Iceland
Liechtenstein
Norway

Civil
Society Fund

EEA Civil Society Fund in Estonia

Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters of the EEA Civil Society Fund Estonia

version 1.1

Contents

1. Background for the EEA Civil Society Fund in Estonia 4
2. Definitions and Abbreviations 6
3. Programme Modalities 7
4. Programme Focus 9
4.1. Outcome 1: Democratic values and rule of law strengthened 9
4.2. Outcome 2: Human rights strengthened 11
4.3. Outcome 3: CSOs that promote democracy, the rule of law and human rights, strengthened 13
5. Eligible Activities and Target Groups 16
6. Eligible Applicants and Partners 17
6.1. Eligible applicants 17
6.2. Eligible project partners 18
7. Eligibility of Expenditures 19
7.1. Eligible Expenditures 19
7.1.1. Categories of Eligible Expenditures 19
7.1.2. Forms of Eligible Expenditures 19
7.2. Ineligible Expenditures 20
8. Application Process 21
9. Assessment and Selection of Projects 22
9.1. Compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria 22
9.2. Eligibility criteria 22
9.3. Assessment of applications by experts 23
9.4. Selection Committee 24
9.5. Steering Committee 24
9.6. Notifying of the results of the selection process 24
9.7. Contracting Projects 24
10. Communication Requirements 26
11. Project Financing, Reporting and Payments 28

11.1. General Provisions 28
11.2. Reporting on Projects 29
11.3. Payments to Projects 30
11.4. Reporting on Organisational Grants 32
11.5. Payments to Organisational Grants 32
12. Support and Capacity-Building Provided by the Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations 33
13. Complaints 34
14. Contact Information 35
ANNEX 2: RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT FOR THE EEA CIVIL SOCIETY FUND 36

1. Background for the EEA Civil Society Fund in Estonia

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 organizations 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 **Estonia** is **€ 6,4 million.**

Through an open tender process, the secretariat of the Donor States – the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) – has selected a consortium of Open Estonia Foundation and Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations as Fund Operator of the EEA Civil Society Fund in Estonia. The Fund Operator manages the EEA Civil Society Fund in Estonia 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 Estonia will include 7 open calls, contributing to the following outcomes:

- 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 aims to strengthen cooperation between civil society organisations in Estonia and civil society organisations in the Donor States Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

In addition, the programme has two country-specific focus areas: addressing challenges arising from the invasion of Ukraine, and intercultural, interethnic, and/or interreligious understanding or dialogue and inclusion.

Open Estonia Foundation as a contractual partner of the Donors is responsible for the overall coordination and administration of the EEA Civil Society Fund in Estonia. It manages all grant-making schemes of the

programme and oversees the reporting on program results to the Donors. **Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations** is responsible for supporting potential applicants and Project Promoters in preparing and implementing of projects.

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 Estonia: www.eea-csf.ee.

2. Definitions and Abbreviations

Donor states are Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Donor partnership project (dpp) is a project that is carried out in partnership with an organisation from one of the donor countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway.

Beneficiary countries are Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) is the Brussels-based secretariat for the EEA and Norway Grants and acts as the contact point between Donor and Beneficiary States.

Fund operator is a consortium of Open Estonia Foundation and Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations that manages the EEA Civil Society Fund in Estonia in behalf of the donors.

Project Partner is a public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organisations, all having a functional role in the implementation of a project and formally involved in the project through a partnership agreement with the Project Promoter.

Project Promoter is a legal person responsible for initiating, preparing and implementing the project.

Civil society organisation (CSO) is a non-governmental, non-profit voluntary organisation with a non-commercial purpose, independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organisations.

3. Programme Modalities

The programme will be implemented by way of open calls for proposals and one pre-defined project. In addition, there will be measures that support the development of bilateral cooperation with Donor States and regional cooperation with other Beneficiary Countries.

There will be four types of grants:

1. Strategic project grants to allow CSOs to pursue their mission-related work under Outcome 1 and 2:

   - Medium-sized grants ranging from EUR 50 001 to 70 000 (up to EUR 80 000 in case of donor partnership projects) to support CSOs in setting both short- and long-term goals within their specific focus area.
   - Large grants ranging from EUR 80,001 to 100,000 (up to EUR 120 000 in case of donor partnership projects) to allow CSOs working in partnership with other CSOs or CSO coalitions to address systemic issues or achieve sector-wide impact.

2. Small grants ranging from EUR 10 000 to 25 000 addressing the consequences of the war in Ukraine under Outcome 1 and 2
3. Organisational grants in the amount of EUR 150 000 aimed at strengthening the resilience and institutional development of CSOs that promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights under Outcome 3
4. Project grants ranging from EUR 25 001 to 40 000 that target the sustainability and resilience of CSOs under Outcome 3

Between 2026 and 2029 there will be 7 open calls for proposals:

Call for proposals	**Total amount available**	**Grant sizes**	**Project duration**	**Timeframe**
Call # 1 Strategic projects under Outcome 1 and 2	EUR 1 405 000	EUR 50 001-70 000 (up to EUR 80 000 in case of dpp)	12-24 months	Launch in June 2026, preliminary start of projects January 2027
		EUR 80 001-100 000 (up to EUR 120 000 in case of dpp)	18-24 months	
Call # 2 Rolling call „For Ukraine“ under Outcome 1 and 2	EUR 300 000	EUR 10 000-25 000	6-12 months	Launch in July 2026, open until funds are exhausted
Call # 3 Project grants sustainability and	EUR 250 000	EUR 25 001-40 000	12-24 months	TBD

resilience of CSOs under Outcome 3				
Call # 4 Strategic projects under Outcome 1 and 2	EUR 1 100 000	EUR 50 001-70 000 (up to EUR 80 000 in case of dpp)	12-24 months	TBD
		EUR 80 001-100 000 (up to EUR 120 000 in case of dpp)	18-24 months	
Call # 5 Organisational grants under Outcome 3	EUR 750 000	EUR 150 000	36 months	TBD
Call # 6 Strategic projects under Outcome 1 and 2	EUR 940 000	EUR 50 001-70 000 (up to EUR 80 000 in case of DPP)	12-24 months	TBD
		EUR 80 001-100 000 (up to EUR 120 000 in case of DPP)	18-24 months	
Call # 7 Project grants sustainability and resilience of CSOs under Outcome 3	EUR 250 000	EUR 25 001-40 000	12-24 months	TBD

Bilateral cooperation between civil society in Estonia and the donor states of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway is encouraged across all outcomes. Similarly, contributing to the country-specific concern of **intercultural, interethnic, and/or interreligious understanding or dialogue and inclusion** is encouraged.

4. Programme Focus

The programme follows the principles of results-based management. This means it is designed and managed with a focus on achieving results. All supported projects should conceptually align with programme's results framework and contribute to its outcomes and outputs.

Each project may contribute to a single outcome [1]and, within that outcome, to one or more of outputs[2]. Additional information on **results-based management of the EEA Civil Society Fund** can be found in Annex 2 to these Guidelines.

4.1. Outcome 1: Democratic values and rule of law strengthened

Civil society organisations (CSOs) in Estonia face a complex and evolving environment where political polarisation, populism, and socio-economic inequalities undermine inclusive democratic participation and social cohesion. CSOs struggle to consistently influence policymaking, represent diverse constituencies, and ensure government accountability to democratic norms and rule of law principles.

At the same time, ethnic divides, particularly between Estonian and Russian-speaking communities, alongside external threats such as disinformation and geopolitical pressure, weaken public trust in democratic institutions.

