless expenditure (these must be taken in relation to the principle of eligibility of expenses according to which they must be "proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project" - (e.g. business travel class, purchasing state of the art equipment where cheaper options would cover the same need).

5. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND PARTNERS

Territorial scope: the Programme aims to support **Romanian CSO projects in Romania**, without prejudice to actions that are carried out in Donor or Beneficiary States or Border States with Romania under partnerships created to implement the selected projects.

In exceptional and well justified cases, there could be allowed initiatives to participate/ organize organisational development activities in other EU countries than the one already mentioned above.

5.1. Eligible Applicants

A. Eligible Applicants are **non-governmental and non-profit organizations**, legally established in Romania, organized and operated in accordance with the relevant Romanian laws, respectively:

- Associations, foundations or federations legally established in Romania, having acquired either Romanian legal personality or the status of foreign legal entities recognized in Romania, and operating under the Government Ordinance 26/2000 and/or the Law 21/1924 on associations and foundations (with subsequent amendments and completions), or
- National Red Cross Society in Romania, established under the Law 139/1995 (amended and by the Law 524/2004) and its structures with legal personality.

Voluntary[6], non-profit organisations, established as legal entities in Romania, with a non-commercial purpose falling outside the above categories may be considered eligible on a case-by-case basis if they are, and fulfil the requirements described below at sections B and C and if they are not in the situations described in sections D and E.

B. Additionally, Applicants shall meet the following requirements:
(a) only in case of Applicants for small grants: have an average turnover of maximum 280,000 RON in the last three financial years for which accounting documents are available, and
(b) abide by the principles of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights for all, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and
(c) have the capacity, according to their statutes, to act in the field addressed by the project, and

[6] i.e. have a voluntary nature, namely it should the result of an initiative of association arising from the will of the founding members, and that the capacity of associate should not be based on a legal obligation but on the member's own will.

(d)	are independent of the local, regional and national government and other public entities[7], and
(e)	are independent of political parties, and
(f)	are independent of profit-making entities (commercial entities)[8], and
(g)	do not promote a religious doctrine, mission or proselytism related to the beliefs of a particular faith (beyond basic religious/cultural awareness raising), and
(h)	have transparent structures and governing bodies which are accountable to their members and donors, and
(i)	are directly responsible for designing and managing the project and do not act as an intermediary.

C. Additionally, Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria, applicable to the past 5 years:	
(a)	have not promoted or engaged in documents or actions that contravene PSEAH (prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment) standards;
(b)	have not promoted or engaged in documents or actions of sexual harassment, moral harassment in the workplace, or any form of harassment, sexual assault, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation, discrimination, as well as any other form of abuse or attempted abuse against a person in a position of vulnerability, in a relationship of power or trust, or any form of physical, psychological, or coercive aggression or violence;
(c)	have not promoted or engaged in documents or actions that have violated or aimed to restrict fundamental human rights, as defined by the Romanian Constitution and the jurisprudence of the Romanian Constitutional Court, national legislation, and other international treaties to which Romania is a party in the field of fundamental human rights, at the level of the European Union and the Council of Europe, including through the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights;

[7] To verify if an organisation fulfils this conditions, the FO's assessment will mainly include the following aspects:
- public institutions and/or public authorities do not represent more than half of the members with voting rights within the organization;
- public institutions and/or public authorities, or their representatives acting as natural persons on behalf of such entities, do not hold more than half of the voting power within the Board of Directors or the General Assembly;
- the purpose and objectives set out in the statues are established autonomously by the organization, without being subordinated to or limited to supporting a public institution and/or public authorities;
- the organisational operational structures and their strategic decisions, the planning and implementation of its activities are neither influenced by public institutions / public authorities nor conditioned by the administrative priorities of public institutions and/or public authorities.

[8] To verify if an organisation fulfils this conditions, the FO's assessment will mainly include the following aspects:
- profit making entities do not represent more than half of the members with voting rights within the organization;
- profit making entities, or their representatives acting as natural persons (such as owners, directors, or employees acting on behalf of these companies), do not hold more than half of the voting power within the Board of Directors or the General Assembly;
- the purpose and objectives set out in the statues are established autonomously by the organization, without being subordinated to or limited to supporting the commercial interests, market positions, profitability or promotion of any profit-making entity;
- the organisational operational structures and their strategic decisions, the planning and implementation of its activities are neither influenced by profit-making entity nor conditioned by the administrative priorities of profit-making entity.

