Iceland
Liechtenstein
Norway

Civil Society Fund

Assessment Criteria for Project Applications under Call No. 7 for Bilateral initiatives

(May 2026)

Overview of Criteria for Expert Assessment

Criteria Group / Criterion	Maximum Points	Location in the application
1. Relevance, Purpose, Added Value and Participatory Dimension	**35**	
1.1 Relevance of the project in relation to the focus of the call, alignment with the selected outcome and output, and clarity of problem analysis	15	5. Content, 9. Summary
1.2 Understanding the needs of direct and indirect target groups and the appropriateness of the proposed solution	10	5. Content
1.3 Quality and depth of participatory approaches involving relevant target groups in the design, implementation and/or evaluation of the project	5	5. Content, 9. Summary
1.4 Expected impact and sustainability of project results, including the potential for long-term systemic change or sustainability of the partnership	5	8. Sustainability, 9. Summary
2. Project Implementation Approach and Quality of Partnership	**35**	
2.1 Appropriateness, feasibility, coherence and internal logic of planned activities in relation to defined results, including risk analysis and mitigation measures	15	5. Content, 6. Communication and Indicators, 9. Summary
2.2 Quality and feasibility of communication and visibility measures	5	6. Communication and Indicators
2.3 Quality of partnership with the project partner from Iceland, Liechtenstein and/or Norway, including clarity of roles, added value, active involvement and substantive cooperation	15	4. Partner information, 5. Content, 9. Summary
3. Value for Money – Budget and Cost-Effectiveness	**15**	
3.1 Cost-effectiveness and appropriateness of proposed expenditures	10	7. Project budget / Attachment
3.2 Alignment between the budget and proposed activities and efficient allocation of resources	5	5. Content, 7. Project budget / Attachment
4. Profile, Capacity and Experience of the Applicant (and Partner)	**15**	
4.1 Alignment of the applicant's activities with the shared values and principles of the EEA Civil Society Fund program	10	3. Organizational background
4.2 Organizational and professional competence, management systems and capacity to implement the project	5	1. Applicant information, 3. Organizational background, 4. Partner information
Total Score	**100**	

Explanation of Criteria for Expert Assessment of Applications and Recommendation for Determining Point Scores

1. Relevance, Purpose, Added Value and Participatory Dimension (Criteria Group, 35 points)

1.1 Relevance of the project in relation to the focus of the call, alignment with the selected result and output, and clarity of problem analysis	
Maximum score: 15 Location in the grant application: 5. Content, 9. Summary	
Assessment focuses on: • Alignment with the selected result and output within the call. • Logical problem analysis supported by evidence. • Clarity of the justification for the proposed intervention. • Relevance to specific priority areas for the given country.	
Recommended scoring scale:	
- Alignment is weak or unclear; problem analysis is missing, illogical, or unsupported; link to results is not demonstrated.	0 – 2
- Basic alignment is demonstrated; problem analysis is present but superficial, only partially supported, or not fully coherent.	3 – 6
- Clear and logical alignment; problem analysis is relevant and adequately supported; intervention logic is coherent.	7 – 11
- Very strong strategic alignment; problem analysis is well-evidenced, analytically sound, and convincingly linked to expected results and outputs.	12 – 15

1.2 Understanding the needs of direct and indirect target groups and the appropriateness of the proposed solution	
Maximum score: 10 Location in the grant application: 5. Content	
Assessment considers: • Clear identification of direct and indirect target groups. • Evidence-based understanding of their needs. • Appropriateness and proportionality of the proposed solution.	
Recommended scoring scale:	
- Target groups are not defined, are inappropriate, or their needs are not supported by evidence.	0 – 2
- Target groups are identified but needs analysis is limited or partially justified; the solution only partially addresses identified needs.	3 – 5
- Target groups are clearly defined; needs are adequately supported; the solution is appropriate and realistic.	6 – 7
- Target groups are comprehensively and convincingly defined; needs are well-documented; the proposed solution is clearly tailored and proportional.	8 – 10