Under Outcome 1, initiatives that strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations to safeguard democratic values, increase their influence on policymaking, reinforce the rule of law, and contribute to building a resilient and cohesive society are supported. Initiatives that promote civic education and democratic literacy, foster good governance and a culture of participation, and increase people's engagement in civic and community life, including the participation of young people, minorities, including Ukrainian refugees are also encouraged. Focus will also be placed on initiatives that enhance media literacy and critical thinking and strengthen resilience against disinformation.

All projects eligible for support under Outcome 1 must contribute to achieving the following outcome and relevant outputs. Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators. Under the rolling call **"For Ukraine"** the use of at least one of the programme-level indicators is mandatory. Detailed definitions of programme-level indicators and guidance on their application is provided in Core Indicators Library of EEA and Norway Grants Financial Mechanisms 2021-2028.

Outcome 1: Democratic values and rule of law strengthened	
CIV-041	*Number of national, regional or local laws, policies or regulations proposed by or commented on by CSOs*
CIV-008	*Number of training participants self-reporting improved knowledge/understanding after the training (disaggregated by gender)*
ALL-013	*Estimated number of people who engaged and took an action in response to advocacy / awareness campaigns*

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

[2] Outputs are the products, goods and services directly delivered by projects to the target group. They should be directly observable and measurable and able to be directly attributed to the activities of a project or programme.

Output 1.1: CSO participation in democratic processes increased	
CIV-004	*Number of CSOs participating in consultations with a public institution*
CIV-015	*Number of public advocacy outputs delivered by supported CSOs*
CIV-030	*Number of new or continued partnerships established between supported CSOs and other entities within the Beneficiary Country*
Output 1.2: Civic engagement increased	
CIV-006	*Number of people who participated in consultations with a public institution facilitated by CSOs*
CIV-007	*Number of people who have completed a CSO-led training course (disaggregated by gender)*
CIV-010	*Number of people engaged in CSO activities as volunteers*
ALL-012	*Number of advocacy/awareness-raising campaigns carried out*
EE-CIV-003	*Number of CSO-implemented initiatives promoting interethnic and intercultural understanding, dialogue or inclusion (including Ukraine)*
Output 1.3: Information integrity and media literacy increased	
CIV-007	*Number of people who have completed a CSO-led training course (disaggregated by gender)*
ALL-004	*Number of assessments, studies or mappings completed*
CIV-030	*Number of new or continued partnerships established between supported CSOs and other entities within the Beneficiary Country (including non-Estonian-speaking groups and media entities)*
CIV-015	*Number of public advocacy outputs delivered by supported CSOs*

Output 1.1. CSO participation in democratic processes increased

- Increased CSO engagement in policy development and monitoring
- Strengthened CSO advocacy and watchdog role
- Strengthened CSO networks and coalition-building

The dialogue between public authorities and civil society organisations is uneven, and cooperation remains fragmented, which in turn limits the overall influence of the civil society sector on societal processes. Although formal participation mechanisms are in place, the involvement of civil society organisations in policymaking is often procedural rather than substantive, constraining their ability to influence decisions and reducing government accountability.

The programme supports initiatives aimed at strengthening CSOs as effective partners in the design, implementation, and monitoring of public policies. It also supports the enhancement of civil society advocacy capacities, the promotion of meaningful and consistent engagement with decision-makers, and the development of cooperation and networks within the civil society sector to foster more open and transparent governance.

Output 1.2. Civic engagement increased

- Strengthened civic participation and engagement of citizens, including vulnerable groups
- Increased civic literacy, including vulnerable groups

Civic engagement in Estonia is hindered by insufficient civic education and limited opportunities for meaningful participation, particularly among youth and marginalized groups. Many citizens lack the knowledge, skills, and confidence to engage constructively in democratic processes, which contributes to political disengagement and societal polarization.

The programme supports investments in civic education and inclusive participation mechanisms, thus providing opportunities for direct experiences of democracy, collaboration, and civic participation. In

addition, it supports initiatives that enable people of different ages and backgrounds to participate more actively and effectively in decision-making processes and community engagement, thereby strengthening social cohesion and reinforcing democracy.

Special focus on country-specific concern of addressing the consequences of the war in Ukraine

Estonian society faces ongoing challenges related to the consequences of Russia's war in Ukraine. While many Ukrainian refugees have integrated relatively well, gaps remain in social inclusion, community engagement, and long-term integration that can be effectively addressed by civil society. In addition, there are attempts to undermine public support for Ukrainian refugees and diminish social cohesion in society.

Under this country-specific focus, the programme supports projects that engage and empower Ukrainian refugees and strengthen connections between refugees and host communities. This includes activities that promote participation, build mutual understanding, and foster inclusive communities. Initiatives that counter disinformation and negative narratives, and that strengthen trust and solidarity within society, are also encouraged.

Output 1.3. Information integrity and media literacy increased

- Enhanced media literacy and resilience to disinformation
- CSO capacity and preparedness to disinformation strengthened

The growing spread of misinformation and disinformation, including externally driven narratives, poses a significant threat to public trust, social cohesion, and the functioning of democratic institutions in Estonia. Limited media literacy skills across different segments of society reduce the ability of citizens to critically assess information and make informed decisions. At the same time, CSOs often lack the capacity for consistent, strategic, and credible communication needed to effectively counter false narratives.

The programme supports strengthening media literacy, critical thinking, and CSO communication capacities and other initiatives that contribute to better informed audiences and public debate, including non-Estonian audiences. Also strengthening CSO capacities to emerge as trusted sources of information, contributing to stronger information integrity and increased trust in democratic processes.

4.2. Outcome 2: Human rights strengthened

In Estonia, the advancement of human rights continues to be influenced by political tensions and conservative attitudes, particularly in areas such as gender equality and LGBTIQ+ rights. Discrimination persists, and the reality does not always correspond to the protections guaranteed by legislation or to formally assumed state commitments. Broader societal attitudes, shaped by traditional norms and historical legacies, continue to hinder inclusive policymaking and reduce public support for change.

The programme supports CSO advocacy aimed at promoting human rights, equal treatment, and gender equality, as well as raising public awareness on these issues. The programme also strengthens the capacity of CSOs to influence policies, counter regressive narratives, and promote a just approach to climate and environmental action. Without strengthened advocacy, partnerships, and grassroots engagement, the potential of civil society to advance human rights, promote social justice, and support a just green transition cannot be fully realised.

All projects eligible for support under Outcome 2 must contribute to achieving the following outcome and relevant outputs. Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators. Under the rolling call **"For Ukraine"** the use of at least one of the programme-level indicators is mandatory. Detailed definitions of programme-level indicators and guidance on their application is provided in **Core Indicators Library** of EEA and Norway Grants Financial Mechanisms 2021-2028.