(d)	have not promoted or engaged in acts or actions of discrimination, including by supporting a cause or making public statements that have discriminated against a person, a group of persons, or a community based on race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social category, beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, chronic disease, HIV infection, or belonging to any other disadvantaged category;
(e)	have not promoted or engaged in public behaviour that fosters nationalist-chauvinist propaganda, incitement to hatred, violence, and discrimination, or behaviour aimed at or resulting in the violation of dignity or the creation of an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive atmosphere against a person, a group of persons, or a community, directly or indirectly related to their belonging to a certain race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social category, beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, chronic disease, HIV infection, or any other disadvantaged category;
(f)	have not used, promoted, or displayed in their activities or in public spaces symbols, messages, or ideologies associated with organizations, movements, or extremist groups prohibited by the national legislation.

The eligibility criteria will be verified by the FO, in accordance with the following available sources:

1. the existence of a decision or judgment by an authority, public institution, or court that establishes and/or sanctions the Applicant for violating the documents or actions mentioned in section C letters a)-f);
2. the existence of a complaint from other CSOs indicating that the Applicant engaged in documents or actions mentioned in section C letters a)-f);
3. the existence of activities or projects through which the Applicant carried out documents or actions mentioned in section C letters a)-f);
4. the initiation, support, or signing of position papers, endorsements, petitions, or requests addressed to authorities, public institutions, or other natural or legal persons through which the organization engages in documents or actions mentioned in section C letters a)-f);
5. the existence of statements made by the Applicant and/or its representatives in the public space, including on social media or in mass media, through which they engage in documents or actions mentioned in section C letters a)-f) – for this criterion to be considered, the statements must be confirmed by at least three verifiable public sources, such as online press, social media platforms or other recognized publications;
6. any other verifiable and credible public source, including social media, demonstrating the violation of the documents and actions mentioned in section C letters a)-f) – for example, but not limited to, reports from national, European or international CSOs, independent journalistic investigations, etc.

The FO is not limited in its compliance analysis solely to the existence of a decision or judgment by an authority, public institution, or court that establishes and/or sanctions the Applicant. The FO has the right to base its decision on the verification sources mentioned above.

The eligibility criteria mentioned in section C, will be verified only for those proposals that are recommended for funding after the technical and financial evaluation, and before the decision is taken by the Selection Committee. In case an Applicant does not meet the additional eligibility criteria, the project will not be proposed for financing.

D. Not eligible Applicants
(a) any legal entities who do not meet all criteria mentioned in sections A, B & C;
(b) political parties;
(c) religious institutions (religious cults, religious associations established under the Law 489/2006 on freedom of religion and general regime of cults);
(d) professional associations (the associations which makes conditional the exercise of a certain profession with the membership in the association, and the purpose and objectives of the association are to further the specific interests of its members only);
(e) social partners (trade unions and employers' organizations);
(f) profit-distributing cooperatives.

E. Applicants will be considered non-eligible and will not be awarded grants if they fall under one of the supplementary situations below:
(a) are bankrupt, are in the administration of a judicial authority or are being winding up, have suspended the activity, are subject of proceedings concerning these issues or are in a similar situation following the application of a similar procedure provided for in the national legislation or regulations in force;
(b) are guilty of serious professional misconduct proven by any means the FO can justify;
(c) have not fulfilled obligations related to the payment of social security contributions or taxes to the state budget in accordance with the national legislation;
(d) have been the subject of a final decision *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization or any other illegal activity to the detriment of financial interests, without the evidence that corrective action has been taken in this respect in recent years;
(e) organisations from which the amount due was not recovered, following a final court decision in connection with the NGO Fund Programme 2009-2014.

! Important	Each Applicant is required to submit a Declaration of eligibility (Annex 3) stating that the Applicant meets all the eligibility criteria outlined above. The Declaration of eligibility shall be completed, signed with a wet or qualified electronic signature by the legal representative of the Applicant, dated, scanned (if needed) and uploaded as a digital document within the Application form. For projects selected for funding, Applicants will be required to submit an updated Declaration of eligibility. The FO reserves the right to request any supporting documentation to verify the information provided in the Declaration. The eligibility of each Applicant or Partner will be assessed on an individual basis, considering the specific documents presented. The FO reserves the right to evaluate each situation *in concreto* and to make a final decision on eligibility based on its own assessment. If the FO determines that the eligibility criteria are not fulfilled, the Applicant and/or Partner will be informed of the rationale behind the decision.

5.2. Eligible Project Partners

Projects may be implemented in partnership with project **Partners.** Project Partners shall share a common social goal with the Applicant, which is to be realised through the implementation of the project. Partners shall be actively involved in and effectively contribute to the implementation of the project.