1.3 Quality and depth of participatory approaches involving relevant target groups in the design, implementation and/or evaluation of the project

Maximum score: 5 Location in the grant application: 5. Content, 9. Summary
Assessment focuses on meaningful involvement of target groups in: • Project design. • Implementation. • Monitoring and/or evaluation. *Note: Participation must go beyond mere consultation and demonstrate substantial involvement, especially for projects focused on inclusion and empowerment.*
Recommended scoring scale:

- No participatory elements or purely formal/token involvement.	0
- Limited or symbolic participation; involvement is marginal or insufficiently described.	1 – 2
- Clear participatory mechanisms; target groups are meaningfully involved in at least one phase of the project.	3 – 4
- Participation is systematic, well-structured, and integrated into multiple phases; demonstrates community-led design and ownership.	5

1.4 Expected impact and sustainability of project results, including the potential for long-term systemic change or sustainability of the partnership
Maximum score: 5 Location in the grant application: 8. Sustainability, 9. Summary
Assessment considers: • Likely contribution to planned outputs and results. • Potential for long-term impact after the project ends. • Contribution to systemic change, policy improvement, or strengthening of rights. • Substantive and institutional sustainability of the created or ongoing partnership.
Recommended scoring scale:

- Impact is unclear or unrealistic; sustainability measures are missing or weak. Partnership is created solely for this project opportunity.	0 -1
- Impact is likely but limited; sustainability measures are basic or underdeveloped. Partnership was formed for the project, but the assumptions for its continuation are credibly described.	2 – 3
- Strong expected impact; sustainability is realistic and supported by specific measures. Partnership is based on existing long-term cooperation or has evident potential for continuation.	4
- High potential for long-term or systemic impact; sustainability is comprehensive, institutionally anchored, and clearly allocated. Partnership includes concrete plans for further cooperation.	5

2. Project Implementation Approach and Quality of Partnership (Criteria Group, 35 points)

2.1 Appropriateness, feasibility, coherence and internal logic of planned activities, including risk analysis and mitigation measures	
Maximum score: 15 Location in the grant application: 5. Content, 6. Communication and Indicators, 9. Summary	
Assessment examines: • Logical link between activities, outputs, and results. • Feasibility and timeline sequence. • Adequacy of resources. • Risk identification and mitigation.	
Recommended scoring scale:	
- Activities are illogical, unrealistic, or disconnected from objectives; major implementation risks are not addressed.	**0 – 2**
- Activities are generally relevant but show weaknesses in planning, sequencing, feasibility, or risk management.	**3 – 7**
- Activities are coherent and feasible; planning is sufficiently detailed; risks are identified and appropriately addressed.	**8 – 12**
- Activities are comprehensive, logically structured, and fully feasible; resources are appropriate; risk management is robust and well-integrated.	**13 – 15**

2.2 Quality and feasibility of communication and visibility measures	
Maximum score: 5 Location in the grant application: 6. Communication and Indicators	
Assessment considers: • Suitability of communication methods. • Reaching the relevant audience. • Realistic timeframe and scope.	
Recommended scoring scale:	
- Communication measures are missing or severely inadequate.	**0**
- Communication is partially described; targeting or methods are weak or unrealistic.	**1 – 2**
- Communication plan is appropriate and feasible; methods, target groups, and timeframe are realistic.	**3 – 4**
- Communication plan is comprehensive, well-targeted, realistic, and proportional to the project scale.	**5**

2.3 Quality of partnership with the project partner from Iceland, Liechtenstein and/or Norway, including clarity of roles, added value, active involvement and substantive cooperation