Outcome 2: Human rights strengthened	
CIV-041	*Number of national, regional or local laws, policies or regulations proposed by or commented on by CSOs*
ALL-015	*Number of people self-reporting a change in their knowledge from advocacy / awareness campaigns (disaggregated by gender)*
Output 2.1: Human rights, including anti-discrimination, and social justice supported	
CIV-016	*Number of policy advocacy outputs delivered by supported CSOs*
ALL-012	*Number of advocacy/awareness-raising campaigns carried out*
CIV-007	*Number of people who have completed a CSO-led training course (disaggregated by gender)*
CIV-027	*Number of supported CSOs working on migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers' rights (including Ukrainians)*
Output 2.2: Gender equality, including SRHR, and LGBTIQ+ rights supported	
CIV-006	*Number of people who participated in consultations with a public institution facilitated by CSOs*
CIV-015	*Number of public advocacy outputs delivered by supported CSOs*
CIV-023	*Number of supported CSOs working on gender equality or women's/girls' rights*
CIV-026	*Number of supported CSOs working on LGBTIQ+ rights*
Output 2.3: Climate action, environmental protection, and a just green transition supported	
CIV-006	*Number of people who participated in consultations with a public institution facilitated by CSOs*
CIV-018	*Number of climate and environmental strategic litigation cases filed in court by the supported CSOs*
CIV-014	*Number of people who participated in public gatherings led by CSOs on climate justice and environmental issues*

Output 2.1. Human rights, including anti-discrimination, and social justice supported

- Increased awareness of human rights principles and anti-discriminatory practices
- Strengthened CSO advocacy and watchdog role

Despite existing legal frameworks, discrimination against vulnerable and marginalized groups persists, and the implementation of human rights commitments remains inconsistent. Civil society efforts are often constrained by limited advocacy capacity, insufficient public awareness, and weak enforcement of anti-discrimination measures.

The programme supports the strengthening of advocacy, promoting public awareness, on human rights and principles of equal treatment and building strategic partnerships. As a result, stronger legal frameworks and improved policy implementation will better protect marginalized groups, government accountability will increase, and public attitudes will shift towards greater inclusion and respect for human rights, particularly in underserved communities.

Special focus on country-specific concern of addressing the consequences of the war in Ukraine

Ukrainian war refugees in Estonia, especially women and other vulnerable groups, continue to face discrimination, gender stereotypes, and unequal treatment in access to services and the labour market. These challenges highlight the need for stronger protection of rights, equal opportunities, and gender-

sensitive approaches. CSOs play a key role in advocating for the interests of Ukraine war refugees and providing them with targeted support.

The programme supports projects that address these issues through advocacy, awareness-raising, and policy engagement. This includes efforts to combat discrimination, promote gender equality, and improve access to fair employment and services. Projects that contribute to more inclusive policies and strengthen the protection of human rights in the context of refugee integration are also encouraged.

Output 2.2. Gender equality, including SRHR, and LGBTIQ+ rights supported

- Increased awareness of gender equality
- Strengthened protections of vulnerable groups, including LGBTIQ+
- Increased engagement of vulnerable groups

Progress in gender equality and LGBTIQ+ rights remains uneven, hindered by persistent gender stereotypes, conservative backlash against sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and ongoing discrimination and gender-based violence. Civil society faces the challenge of countering regressive narratives while providing essential support services to affected individuals.

The programme addresses these issues by supporting sustained advocacy, monitoring of government commitments, public education, and engagement of diverse audiences and target groups. As a result, gender stereotypes will gradually diminish, stronger protections and support will be available for women, LGBTIQ+ individuals and other vulnerable groups, and these issues will be more effectively integrated into national policies, aligning Estonia more closely with international and European human rights standards.

Output 2.3. Climate action, environmental protection, and a just green transition supported

- Increased CSO influence in environmental issues
- Increased civic participation and engagement of citizens in environmental issues

Environmental organisations face increasing pressure to compromise on sustainability goals, while climate policies risk disproportionately affecting marginalized communities if not designed inclusively. At the same time, there is a need to balance economic development with long-term ecological sustainability and social justice.

The programme supports strengthening CSO advocacy and actions, including at the grassroots level, to climate justice. As a result, environmental policies will better reflect principles of equity and sustainability, marginalized communities will be more actively involved in decision-making, and civil society will play a stronger role in ensuring a just and inclusive green transition.

4.3. Outcome 3: CSOs that promote democracy, the rule of law and human rights, strengthened

Although Estonian civil society is relatively strong compared to the region, many CSOs face persistent challenges related to financial sustainability, organizational capacity, and long-term strategic development. Heavy reliance on short-term, project-based funding, coupled with economic uncertainty and reduced public funding contribute to unstable operating environment.

The programme supports the development of professional capacities within CSOs, as well as long-term planning and implementation. It also supports activities aimed at increasing public awareness of and support for civil society, thereby contributing to the development of an enabling environment for its operation. Without targeted support for areas such as leadership, organisational resilience, and cross-sector cooperation, the capacity of CSO to promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights will remain constrained.

All projects eligible for support under Outcome 3 must contribute to achieving the following outcome and relevant outputs. Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators. Detailed definitions of programme-level indicators and guidance on their application is provided in **Core Indicators Library** of EEA and Norway Grants Financial Mechanisms 2021-2028.

Outcome 3: CSOs that promote democracy, the rule of law and human rights, strengthened	
CIV-035	*Number of supported CSOs with improved overall organizational strength*
CIV-041	*Number of national, regional or local laws, policies or regulations proposed by or commented on by CSOs*
Output 3.1. Organizational development supported	
CIV-036	*Number of supported CSOs with a new or improved organizational policy [on topic]*
EE-CIV-002	*Number of supported CSOs with established, strengthened or sustained dedicated advocacy staff positions*
EE-CIV-001	*Number of supported CSOs with increased advocacy capacity*
Output 3.2. An enabling environment for civil society supported	
CIV-006	*Number of people who participated in consultations with a public institution facilitated by CSOs*
CIV-030	*Number of new or continued partnerships established between supported CSOs and other entities within the Beneficiary Country*

Output 3.1. Organisational development supported

- Strengthened CSO advocacy and watchdog role
- Strengthened CSO organisational resilience

CSOs in Estonia face internal capacity challenges, including unstable funding, limited strategic planning, and insufficient skills in advocacy, communication, and impact measurement. Gaps in digital security, crisis communication, and challenges in finding and retaining motivated volunteers further weaken organizational resilience.

To strengthen CSOs and improve their governance, enabling them to pursue their objectives more effectively, contribute meaningfully to policymaking, and respond to emerging challenges, the programme supports, among other things, the development and strengthening of professional capacities in areas such as strategic planning, advocacy, communication, fundraising, and impact assessment.

The programme also supports initiatives aimed at strengthening civil society advocacy in defence of democratic values and human rights, fostering and maintaining partnerships, sustaining connections with communities, and developing and maintaining networks within the civil society sector.

Output 3.2. An enabling environment for civil society supported

- Enhanced CSO influence in policymaking and governance processes
- Enhanced CSO networks and coalition-building

The broader environment for civil society in Estonia is affected by limited public awareness of the role and value of CSOs, weak collaboration across sectors, and insufficient opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making processes. Efforts to create an enabling environment for civil society are further hindered by an insufficient understanding of the broader role of civil society organisations in safeguarding democracy and the rule of law.

To contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for civil society the programme supports the development of stronger cooperation across sectors, more robust civil society networks, a legal and regulatory framework conducive to civil society action and increased public awareness of the role of civil society in strengthening democratic resilience. Stronger advocacy and more strategic communication can also foster greater public engagement and recognition of the contribution of civil society organisations. This, in turn, helps create a more supportive and visible environment characterised by greater trust, stronger partnerships, and increased civil society influence in decision-making, ultimately contributing to a stronger and more inclusive democracy.