Partnerships are not mandatory, but highly encouraged, especially with Partners from the Donor States. The following legally established entities are eligible to be project Partners: **any non-governmental organisations, public entities** (such as local and central public authorities, public institutions / agencies, decentralized governmental public services, territorial administrative units, universities, etc.) as well as **private entities** (commercial or non-commercial), **established as a legal person** either in: **Romania, Donor States** (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein), **Beneficiary States** (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia) and/or **Countries outside the European Economic Area that have a common border with Romania** (Moldova, Ukraine and Serbia), any **international intergovernmental organisation** or body or agency thereof. **Informal groups** are considered eligible project Partners provided they meet the following requirements:

(a) their members are legal residents or based in Donor States, Beneficiary States or a country outside the European Economic Area that has a common border with the Beneficiary State;

(b) they are not established or operating with the purpose of personal profit;

(c) membership in the group is voluntary and non-discriminatory;

(d) their purpose aligns with the objective of the EEA CSF;

(e) 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

(f) they are represented by one single person, with legal residency in the Beneficiary State, who signs the partnership agreement on behalf of the group.

Only the following entities are eligible to receive funding as project Partners under the Programme:

- **non-commercial private entities, including CSOs**, that meet the eligibility requirements set for the Applicants under section B & C and are not in the situations specified under section E a)-e)
- **international intergovernmental organisations** or agencies or bodies there of;
- **public entities;**
- **informal groups that meet the requirements above; in this case, the Project Promoter shall be the formal recipient of the project grant covering the activities of the informal group. The project Grant Contract and partnership agreement shall in these cases contain provisions to this effect.**

Commercial entities may participate as Partners in the project; however, **they are not eligible to receive funding** from the grant, though they may contribute to the project activities.

The **Declaration of eligibility** submitted by the Applicant with the project proposal will also certify the fulfilment by the Partners of the eligibility conditions specified in this section.

In case of projects implemented in partnership with one or several entities, it is mandatory for the Applicants to submit with the Application form a **Partnership Declaration** (Annex 4) signed with the Partner/s (including Partners from Donor States, Beneficiary States, Countries outside the European Economic Area that have a common border with Romania). The Partnership Declaration shall be in English in the case of projects implemented in partnerships with entities from countries other than Romania and Republic of Moldova.

The Applicant coordinates the implementation of the project and, in case it is selected for funding, will represent the Partners and will sign the Grant Contract. Eligibility of costs generated by the Partners must respect the same rules that apply to the costs generated by the Applicant.

! Important	**A project partnership shall not be mistaken for sub-contracting.** Project Partners always share a common economic or social goal throughout the implementation of the project and cooperate throughout the entire project realisation. Sub-contracting is aimed at one or several specific deliverables, e.g. services or equipment to implement a specific activity within the project. Sub-contracting shall always be carried out based on an appropriate service or purchase contract, according to the applicable public procurement rules as defined in section 4. Project budgeting rules

5.3. Limitations

An Applicant shall submit **maximum two project proposals for the Call #5**. There are no restrictions regarding the number of project proposals submitted in which an organization participates as Partner.

In case an Applicant submits more than two project proposals under the Call #5, the FO will request the Applicant to indicate the applications that will enter the administrative and eligibility verification to comply with the limitation established. If the Applicant does not respond in 5 working days from the receipt of the FO request, all its applications will be rejected and none of them will enter the administrative and eligibility verification.

6. HOW TO APPLY: PREPARATION, SUBMISSION AND REGISTRATION

Only applications submitted before the deadline in the prescribed format with all the annexes and in an electronic version via platform https://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro/ will be evaluated. To apply it is necessary to follow the next steps:

(1) Download from the Programme website	**Guidelines for Applicants and all Annexes:** Annex 1 – Application form Annex 2a – Project budget Annex 2b – Guidelines for budgeting Annex 3 – Declaration of eligibility Annex 4 – Partnership Declaration (if the case) **Supporting documents:** Programme Indicators Guidance EEA Civil Society Fund Communication and Design Manual Guidelines for using the online platform Organizational Development Matrix (https://app.crestem.ong/) Toolkit for integrating intersectionality in project design
(2) Develop the Application	The project must be formulated clearly and concisely, based on a coherent intervention logic that addresses the identified problem through precisely defined and quantified beneficiaries. The detailed project implementation plan, including the timeline, detailed budget, communication plan and capacity of organizations and sustainability of the project are part of the Application.

