Iceland Liechtenstein Norway **Civil Society Fund**

OPEN CALL FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOs)

IN CROATIA

CALL FOR EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY PROJECTS AND

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

AVAILABLE FUNDING: 600.000 €

DEADLINE: September 4, 2026 23:59, Zagreb time

Last updated: 22. October – in Sections 6.2.1, 7 and 13

Note: The Croatian version is the official document, in case of differences between the two texts the Croatian version is the valid one.

Slagalica SOLIDARNA PRIPREMA POZOR SMART

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 **Croatia**. 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 **Croatia** has a total allocation of **€ 12.013.120,95,** and out of that € 9.766.349 is intended for project financing. A consortium of Community Foundation Slagalica (hereafter: CF Slagalica), SOLIDARNA - Foundation for Human Rights and Solidarity and Association for Civil Society Development SMART operates the EEA Civil Society Fund in **Croatia** on behalf of the Donor States.

This call targets Civil Society Organisations (hereafter: CSOs) working in the area of democratization, human rights, including minority rights, social justice, gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and LGBTIQ+ rights as well as climate action and environmental protection and has a total allocation of **€ 600.000,00.**

SUMMARY OF THE CALL	
Title of the call	Call for evidence-based advocacy projects
Purpose of the call	The call will provide support to CSOs to conduct policy-relevant research, develop advocacy strategies, engage in sustained public policy dialogue, and carry out independent impact assessments - particularly in policy fields where evidence of results is weak, mixed, missing, or contested.
Outcome	1. Democratic values and rule of law strengthened
Output	1.1. CSO participation in democratic processes increased
Relevant project activities	See section 2.2.4 of this document
Eligible project applicants	Civil society organizations as described in section 3.1. of this document.
Project duration	Between 18 and 24 months
Project grant amount	Between € 100.000 and € 150.000
Co-financing	No co-financing required.
Partnerships	Applications may be submitted in partnership.

	Partnerships with entities from the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) are encouraged. See section 3.2 of this document.
Call available in the following language(s)	Croatian, English
Questions deadline	**August 27, 2026, 23:59 Zagreb time**
Application deadline	**September 4, 2026, 23:59 Zagreb time**

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1. BACKGROUND FOR THE EEA CIVIL SOCIETY FUND IN CROATIA

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 **Croatia** is € **12.013.120,95.**

Through an open tender process, the secretariat of the Donor States – the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) – has selected a consortium led by Community Foundation Slagalica as Fund Operator of the EEA Civil Society Fund in Croatia. The Fund Operator manages the EEA Civil Society Fund in Croatia 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 Croatia will include 12 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 Croatia and in the three Donor States Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

The programme uses a results-based management approach. 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 Croatia: www.eea-csf.hr

[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 of this document.

2. FOCUS OF THIS CALL

2.1 PURPOSE OF THIS CALL

The CSF Croatia programme (hereafter: Programme) aims to strengthen a vibrant and resilient civil society in Croatia. It specifically supports civil society actors that protect and promote democracy, the rule of law and human rights, with a focus on inclusion, participation and social justice. It will support watchdog and human-rights CSOs, non-profit media and community-based organisations to engage in advocacy, civic education, democratic participation and information integrity, with a particular focus on groups facing structural and intersectional discrimination, including Roma, women, LGBTIQ+ persons, migrants, refugees, youth, persons with disabilities and residents of under-served regions. In line with the EEA and Norway Grants' mission, the programme will also advance a specific bilateral objective: to deepen and institutionalise cooperation between Croatian civil society actors and entities from Donor States, as well as regional partners, in order to share knowledge, innovative approaches and joint advocacy strategies in the fields of democracy, rule of law and human rights.

The Call for evidence-based advocacy projects (hereafter: Call) will provide support to CSOs to conduct policy-relevant research, develop advocacy strategies, engage in sustained public policy dialogue, and carry out independent impact assessments—particularly in thematic areas where the outcomes of public and social investment remain unclear.

The Call responds to a structurally constrained civic environment in Croatia in which civil society organisations working on democracy, the rule of law and human rights face limited access to meaningful policymaking, shrinking civic space, fragmented coordination, and insufficient resources for sustained advocacy and research.

Despite clear public demand for accountability, evidence and independent oversight, CSO contributions to public consultations and policy processes are often symbolic, late-stage, or disconnected from decision-making. At the same time, advocacy actors face funding gaps, hostile narratives, legal intimidation, organisational strain, and weak cross-sector collaboration—particularly with academia and research institutions.