5. Eligible Activities and Target Groups

- Advocacy to support a cause or policy
- Awareness-raising activities
- Capacity-building activities of CSOs
- Civic education and training
- Cultural activities for promoting social change
- Intercultural dialogue, including platforms to encourage dialogue between majority and minority groups
- Measures for increasing information integrity, media pluralism and media literacy, and countering misinformation and disinformation
- Legal aid, psychological assistance, and other forms of support for human rights defenders
- Networking of the civil society sector and with public and private sectors
- Outreach and community organising to encourage citizen activism, volunteering, and civic participation
- Outreach to and interest representation of target groups that are marginalised
- Participation in policy and decision-making processes
- Partnerships between CSOs and public and private sector entities
- Strategic litigation
- Research, advocacy and other activities to support good governance, anti-corruption and transparency
- Research and analysis to inform advocacy work and policy
- Watchdog activities and monitoring of policy development and implementation

Provision of social or similar services can only be supported if these services are necessary for enhancing advocacy, community participation, and/or civic engagement.

6. Eligible Applicants and Partners

6.1. Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants are non-profit associations and foundations that are established in Estonia under Non-profit Associations Act or Foundations Act and that are considered non-governmental organisations falling within the following definition:

> *A non-profit voluntary organisation with a non-commercial purpose, independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organisations.*

Religious institutions and political parties, social partners, trade- and professional associations or profit-distributing cooperatives are not eligible applicants. Faith-based organisations are eligible if they meet the principles identified above and if the funded activities do not directly or indirectly promote a religious doctrine, mission or proselytism related to the beliefs of a particular faith (beyond basic religious/cultural awareness raising).

All eligible applicants must abide by the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and comply with the fundamental rights and obligations enshrined in relevant instruments and standards.

Eligible organisations can submit **one application as (lead) applicant within each call**. There is no limitation as to the number of partnerships any organisation may be involved in as project partner.

Additional eligibility criteria for applicants of organisational grants

- the applicant must have had legal personality for at least 60 months prior to the submission deadline;
- the applicant must have had an average annual turnover of at least EUR 100,000 and maximum EUR 500,000 over the last three financial years for which accounting documents are available; and
- the applicant must have a multiannual work plan and/or strategy, outlining the organization's goals and priorities, covering the period for which the organisation is applying for funding. A plan or strategy covering a period of at least two years is deemed multiannual for this purpose.

6.2. Eligible project partners

Projects may be implemented in partnership with project partners. Project partners shall be actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of the project.

The following entities are eligible to be project partners:

- Any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as CSOs, established as a legal person either in the Donor States[3], or Beneficiary States[4];
- An international organisation or body or agency thereof;
- Informal organisations that are not registered legal entities (hereinafter referred to as "informal groups"). Informal groups are considered eligible project partners provided that:
    - their members are legal residents or based in either the Donor States, or Beneficiary States;
    - they are not established or operating with the purpose of personal profit;
    - membership in the group is voluntary and non-discriminatory;
    - their purpose aligns with the objective of the EEA Civil Society Fund;
    - they are independent of local, regional and national government and other public authorities, as well as of political parties, religious institutions and commercial organisations; and
    - they are represented by one single person, with legal residency in Estonia. An informal group cannot not be a direct recipient of the project grant.

A partnership declaration between the Project Promoter and each of its partners shall be submitted as a supporting document to the application. The declaration shall be in Estonian or in English and shall be based on a template provided by the Fund Operator.

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

All eligible partners must abide by the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and comply with the fundamental rights and obligations enshrined in relevant instruments and standards.

[3] Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

[4] Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

7. Eligibility of Expenditures

The eligibility of project expenditures is described in detail in the document Cost Eligibility Guidance for the EEA Civil Society Fund.

This section provides only the key information applicants need when preparing their applications.

The eligibility period for project expenditures is specified in the project contract. The maximum eligibility period ends on 30 April 2031.

7.1. Eligible Expenditures

7.1.1. Categories of Eligible Expenditures

1. Direct expenditures:

These are costs that are directly related to and necessary for the implementation of project activities. Eligible categories of direct expenditures are:

- personnel costs,
- travel costs and allowances,
- consumables and supplies,
- costs of purchase or rental of equipment,
- services,
- other direct costs.

2. Indirect expenditures:

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

- management, administrative and accounting costs;
- overhead and operational costs, such as office rent, utilities, telephone and internet costs, IT support, etc.

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

7.1.2. Forms of Eligible Expenditures

1. Actual costs incurred:

These are reimbursements of eligible expenditures actually incurred by the Project Promoter and/or Project Partner in connection with project implementation. Each cost item must be supported by appropriate documentation showing that the costs have been invoiced and paid, and that the goods have been delivered or the services performed.

2. Simplified Cost Options (SCOs):

Simplified Cost Options are pre-determined amounts, rates or percentages that represent the best possible approximation of actual eligible costs in practice. They provide an alternative method of reimbursement where it is not necessary to document the actual costs and payments for each expenditure

item. When Simplified Cost Options are used, it is not necessary to provide accounting documents or other supporting evidence for each individual expenditure item.

The Programme uses the following Simplified Cost Options:

- flat rate: a pre-determined percentage used to calculate one or more cost categories in the project, for example other project costs or indirect costs;
- draft-budget method: the applicant first submits a traditional budget, which is then fully converted into Simplified Cost Options, using unit costs and/or lump sums;
- unit costs: pre-defined unit costs used to calculate the costs of different activities, for example events, trainings, trips or similar activities;
- lump sums: pre-agreed fixed amounts linked to the achievement of specific project outputs or results.

7.2. Ineligible Expenditures

Ineligible expenditures are generally expenditures that do not fall within the categories of eligible costs and do not meet the eligibility criteria defined in Section 3.1 of the Cost Eligibility Guidance for the EEA Civil Society Fund (Annex 1 to these Guidelines).

In addition, the following expenditures are not considered eligible:

- interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges;
- charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to accounts and financial services required by the project contract;
- costs related to the purchase of land or real estate;
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- exchange rate losses;
- recoverable VAT;
- costs that are covered by other sources;
- fines, penalties and costs of litigation, except where litigation is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project; and
- excessive or reckless expenditure.

8. Application Process

Applications shall be submitted electronically in the Estonian language via eGRANT system **oef.egrant.ee** by the deadline indicated in the call for proposals. Detailed instructions on how to submit applications are available on the Fund Operator's website.

9. Assessment and Selection of Projects

All project applications are assessed against the following criteria:

- administrative and eligibility criteria;
- evaluation criteria published in the call for proposal.

9.1. Compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria

Administrative criteria include the following:

- the project application has been submitted electronically via e-grant system;
- the project application has been submitted by the deadline of the call;
- the project application includes all requested annexes as specified in the call;
- the project application is signed by an authorized person.

Non-compliance with any of the above criteria will lead to the automatic rejection of the project application. The respective applicant is notified of non-compliance within 5 working days.

9.2. Eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria include the following:

- the applicant is a non-governmental organisation, registered in Estonia, that meets the eligibility criteria defined in Article 3 of the Guidelines and any additional eligibility criteria as specified in the call for proposals;
- project partners (if any) are CSOs, or any other public or private entities established in Estonia, any other Beneficiary States[5], or Donor States, or any international organisation or body or agency thereof. Informal groups that are not registered legal entities in Estonia are also eligible as partners;
- the requested grant amount is within permissible limits as published in the call;
- the proposed implementation period is within permissible limits as published in the call.

The Fund Operator may ask for additional information from the applicant in case of doubt whether any of the eligibility criteria above have been met.

In case of clerical mistakes in the project application or annexes, detected during the administrative or eligibility check, the applicant is given 3 working days to correct the mistakes and re-submit the document(s) in question. After re-submission of the document(s) the administrative and/or eligibility check is repeated.