	Applicants should carefully select the relevant Outcome and Output indicators from the tables provided at section 3.5. In drafting the application, the working version (Word format) of the Application form it can be used. Please read **Annex 2b – Guidelines for Budgeting** carefully before completing your financial proposal, as the full project budget must be uploaded as an annex including **all worksheets**. In the main Application form, you should only enter the **requested grant amount** expressed in **Euro**.
(3) Submit the Application	Create/ log in into your account on the application platform. Take note that the Romanian CSO Partner must also have an account on the online platform. Fill in the Application on the online platform. Make sure that all compulsory annexes (2a, 3 and 4 – if the case) are uploaded in the accepted formats. **For Annex 4 – Partnership Declaration**, in case of multiple declarations, they must be uploaded as a **single PDF document combining all of them** or as a single **compressed archive**. **Validate the final form of the Application before the deadline, 08 October 2026, 16:00 (Romania time).** Before validation, please ensure that all compulsory annexes have been included. Once validated, you will be able to view the entire application and the uploaded annexes, but **no further changes or edits can be made**. If you identify any issues after validation, but before the deadline, please contact the FO immediately.

! Important	The final version of the Application submitted for evaluation must be completed, have the mandatory annexes uploaded, and be validated on the application platform before the deadline. Not uploading the mandatory annexes leads to the exclusion of the application during the administrative compliance and eligibility assessment. **Only** the information included in the **Application and in the compulsory annexes** will be considered for evaluation.

A detailed procedure for online application is described in the *Guidelines for using the online platform* available on the Programme website.

The Application will be filled in Romanian (the only exceptions are the sections indicating otherwise and the Partnership Declaration in case of a foreign Partner). The Application is complete only when it contains all following documents:

Document	Submission through https://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro/
Application form	Filled in the platform
Project budget (Annex 2a)	Uploaded as annex in EXCEL format
Declaration of eligibility (Annex 3)	Uploaded as PDF or JPEG format
Partnership Declaration (if the case) (Annex 4)	Uploaded as PDF or JPEG format or as a compressed archive (ZIP, RAR) in case of multiple declarations

A registration number will automatically be generated once the first information of the Application is saved to the platform. This number will further be used in the correspondence between the FO and the Applicant.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE, ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

7.1. Evaluation and project selection process

All applications received under this Call for project proposals will enter the evaluation and selection procedure as follows:

1. Verification of administrative compliance and eligibility	• Verification of administrative compliance and eligibility. • Requests for clarifications (if the case). • Informing the Applicants on the results of the administrative and eligibility verification.
2. Technical and financial evaluation	• Applications that are compliant with the criteria in Step 1 are randomly assigned to two impartial evaluators. • Applications are scored based on the evaluation criteria. • According to the total average scores, a ranking list is prepared.
3. Selection Committee	• The Selection Committee approves a list of projects to be financed, conditions (if existing), reserve list and/or rejected applications. • The Selection Committee provides the Steering Committee with its recommendation.
4. Steering Committee	• The Steering Committee confirms the decisions of the Selection Committee and justifies any changes (if the case). • The Steering Committee makes the final decision on the list of projects to be financed, reserve list and/or rejected applications.
5. Announcing the results	• Applicants are informed about the final decision of the Steering Committee.

To ensure transparency, the FO publishes the lists with the applications received, as well as the list of applications entering each evaluation stage.

7.2. Verification of administrative compliance and eligibility

All Applications submitted within the deadline will be assessed according to the administrative compliance and eligibility criteria, based on a Yes/No grid. Below is the grid that shall be used for the verification of administrative compliance and eligibility:

1. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE	**Yes**	**No**
The project application includes all the annexes required for the current Call for proposals:		
1.1. The online Application Form (Annex 1) is filled in Romanian, including the summary in English and is complete (all compulsory fields are filled in)		
1.2. The project Budget is filled in, respects the format from Annex 2a, is provided in Euro and is uploaded (in Excel format)		

1.3. The Declaration of eligibility (Annex 3) is filled in Romanian, signed with a wet or qualified electronic signature by the legal representative of the Applicant, dated, scanned (if needed) and is uploaded		
1.4. If applicable, the Partnership Declaration/s (Annex 4) is/are filled in, signed with a wet or qualified electronic signature by the legal representatives of the Applicant and Partner/s, dated, scanned (if needed) and is/are uploaded		
The assessment of eligibility will be conducted only for the applications that are compliant with the administrative criteria.		
2. ELIGIBILITY	**Yes**	**No**
2.1. The Applicant is eligible		
2.2. The Partner/s is/are eligible		
2.3. The project falls into the types of grants (amount, duration) that can be awarded within the current Call for proposals		

The FO may request clarifications when the information provided is not clear enough and sufficient to allow an objective assessment of the administrative compliance and eligibility of the application. The clarification shall be submitted by the Applicant in no more than 2 working days from the FO's notification. The information exchange will take place on the application platform. Please note that Annex 2a, Annex 3 and Annex 4 (if the case) cannot be requested in case they are missing from the submitted application.