Maximum score: 15 Location in the grant application: 4. Partner information, 5. Content, 9. Summary	
Assessment focuses on: • Added value of the partner from donor states. • Active and substantive involvement. • Clear and complementary division of roles. • Mutual benefit and knowledge exchange.	
Recommended scoring scale:	
- Partnership is purely formal with no or very low added value.	0 - 3
- Partnership exists and is logical for project implementation, but roles are unclear or added value is limited.	4 – 8
- Partnership demonstrates clear roles and substantive cooperation, bringing significant added value to at least one party.	9 – 13
- Partnership brings strong added value to both parties; both are actively involved and the project delivers meaningful knowledge exchange.	14 - 15

3. Value for Money – Budget and Cost-Effectiveness (Criteria Group, 15 points)

3.1 Cost-effectiveness and appropriateness of proposed expenditures	
Maximum score: 10 Location in the grant application: 7. Project budget / Attachment	
Assessment considers: Proportionality of costs to the scope/complexity of activities, realism of unit costs, and justification of expenditures.	
Recommended scoring scale:	
- Budget is significantly disproportionate, unrealistic, or insufficiently justified.	0 – 3
- Budget is generally appropriate but contains weaknesses or minor disproportions.	4 – 6
- Budget is realistic, justified, and proportional.	7 – 8
- Budget demonstrates high cost-effectiveness, clear justification, and optimized allocation.	9 – 10

3.2 Alignment between the budget and proposed activities and efficient allocation of resources	
Maximum score: 5 Location in the grant application: 5. Content, 7. Project budget / Attachment	
Assessment examines: Whether financial allocations logically correspond to planned activities and ensure smooth implementation.	
Recommended scoring scale:	
- Budget does not sufficiently cover key activities or show fundamental imbalance.	0 – 1

- Budget is largely aligned with activities but contains certain inconsistencies.	2– 3
- Budget is well-aligned with activities and enables feasible implementation.	4
- Budget is optimally structured and fully coherent with the implementation plan.	5

4. Profile, Capacity and Experience of the Applicant (and Partner) (Criteria Group, 15 points)

4.1 Alignment of the applicant's activities with the shared values and principles of the EEA Civil Society Fund Programme	
Maximum score: 10 Location in the grant application: 3. Organizational background	
The EEA Civil Society Fund Programme is based on shared values and principles, which are respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. The assessment will assess: • whether the organisation and the proposed project demonstrably act in accordance with the principles of the Programme, • the organisation's track record and whether its past and current activities, approaches and proposed project respect and support these principles will also be taken into account.	
Recommended scoring scale:	
- Applicant/project does not respect Programme principles or there are fundamental contradictions. Past activities conflict with Programme values.	0 – 3
- Partial consideration of principles; activities reflect values but lack a systematic approach.	4 – 6
- Clear alignment with principles; organization systematically respects values; project has potential for development. (Partnership with a donor state partner is considered here).	7 – 8
- Full and consistent reflection of principles; the organization is an example of supporting these values; project significantly strengthens principles and inspires the sector. (Significant role of donor state partner is considered here).	8 – 10

4.2 Organisational and professional competence, management systems and capacity to implement the project
Maximum score: 5 Location in the grant application: 1. Applicant information, 3. Organizational background, 4. Partner information
Assessment considers: Relevant experience, team composition/competencies, and management systems. Important note for assessors: If the applicant is an organization where representatives of marginalized or vulnerable communities (as identified in the Call) hold leadership or decision-making positions, and the project addresses the status of that group, assessors are encouraged to lean toward higher scores. This ensures involvement beyond the activity level.

Marginalized/vulnerable groups include (but are not limited to): Roma communities, LGBTQI+ persons, persons with disabilities, migrants/refugees, ethnic/national minorities, women facing structural discrimination, youth at risk of exclusion, seniors in vulnerable situations, and communities in disadvantaged regions.	
Recommended scoring scale:	
- Insufficient competence; serious risks regarding implementation capacity.	0 – 1
- Adequate capacity, but with visible gaps in experience or team composition.	2 – 3
- Competent team; appropriate governance systems; clear capacity for successful implementation.	4 – 5