[5] Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia

Once the administrative and eligibility check has been completed, the applicants whose project applications have been rejected are notified of the decision of the Fund Operator and are informed of the reasons for the rejection. In case the applicants are not satisfied with the explanation provided by the Fund Operator, they may submit an appeal within 5 working days to the Fund Operator.

In case the applicant has submitted more than one application as (lead) applicant within one call for applications, the most recently submitted application shall be considered; all other applications are automatically rejected.

9.3. Assessment of applications by experts

Applications which pass the administrative and eligibility check are assessed against the evaluation criteria published in the call.

Each application is assessed independently by two impartial experts, of whom at least one is independent of the Fund Operator.

The average scores awarded by the experts are used to establish the ranking list of project applications. A minimum score of the project application needed to be recommendable for funding is **75 (out of 100)**.

In case the difference between the scores given by the two experts is more than 30% of the higher score, a third expert is commissioned to assess the application in question. If the score given by a third expert would not in any way result in the support of the project, the third expert will not be commissioned.

The Fund Operator may organise a discussion meeting after the independent scoring of applications has been completed and the ranking list based on experts' scores has been established if it sees the need to clarify the comments provided by experts and to ensure the consistency and alignment of scoring with the criteria published in the call. Independent experts may change their scores because of discussion meetings; such changes will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

In case of a rolling call for small projects addressing the consequences of the war in Ukraine a simplified selection procedure is used whereby applications are assessed by two experts appointed by the Open Estonia Foundation according to the evaluation criteria as specified in the call for proposals. The Executive Director of OEF shall take the decision to accept or reject applications based on the recommendations of experts.

Applications which receive a score of 75 or higher shall go through values compliance review to establish that the applicant and project partner(s) (if any) abide by the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and comply with the fundamental rights and obligations enshrined in relevant instruments and standards.

9.4. Selection Committee

The Fund Operator shall establish the Selection Committee whose role is to recommend to the Fund Operator which projects should be funded. The Selection Committee shall consist of at least three people with expertise and experience of working on or with civil society. At least one of them will be external to the Fund Operator.

The Fund Operator shall provide the Selection Committee with the list of project applications ranked based on expert assessment as well as with the results of values compliance review. The Selection Committee shall review the list, with special consideration to how the totality of selected projects aligns with *inter alia* the fund objective, country-specific focus areas and fund specifics. Based on this review, the Selection Committee makes recommendations to the Fund Operator which projects should be funded, which should be rejected, and which should be left on the reserve list if some of the selected project promoters may fail to launch their projects. The Selection Committee may also propose changes to individual projects' budget or approve a project application with additional conditions.

The FMO, representative of the National Focal Point, the Royal Norwegian Embassy and Embassy of Iceland will be invited as observers to the meetings of the Selection Committee.

9.5. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee of the Fund Operator shall take the final decision regarding which projects to support. It may modify the decision of the Selection Committee in justified cases. The decision of the Steering Committee is final and will not be subject to dispute.

The Steering Committee consists of representatives of both consortium partners of the Fund Operator.

9.6. Notifying of the results of the selection process

Applicants are notified in writing about the approval or rejection of their application within one week after such a decision was taken.
Unsuccessful applicants are provided with feedback of the reasons for not approving their project for funding. If the rejection of a project application was the result of a modification by the Selection Committee or the Steering Committee, such a justification will be provided.

9.7. Contracting Projects

A project contract will be concluded between the Open Estonia Foundation and the Project Promoter for each approved project. The project contract will set out the terms and conditions of grant assistance and the roles and responsibilities of the parties. The project contract template can be found on the programme website.

If a project is implemented in partnership, the Project Promoter shall sign a partnership agreement with each of the project partners. The partnership agreement will detail the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

As a minimum, the partnership agreement shall contain the following:

a) provisions on the roles and responsibilities of the parties;
b) provisions on the financial arrangements between the parties including, but not limited to, financial reporting obligations, means for proof of expenditure, payment flows and the expenditure for which project partners can be reimbursed from the project budget;
c) currency exchange rules for such expenditure, if appropriate, and reimbursement;
d) provisions on indirect costs and their maximum percentage;
e) requirements for the submission of proof of expenditure and/or proof of conditions fulfilled where unit costs or lump sums are used;
f) provisions on audits of the project;
g) a detailed budget, which foresees flexible rules for shifts between budget headings; and
h) provisions on dispute resolution.

The partnership agreements shall be submitted to the Fund Operator prior to the signing of the project contract who will verify that the agreements comply with the Programme requirements. For projects involving entities from the donor states, an English-language partnership agreement template shall be used which can be found on the programme website.

The Project Promoter is required to inform the project partners of all provisions of the project contract that are relevant for them, and equally, sufficiently in advance, of modifications to the project that affect them.

10. Communication Requirements

All Project Promoters are required to follow the information and communication requirements of the Programme:

- In all communication activities of the project the Project Promoter must acknowledge the support from the EEA Civil Society Fund. It includes all materials and activities related to the project: website, social media, events, publications, press releases, exhibitions, etc. For example, "The Project is supported by the EEA Civil Society Fund that is administered by the consortium of Open Estonia Foundation and Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations.
- In addition to reference to the support in all materials and occasions the logo of EEA Civil Society Fund must be used. Logo can be found on the website of EEA Civil Society Fund in Estonia. It may not be changed or translated, and it must be larger and more prominent than other logos. In addition, the Project Promoter must use the logos of the Fund Operator (Open Estonia Foundation and Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations).
- All project partners must follow the EEA Civil Society Fund communication requirements. In case of Donor project partners, it is the 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.
- The Project Promoter must make information about the project available on the web and/or on social media, either on a dedicated website or on its own website provided that it is public and easily assessable.
- The information about the project must be regularly updated: goals, activities, progress, results and impact. All project participants must be informed of the funding from the Programme and the Donor States.
- Project Promoters are obliged to cooperate with the Fund Operator in communicating about the project: share information and updates, add references to Fund Operator in social media, provide Fund Operator with project visuals and inform of major communication activities.
- In case of physical events, logo and reference to the support from the Programme must be visible and all participants must be informed about the support from the Programme and the Donor States.
- For a Project Promoter with a total project budget larger than € 100,000 and whose project finances a physical object, infrastructure or construction: to put up a billboard at the site of each such operation during the implementation of the project, and that such billboards shall comply with the requirements set out in the Communication and Design Manual provided by the FMO; and to replace the billboard with a permanent commemorative plaque in line with the designs and other requirements provided in the Communication and Design Manual not later than six months after the completion of the project. The Fund Operator may waive the latter obligations for information if it deems such activities could jeopardize the implementation or success of the project or put stakeholders at risk.

If the Project Promoter posts about the project on social media, it is recommended to tag the Fund Operator using the @ symbol. This helps increase the visibility of the posts, reach a wider audience, and

enables the Fund Operator and donors to further share information about the project through their own channels.

It is also recommended to collect photos, videos, and other visual materials demonstrating the project's impact, while always ensuring that participants' consent has been obtained.

For more detailed information and recommendations, please consult the EEA Civil Society Fund Design and Communication Manual, available at the Fund Operator's website.

11. Project Financing, Reporting and Payments

11.1. General Provisions

Project grants under the EEA Civil Society Fund shall be financed at a rate of up to **100% of the total eligible project costs**, unless otherwise specified in the call for proposals.

The grant shall be disbursed to the Project Promoter in the form of:

- an advance payment;
- one or more interim payments; and
- a final payment following approval of the final project reports.

The amount of the advance payment shall be specified in the Project Contract.