! Important	In case of inconsistencies between the amounts mentioned in the Application form and those included in the Project budget (Annex 2a), those from the Project budget will be taken into consideration. Should any Application be submitted with sections containing unintelligible sequences of letters and/or numbers, the FO reserves the right to consider them invalid applications and exclude them from the evaluation process.

The Applicants will be notified via e-mail once the result of the administrative compliance and eligibility assessment is available in their organization's account.

Applicants may **appeal the decision over compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria** within **10 calendar days** from the notification date of the results, to apel5csf@fdsc.ro as follows:

- the appeal will be formulated in writing and will include the reason for which such a request is well justified;
- no new documents may be submitted in support of the case, and the content of the initial submitted application cannot be modified.

The FO will take into consideration only the appeals submitted by the legal representative of the Applicant or by the person empowered on his behalf. The FO's decision after appeal is final and will be communicated to the Applicant within **15 working days** from the receipt of the appeal. No further appeal on the same application could be formulated afterwards.

7.3. Technical and financial evaluation

Applications that meet the administrative compliance and eligibility criteria will enter the technical and financial evaluation and be scored on a scale from 0 to 100, by two impartial evaluators. The evaluation process is conducted against specific criteria, each being assigned a score. The final score of each

application is calculated as the arithmetic average of the points given by both evaluators. The grid for technical and financial evaluation is outlined below:

Dimensions and criteria of evaluation	Maximum score	
	Small grants	Large grants
1. The project relevance and coherence	**40**	**35**
1.1. The project demonstrates a clear contribution to the Programme and Call objectives and to the predefined Outcome and Outputs, by effectively integrating the project approach and expected changes described in the Guidelines for Applicants	15	12
1.2. The problem/ need addressed is clearly justified /documented with data, and strictly aligned with the Call objectives	5	7
1.3. The project addresses the problem through a clear and coherent intervention logic between objectives, activities and results, while demonstrating synergies with other initiatives	10	8
1.4. The beneficiaries and the other target groups are clearly identified, quantified, and relevant for the Call objectives	10	8
2. Project design, methodology and feasibility of the project	**40**	**30**
2.1 The project objectives are specific, measurable and realistic/achievable through the proposed activities	10	4
2.2. The activities are sufficiently described, effective and suitable for the beneficiaries and other target groups; the proposed methods are the most appropriate to achieve the expected results/change and the schedule is realistic	17	9
2.3. The project demonstrates a multi-layered approach (integrating direct intervention with organisational development), includes a monitoring and rapid response mechanism, and mainstreams gender equality, while addressing intersectionality where relevant	N/A	6
2.4. The target values for the Programme indicators are realistic and selected accordingly in relation to the proposed activities	5	4
2.5. Implementation risks are identified, and the proposed mitigation/operational response measures are appropriate.	4	3
2.6. The project proposes an efficient and innovative communication approach that ensures the visibility of results and follows the Programme's visual identity rules	4	4
3. Multiplication effect & Sustainability	**N/A**	**10**
3.1. The project demonstrates the potential to generate systemic change at the sector or beneficiary/ target groups level and a multiplication effect beyond the project duration	N/A	6
3.2. The identified conditions and proposed activities are directed towards the achievement of the project outcome/s (including by identifying and generating/ attracting the necessary sources of funding)	N/A	4
4. The budget of the project	**10**	**10**

4.1. The budget is well-justified, economical, and correlated with the proposed activities	8	8
4.2. The budget is correctly filled in and complies with the Program's budgeting and cost eligibility rules	2	2
5. Applicant and Partners	**10**	**15**
5.1. The role of the Partner/s within the proposed intervention, the necessity and the added value of the partnership are well-justified	N/A	3
5.2. Through the proposed partnership, the project contributes to the consolidation of Bilateral Relations (projects with Partners from Donor States)	N/A	2
5.3. Applicant and Partners (if the case) and the proposed project team have the experience*, expertise, motivation and capacity for implementing the project **For newly established organizations or those with no prior experience it will be taken into consideration the motivation and the experience of the proposed project team*	5	5
5.4. The project team structure is adequate for the implementation of the project (number of people involved, roles and responsibilities, management)	5	5
Total	**100**	**100**

! Important	In case a project receives **less than 25 points in the "Relevance and coherence" evaluation dimension, it will be excluded from further evaluation.** **65 out of 100 points is the minimum score** for each Application to be selected and recommended for funding. In case **the difference between the scores given by the two experts is more than 30%** of the higher score, the Application will be scored by a third impartial and independent evaluator. The average total score of the two closest scores shall be used for the ranking of the projects. If the score given by a third expert would not in any way result in recommending the application for financing, a third expert will not be appointed. In case two applications have the same average score, the one with the higher score in the "Relevance and coherence" evaluation dimension will be ranked higher. If this criterion does not allow for differentiation, the following criteria will be applied in order: "Project design, methodology and feasibility of the project"; "The budget of the project"; and "Applicant and Partners".

7.4. Selection Committee

Following the technical and financial evaluation, a ranking list will result based on the average scores awarded by the impartial evaluators.

The ranking list will be submitted by the FO to a **Selection Committee** consisting of independent experts and representatives of the FO Consortium with relevant expertise and experience. At this stage, representatives of FMO and the Embassies of the Donor States to Romania are invited as observers. Also, representatives from relevant institutions (ministries, governmental agencies etc.) may be invited as observers.

The **Selection Committee** will review the ranking lists and the recommendations made by the evaluators and will recommend to the FO the applications to receive grants, within the amount available for the Call for project proposals. The **Selection Committee** may amend and modify the ranking of the project applications in justified cases.

The conclusions of the **Selection Committee** may include conditions, clarifications and a reserve list with the project applications that are recommended to receive grants but cannot be supported at the time of the decision due to lack of funding.

7.5. Steering Committee

A **Steering Committee** of the Programme is responsible for taking the final decision concerning the selection of applications. The Steering Committee may modify the decision of the Selection Committee in justified cases. If such a modification results in a rejection of a project that otherwise would have been approved, the affected Applicant will be informed in writing about the justification for the modification.

The decision of the Steering Committee is definitive and is not subject to appeal.

7.6. Announcing the results

Once the final decision is taken, the result of the selection process for both successful and unsuccessful Applicants will be accessible, in the organisation's online platform account (the average score obtained for each evaluation criterion and the total average score of their application). Applicants will be informed via e-mail on the fact that the selection results are available in the organisation's account.

Upon request, unsuccessful Applicants and Applicants whose applications are on the reserve list will be provided with more detailed feedback on the assessment of their application. Applicants who have projects proposed for funding will be informed via an award letter, on the conditions they have to fulfil to sign Grant Contracts.

The final list of selected projects will be uploaded on the Programme's website only upon the signature of all Grant Contracts for the Call.

7.7. Complaints Committee

A **Complaints Committee** is established at the level of the Programme and is composed of three members. The objective of the Complaints Committee is to provide an accessible, transparent and consistent mechanism for complainants to express concerns regarding a supposed occurrence of mismanagement at the level of the Programme.

The decisions related to the administrative compliance and eligibility verification as well as the decisions related to the selection process are not subject to verification by the Complaints Committee.

8. CONTRACTING

All Applicants whose projects are selected for funding will receive an award letter outlining the next steps required for contracting. The FO will also ask for specific documents to be submitted prior to the signature of the Grant Contract.

! Important	**All the Grant Contracts and further documents elaborated during implementation shall be signed with a qualified electronic signature.** The Applicant must ensure that, upon signing the Grant Contract, the mandates of the Board of Directors are valid, updated and officially registered in the Register of

	Associations and Foundations/ or Register of Federations at the competent court. The FO will refrain from signing any contract with organisations whose mandates have expired or lack proper registration. These requirements apply equally to Partners (where applicable depending on their legal status) at the time of signing partnership agreements. Four further details regarding the validity and procedure registration of mandates in the Registers, please consult Legixplore.ONG on the platform: https://crestem.ong/ro/legixplore.

Please find below the list of the **documents necessary** for the Contract signature:

Applicant	• The certified true copy of the latest updated statute of the organization and of the corresponding final Court decision. If a consolidated version of the statute is not available, certified true copies of the initial statue and of all subsequent amendments, accompanied by the corresponding final Court decision, must be summited; • The excerpt from the Register of Associations and Foundations, in original, issued no more than 90 days before the date of its submission to the FO; • Financial statements for the last three years – only in case of Applicants for small grants; • Valid tax certificate, in original, issued by the National Agency for Fiscal Administration; • Valid organization criminal record certificate, in original, issued by the competent authorities; • A bank statement or a formal letter confirming that both the EUR and RON accounts allocated for the project are owned by the Applicant, and indicating the initial balance (a 0 initial balance for both accounts is recommended); • Declaration of eligibility (according to the format from Annex 3), in original; The FO reserves the right to request the Applicant any kind of documents in support of the Declaration; • A copy of the Partnership Agreement signed by the Applicant with the Partner/s, in case of projects implemented in partnership; • The Communication Plan (according to the format provided by the FO); • CVs of all team members
For Romanian non-commercial private entities including **CSO Partner/s (if the case)**	• A document issued by the competent authority evidencing the legal personality, registration and legal status of the entity. In case of CSO Partners, the certified true copy of the latest updated statute of the organization and of the corresponding final Court decision. If a consolidated version of the statute is not available, certified true copies of the initial statue and of all subsequent amendments, accompanied by the corresponding final Court decision, must be summited; • The excerpt from the Register of Associations and Foundations, in original, issued no more than 90 days before the date of its submission to the FO; • Valid tax certificate, in original, issued by the National Agency for Fiscal Administration;