The level of advance, interim and final payments shall depend on the grant type, project budget and implementation period, as specified below:

Grant type	Project duration	Advance payment	Interim payments	Final payment
Small grants, EUR 10 000 – EUR 25 000	6–12 months	Up to 50%	Up to 40%	Remaining balance, min. 10%
Project grants, EUR 25 001 – EUR 40 000	12–24 months	Up to 50%	Up to 40%	Remaining balance, min. 10%
Medium-sized strategic grants, EUR 50 001 – EUR 80 000	12–24 months	Up to 50%	Up to 40%	Remaining balance, min. 10%
Large strategic grants, EUR 80 001 – EUR 120 000	18–24 months	Up to 40%	Up to 25%	Remaining balance, min. 10%
Organisational Grants, EUR 150 000	36 months	Up to 33.5%	Up to 56.5%	Remaining balance, min. 10%

The advance payment shall be transferred within 10 working days after the signature of the Project Contract has been signed.

Interim and final payments shall be transferred within 10 working days following the approval of the respective interim or final report, including both the narrative and financial report.

Interim and final reports shall be approved within two months from the submission of all required information and supporting documentation.

11.2. Reporting on Projects

These Guidelines apply to all types of project grants. Separate provisions apply to Organisational Grants (see below).

Project reports shall be submitted **every six months**, no later than **30 calendar days following the end of the reporting period**. The final project report shall be submitted no later than **30 calendar days following the end of the project implementation period**.

The purpose of reporting is to enable the Fund Operator to assess project implementation progress, achievement of results, use of grant funds and compliance with the Project Contract.

Project reports shall be submitted through the **eGRANT** online system, which collects information on project implementation, achievement of results, indicators and financial reporting. Detailed instructions for using the system are provided separately.

Each project report shall be submitted using the predefined template and shall consist of:

- a narrative report; and
- a financial report.

Where the grant is implemented using Simplified Cost Options (SCOs), the narrative report shall also include evidence demonstrating the implementation of activities during the reporting period.

The narrative report shall include:

- a summary of activities implemented during the reporting period and progress towards the achievement of expected project results;
- progress on indicators;
- an assessment of project progress, including deviations from the original plan, their causes, implications and corrective actions taken;
- communication and outreach activities and their contribution to achieving the project goals, including changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, stakeholder engagement, visibility of the project and the donors, dissemination of results, and the overall effectiveness of communication strategies.

The Project Promoter shall submit ***supporting evidence*** demonstrating that contracted activities have been implemented and expected results have been achieved.

Such evidence may include, inter alia, attendance lists, event agendas, photos, participant feedback, reports, publications, communication materials, draft legislation, press releases, website statistics, or other relevant documentation.

The exact type of supporting evidence to be submitted shall be specified in the Project Contract.

The financial report shall include:

- a list of project expenditures incurred;

- once per year and at project closure, copies of supporting documents shall be submitted based on the sample requested by the Fund Operator, including invoices, receipts, contracts, timesheets and other accounting documents, together with proof of payment.

Supporting documents shall be submitted only for actual eligible costs incurred when the budget is based on actual costs incurred. When Simplified Cost Options are applied, supporting financial documents shall not be submitted.

Partners from Donor States receiving support below EUR 5,000 are not required to submit supporting financial documents.

11.3. Payments to Projects

Payments of project grants shall be made according to the grant type, following the schedule below, after the required reports have been submitted and approved:

1) Small grants (EUR 10,000–25,000) with project duration of 6–12 months

Time / milestone	Reporting	Payment
Project start	–	50% (advance payment)
Project mid-term	Narrative report + financial report	40%
Project end	Final report + financial report	10% (final payment)

2) Project grants (EUR 25,001–40,000) with project duration of 12–24 months, including

2A) Projects with a duration of 12–15 months

Time / milestone	Reporting	Payment
Project start	–	50% (advance payment)
Month 6	Narrative report + financial report	40%
Project end	Final report + financial report	10% (final payment)

2B) Projects with a duration of 16–24 months

Time / milestone	Reporting	Payment
Project start	–	50% (advance payment)
Month 6	Narrative report + financial report	20%
Month 12	Narrative report + financial report	20%

Month 18 (if the project duration is 21–24 months)	Narrative report + financial report	0%
Project end	Final report + financial report	10% (final payment)

3) Medium-sized strategic projects (EUR 50,001–80,000) with project duration of 12–24 months, including

3A) Projects with a duration of 12–15 months

Time / milestone	Reporting	Payment
Project start	–	50% (advance payment)
Month 6	Narrative report + financial report	40%
Project end	Final report + financial report	10% (final payment)

3B) Projects with a duration of 16–24 months

Time / milestone	Reporting	Payment
Project start	–	40% (advance payment)
Month 6	Narrative report + financial report	25%
Month 12	Narrative report + financial report	25%
Month 18 (if the project duration is 21–24 months)	Narrative report + financial report	0%
Project end	Final report + financial report	10% (final payment)

4) Large strategic projects (EUR 80,001–120,000) with project duration of 18–24 months

Time / milestone	Reporting	Payment
Project start	–	40% (advance payment)
Month 6	Narrative report + financial report	25%
Month 12	Narrative report + financial report	25%
Month 18 (if the project duration is 21–24 months)	Narrative report + financial report	0%
Project end	Final report + financial report	10% (final payment)

11.4. Reporting on Organisational Grants

Project reports shall be submitted every 12 months, by 15 March, and shall consist of the following parts:

- narrative results report;
- financial report.

The narrative results report shall include:

- an overview of Project Promoter's activities during the previous calendar year and an assessment of how the results achieved contributed to the objectives of the call outcome area, together with the outcome and output indicators set out in the application;
- an updated multiannual organisational strategy or work plan;
- an overview of the main communication activities and materials, including a description of how reference has been made to the donors in accordance with the communication requirements of the EEA Civil Society Fund.

The financial report shall include:

- the organisation's balance sheet and income statement for the previous financial year;
- at the end of the implementation period, the Project Promoter shall submit a report by an external auditor confirming that the grant has been used in accordance with the purpose and provisions of the project contract.
- If the Project Promoter commissions annual statutory audit reports for other purposes, the report for the latest year of implementation may be submitted, if it covers the Programme grant and specifically presents the contribution from the Programme.

Progress shall be assessed based on the submitted reports and assessment meetings. The Fund Operator shall organise an annual meeting with the Project Promoter to assess progress in project implementation by 30 April of the following year. Submitted reports shall be approved after the annual meeting.

11.5. Payments to Organisational Grants

Payments for Organisational Grants shall be made according to the following schedule:

Organisational Grants (EUR 150,000) with project duration of 36 months

Time / milestone	Reporting	Payment
Project start	–	EUR 50 000 (advance payment)
Month 12	Narrative report + financial report + annual meeting	EUR 50 000
Month 24	Narrative report + financial report + annual meeting	EUR 35 000
Project end	Narrative report + financial report + annual meeting	EUR 15 000

12. Support and Capacity-Building Provided by the Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations

The **Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations (NENO)** provides the following support to civil society organisations applying for funding:

- information about the Fund, calls for proposals and application requirements, including information events held across Estonia;
- advice and guidance on questions arising during the preparation of project applications.

For civil society organisations awarded funding, **NENO** provides:

- information to support the successful implementation of projects, including information session(s) for grant recipients;
- capacity-building training, workshops and other support activities that strengthen organisational capacity and support project implementation;
- advice and guidance on questions arising during project implementation.

Information, training and advisory services are generally provided in Estonian, except where otherwise justified and explicitly indicated.