	• Valid organization criminal record certificate, in original, issued by the competent authorities; • A bank statement or a formal letter confirming that both the EUR and RON accounts allocated for the project are owned by the Partner/s, and indicating the initial balance (a 0 initial balance for both accounts is recommended); • CVs of all team members
For Romanian informal groups	• Informal Group eligibility declaration, signed by the designated representative of the group, confirming that the group meets the eligibility criteria set out in Section 5.2 of the Call; • Copy of a valid ID card of the designated representative demonstrating legal residency in the Beneficiary State; • A document confirming the appointment of the designated representative of the informal group for the purposes of the project.
For Romanian public entities (if the case)	• Documents/mentions that prove the entity's legal personality (as the case may be, the version updated at the date of submission of the law/operating regulation/decree/decision, etc.) or indicating the number, date and name of the legislative acts published in the Romanian Official Monitor; • CVs of all team members.
For DS/ Beneficiary States/ Countries have a common border with Romania Partner(s)/ (if the case)	• Documents translated into Romanian or English (copy or original) attesting that they are legal entities, • CVs of all team members.

In the case of projects that include costs related to construction, reconstruction, renovation or refurbishment of real estate, the following documents will be requested: an updated land register excerpt (issued no more than 90 days prior to submission) attesting the right of ownership or use of the building for the entire duration of the project and at least 5 years after its completion; if the property is not registered in the land register, the Applicant must provide official documents proving the ownership or use of the building (e.g. deed of ownership, administrative act, tax record certificate, etc) accompanied by a cadastral plan or a technical description of the property. In addition, a declaration may be required regarding the maintenance of the purpose for which the building is being rehabilitated and any other documents to support the declaration, an estimate of quantities elaborated and approved according to the legislation in force, building authorization.

For all projects: to prove the eligibility conditions, additional documents may be required, if the case, during the pre-contracting period. If the Applicant fulfils all the requirements included in the letter, the FO will sign a Grant Contract with the Applicant, who will then become Project Promoter (PP) and will take the administrative lead during implementation.

9. RULES APPLICABLE FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

9.1. Reporting

Each Project Promoter must submit to the FO the following types of reports:

Project Duration	Interim 1 (At Month 12)	Interim 2 (At Month 24)	Interim 3 (At Month 36)	Final Report (At Project End)
4 – 9 Months	N/A	N/A	N/A	**Within 45 calendar days** from the end of implementation
36 – 48 Months	**Within 30 calendar days** from the end of month 12 (covers months 1–12)	**Within 30 calendar days** from the end of month 24 (covers months 13–24)	**Within 30 calendar days** from the end of month 36 (covers months 25–36)	**Within 45 calendar days** from the end of implementation (covers months 37 to end)

Interim Technical reports will contain information on the implemented activities and achieved results and, progress towards achieving indicators target values, sustainability etc.

Interim Financial reports will contain information on the expenditures made by PPs and Partners during the reported period of project implementation.

Interim payments are conditioned by the submission of interim technical and financial reports by the Project Promoter. Together with the final technical and financial reports, they will serve as the basis on which the final project balance will be calculated.

Final Report Requirements:

- **Technical Report:** must be **cumulative**, covering the entire project implementation period. However, it must specifically **detail and highlight the activities carried out during the final unreported period**, while summarizing the overall project achievements.
- **Financial Report:** must cover **only the remaining period** not previously included in the interim reports in the case of projects based on large grants; in case of projects based on small grants the report must cover the entire implementation period.

9.2. Payment's procedures

The payment system ensures a **positive financial flow** for the projects, while minimising as much as possible the risks related to difficulties/ impossibility to recover the unspent amounts from the PPs. Payments to Project Promoters will be made in Euro (to project dedicated Euro bank accounts indicated by themselves and mentioned in the Grant Contract) and reporting will be made at the InforEuro rate[9] corresponding to the month when the expense was committed/invoiced (e.g. date of the invoice not the date of the actual payment).

[9] InforEuro rate is published on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/index_en.cfm

Every Project Promoter has the obligation to open two dedicated bank accounts for the Grant Contract it signs with the FO, as follows: an Euro account in which it will receive the Grant Contract related payments in Euro from the FO and a national currency (RON) account in which they will transfer the equivalent in national currency of the funds received in the Euro account. Both accounts will be indicated in the Grant Contract.

In case of projects implemented in partnership, each Romanian project Partner that manages any amount of the grant has the obligation to open a dedicated Euro account where they will receive the grant from the Project Promoter and a dedicated national currency account (RON) for the project.

The PPs and the Romanian project Partners have to use the RON dedicated bank account for all payments related to the project implementation. As an exception, the payment of salaries related to the personnel that is not 100% allocated to the project and the payment of the indirect costs can be made from the general account of the organization, with the obligation to reconcile the transfers between accounts by the end of the month following the one in which the payments were made.

In case of projects implemented in partnership with entities whose primary location is outside Romania, it is recommended for those Partners to have two dedicated accounts for the project: one in Euro and the other in the national currency (if different from Euro). These Partners may decide not to open dedicated accounts. In both cases the Partnership Agreement should specify the Partner account/s used for the project.

Payments of the project grant to Project Promoters may take the form of advance payments, interim payments (if applicable) and payments of the final balance. The maximum amount of the advance payment as well as the number and value of the interim payments will be differentiated according to the duration of the project and will be clearly stated in the Grant Contract.

The table below summarises the main payment methods applicable within CSF Romania, based on project duration:

Project duration	Advance payment	No. of interim payments	Interim payment percentage	Maximum percentage of the balance
Between 4-9 months (including)	Up to 90%	N/A	N/A	At least 10%
Between 36-48 months (including)	Up to 30%	3 (three)	20%	At least 10%

In cases of projects that have been assessed as posing a high risk for the Programme[10], the FO may make a justified decision to change the payments scheme (reducing pre-financing or exceptionally, applying a scheme without pre-financing under which the FO reimburses Project Promoters only the amount of grant expenses verified by the FO).

The payment method shall not change in case of extension of project Grant Contracts based on addendum, unless otherwise specified in the respective addendum. As a rule:

Payments general rule		
Advance payments	**Interim payments**	**Final payment / Reimbursement by the PP**

[10] This shall be based on a risk assessment prepared and documented by the FO, considering, inter alia, the Project Promoter's previous experience and/or its administrative and financial capacity.

Payments shall be made by the FO within **10 working days** from the date of the Grant Contract signature, unless a later date has been set in the project contract.	**Payments** shall be made by the FO within **30 working days** from the date of receipt of the interim reports and payment claims.	**Payments** shall be made by the FO within **10 working days** from the date of FO acceptance of the final report and payment claim. The **reimbursement** shall be paid by the PP (in case of a negative balance) within **10 working days** from the date of receiving the notification from the FO regarding the amount to be reimbursed.

9.3. Proof of expenditure and audit

For Project Promoters and Romanian Partners an audit report will not be accepted by FO as sufficient evidence of the expenditures involved. Costs incurred by Project Promoters and project Partners shall be supported by receipted invoices, or alternatively by accounting documents of equivalent probative value. Indirect costs identified according to section 4.2 and other flat rates do not need to be supported by proof of expenditure.

A report by an independent auditor, qualified to carry out statutory audits of accounting documents, certifying that the reported costs are incurred in accordance with the Programme rules, the national law and relevant national accounting practices shall be accepted as sufficient proof of expenditure incurred for project Partners whose primary location is in one of the Donor States or project Partners that are international organisations or bodies or agencies thereof.

The FMO could organise audits and on-the-spot verification for Programme and projects and EFTA Board of Auditors/Office of Auditor General of Norway may conduct audits of the Programme and projects.

10. CONTACT DETAILS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

While the Call for proposals is open, the FO will provide support to potential Applicants through info sessions, workshops and helpdesk (via email, phone or meetings) and the publication of the most relevant FAQs. Questions related to this Call for proposals may be addressed by potential Applicants by e-mail and/ or phone by at least **7 working days prior to closing date to:**

For the Call #5
Resource Center for Roma Communities / Centrul de Resurse pentru Comunitățile de Romi
Tel: 0040 728 316 311
E-mail: apel5csf@romacenter.ro
Contact person: Radu Lăcătuș, Grants Specialist
Technical support for the online application platform: support@fdsc.ro
Programme website: www.eeacivilsocietyfund.ro

The FO will submit the answers in **5 working days** from the reception of the questions and with at least two days before the deadline.

Questions that may be relevant to other Applicants, together with the corresponding answers, will be published regularly on the Programme website.

Please check regularly the Programme website for updated information on this Call for proposals or for upcoming calls and events.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Application form **/** Annex 2a – Project budget **/** Annex 2b – Guidelines for budgeting **/** Annex 3 – Declaration of eligibility **/** Annex 4 – Partnership Declaration