13. Complaints

The Fund Operator shall establish a Complaints Committee to effectively process and decide on complaints about suspected non-compliance with the principles of good governance in relation to the implementation of the Programme.

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
- assess each complaint submitted to it in a timely and effective manner
- provide guidance and recommendations regarding follow-up, and
- report back to the complainant on corrective actions when applicable to resolve any assumed incidents of mismanagement.

The Complaints Committee will consist of three members: one member of the Steering Committee of the Fund Operator, one member of Senior Management of the Fund Operator, and an independent expert, external to the Fund.

Programme staff responsible for assessing the project application or monitoring the project in question shall be excluded from the Complaints Committee.

All complaints and alerts related to the implementation of the Programme will be first considered by the Fund Operator. In case a person who submitted a complaint or an alert is not satisfied with the response, he or she has a right to refer the case to the Complaints Committee who will assess the complaint and conclude on the case.

The Complaints Committee will assess whether the decisions taken by the FO adhere to the principles of good governance and rules and procedures established for the management of the Programme. It will not assess any concrete project applications, change the scores of independent evaluators nor change the decisions made by the Selection Committee and the Steering Committee of the Fund Operator.

Information on how to submit a complaint is available on the website of the Fund Operator.

14. Contact Information

EEA Civil Society Fund Estonia website: www.eea-csf.ee

Open Estonia Foundation
Kentmanni 10-18, Tallinn
+372 615 5700

Katrin Enno, Programme Director, katrin@oef.org.ee
Egle Aruvald, Financial Director, egle@oef.org.ee
Ksenia Gutnitšenko-Frolova, Programme Coordinator, ksenia@oef.org.ee
Jete Aljasmäe, Head of Communications, jete@oef.org.ee

Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations
Lõõtsa 8, Tallinn
+372 5373 3130

Eva Berzin, EEA CSF Coordinator, eva@heakodanik.ee

ANNEX 2: RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT FOR THE EEA CIVIL SOCIETY FUND

All programmes and funds supported by the EEA and Norway Grants shall follow the principles of results-based management.

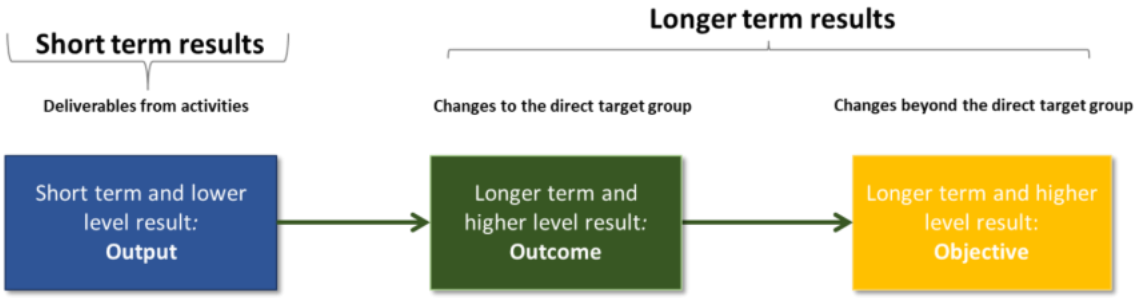
In results-based management, focus is first and foremost on the overall results to be achieved. For the EEA Civil Society Fund, this means focus is on the overall objective. The overall objective is, "A vibrant and resilient civil society protecting and promoting democracy, the rule of law and human rights".

The next step in results-based management is to set a strategy for how to best achieve this overall objective. Results-based management offers a set of tools to do this including result chains, result frameworks, monitoring, and evaluation. We also manage risks for the achievement of results.

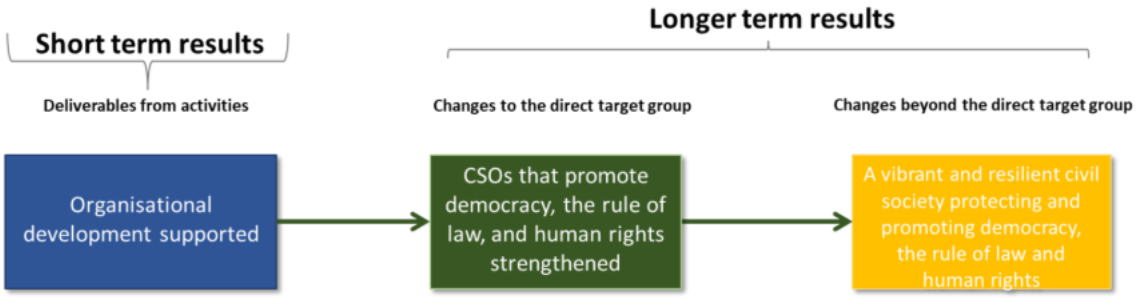
Overall, about results in the EEA Civil Society Fund

A result chain includes lower-level results that are called outputs, medium level results that are called outcomes, and finally the highest-level result that is the objective.

The result chain can be presented in a figure as follows:

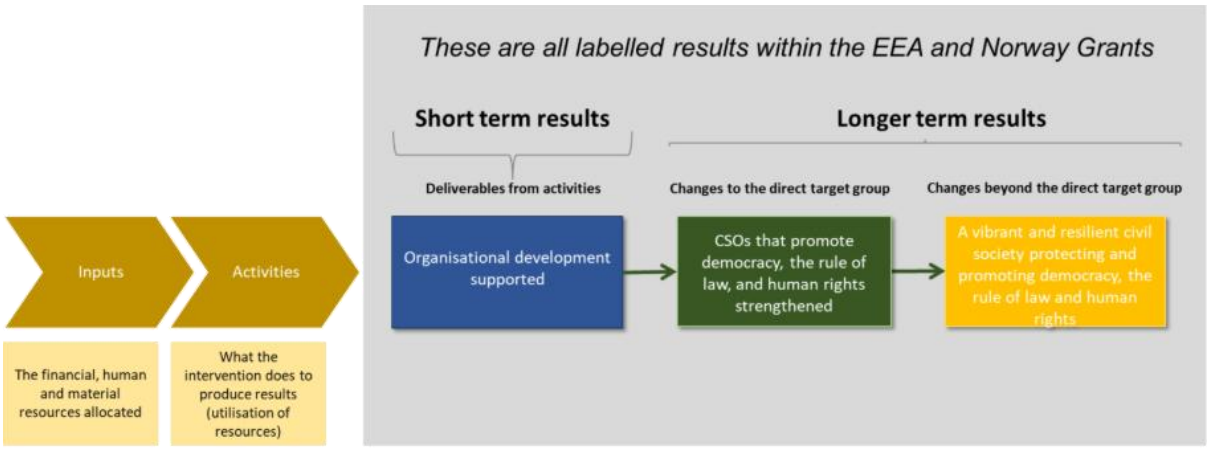


Here is one of the result chains for the EEA Civil Society Fund:

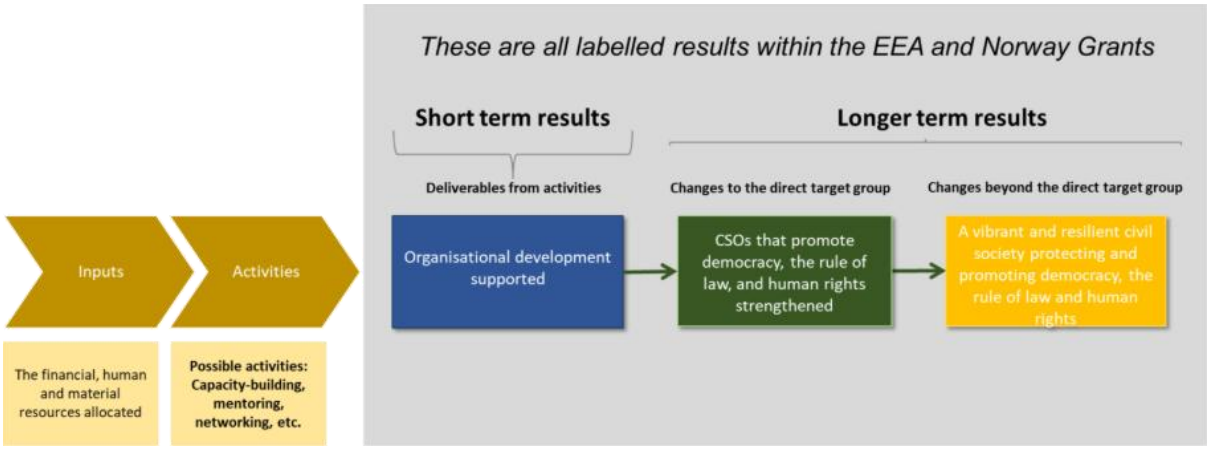


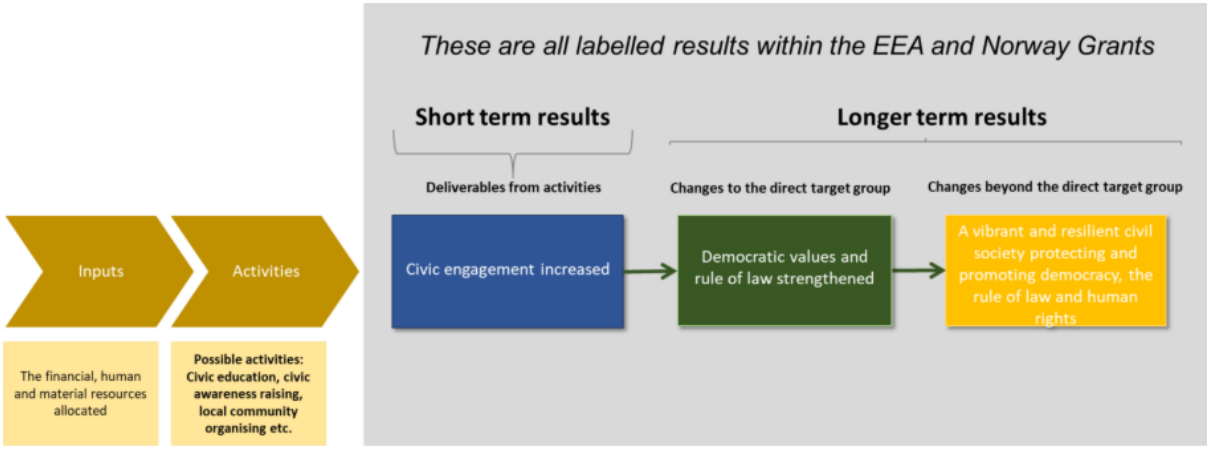
To achieve the outputs, it is necessary to implement activities using the available resources which can be called inputs.

Together with the activities and inputs, the result chain can be presented in a figure as follows:



The two figures below provide general examples of some activities that may be identified to achieve two of the outputs and outcomes in the EEA Civil Society Fund.

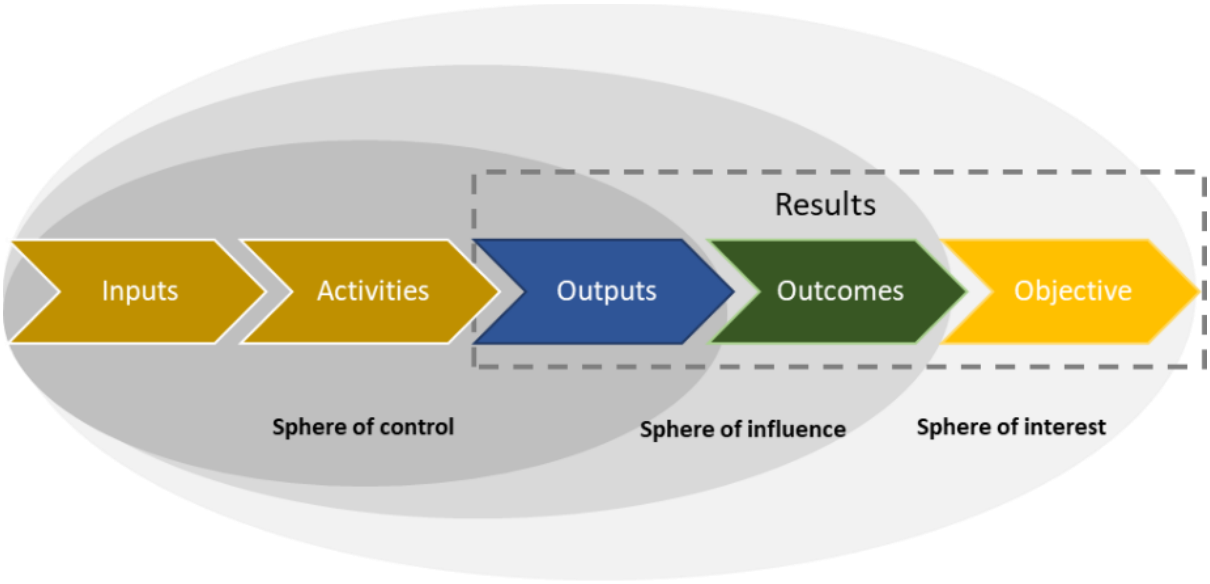




There are assumptions for how one level in the result chain connects to the next. For example, it is an assumption that if CSOs are supported to develop their organisations, then they will be stronger as CSOs. For each assumption it is useful to either provide evidence or plan for evidence through for example an evaluation. For this particular assumption on supporting organisational development, the FMO commissioned an external assessment of organisational grants in 2023 which is available on the EEA and Norway Grants website.

The higher up in the result chain, the less control stakeholders have on the achievement of the desired result. The evidence for how the previous level of the result chain contributes to this higher level of the result chain might also be more ambiguous.

Together with the inputs and activities, the different levels of control along the result chain can be presented in a figure as follows:



Key elements for project result-based management in the EEA Civil Society Fund

The EEA Civil Society Fund follows the Programme model. This means that the desired results at both the outcome and output levels will be derived from projects. As the Civil Society Results Framework specifies what is eligible for support, this means that all projects that would be eligible for support have to contribute to the results expected as per the result framework.

Every project must be situated only under one of the three outcomes (not multiple outcomes). Within the same outcome, projects may contribute to one output or more outputs. In addition to contributing to one single outcome, all projects that include bilateral cooperation must also report on bilateral results.

Each project within the programme can also have its own specific results chains. Applicants are encouraged to check alignment between their project specific results chains with the overall programme results chains. This can help preclude challenges in the implementation and reporting of the projects. However, applicants are not required to develop or work with project specific results chains.

Progress against the EEA Civil Society Fund programme results framework will be measured with the use of indicators. The indicators, including their unit of measurement, data sources of verification, baselines and targets, will be agreed in the project contract.

During implementation, the agreed indicators become a reporting tool. Project Promoters will be responsible for collecting and analysing data to report on the indicators and with narrative against the selected output(s) and outcome.

To ensure accountability and learning, applicants may plan for an evaluation either during or after project implementation.