These conditions collectively undermine the quality, credibility and impact of civic participation in democratic processes and point to a systemic need to strengthen evidence-based advocacy as a foundation for more effective, legitimate and resilient civil society engagement.

The overall aim of the Call is to strengthen the role of civil society organisations in democratic governance by enhancing their capacity to generate high-quality, policy-relevant evidence and to translate that evidence into strategic, coordinated advocacy.

Through supporting applied research, policy analysis, structured dialogue and informed public engagement, the Call seeks to increase meaningful CSO participation in democratic processes at local, national and EU levels, thereby contributing to stronger democratic values, rule of law, and protection of fundamental rights.

All projects selected under this call must contribute to outcome 1 Democratic values and rule of law strengthened, and output 1.1 CSO participation in democratic processes increased. **When applying, the applicants should ensure that their project clearly fits under and contributes to the specified Outcome and Output.**

The detailed focus of the call is described below.

2.2 OUTCOME 1: DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND RULE OF LAW STRENGTHENED

Within the programme's results-based management approach, the primary focus is on the overall results to be achieved. The programme uses a results framework to support this focus and to define what is eligible for support. Each project must be assigned to a single outcome and, within that outcome, for the purpose of this Call, to one output[2].

This call addresses the following outcome and, within that outcome, the following output:

- **Democratic values and rule of law strengthened**
  - **Output 1.1. CSO participation in democratic processes increased**

Output 1.1 aims to increase CSO participation in democratic processes at local, national and EU levels through more consistent and impactful contributions to applied research, policy analysis, public consultations and institutional dialogue.

The Call is designed as an intervention under Output 1.1 because it directly addresses the "demand side" of democratic governance: the ability of independent civic actors to generate credible evidence, translate it into advocacy strategies, and participate in policy dialogue with proposals grounded in data and community realities.

2.2.1 Country specific focus areas

Applications from Roma-led CSOs, CSOs working with and for inclusion and empowerment of Roma, and CSOs partnering with informal groups working with and for inclusion and empowerment of Roma, Roma women and girls, and Roma community actors are encouraged.

2.2.2 Needs addressed

Croatian CSOs working on democracy, rule of law and rights protection operate in an environment shaped by shrinking civic space, declining public trust, and weakened institutional channels for participation. Civil society agency is constrained by interconnected political, institutional, socio-economic and organisational pressures that directly undermine sustainable public policy advocacy and meaningful civic participation.

This disabling environment is reflected in wider trends of civic disengagement and persistently low trust in political institutions, as well as limited opportunities for CSOs to influence decision-making. Based on the Need Assessment[3] conducted by the FO in 2025, there is a widening gap between values and practice in democratic participation and participatory mechanisms are often perceived as "hollowed" or reduced to tokenistic processes, with key advisory bodies perceived as stalled or co-opted.

This context is reinforced by the Needs Assessment's findings that CSOs' contributions to consultations are frequently symbolic and late-stage—used to validate rather than shape policy choices—reducing incentives and effectiveness of public engagement.

These challenges are not isolated—they form a systemic barrier that limits the ability of civil society to act as an effective democratic actor.

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[2] An output is a lower level result area that contributes to the outcome which is a higher level result area. Together, the output and outcome form a result chain where each level is meant to contribute to the results on the next level. See more information in Annex 2 of this document.

[3] Full document available here: https://zaklada-slagalica.hr/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NEEDS-ASSESSMENT-REPORT-CSF-CROATIA-BID-FINAL-APRIL-5-2025.pdf

At the same time, there is clear public demand for credible evidence and accountability: national survey data[4] indicate that citizens broadly support CSOs' roles in policy advocacy and independent research, even while overall trust in CSOs remains uneven and vulnerable to politicised narratives and disinformation.

These contradictions point to a structural need: investing in high-quality, policy-relevant evidence and more strategic, coordinated advocacy can both strengthen CSO participation in democratic processes and rebuild legitimacy for civic action.

Several mutually reinforcing barriers can be identified that particularly affect advocacy capacity and policy impact:

- Restricted access to meaningful policymaking and dialogue. Many CSOs report that institutional engagement mechanisms simulate inclusion without enabling influence, while critical national-level frameworks for civil society development have lapsed or weakened.

- Funding gaps for research, watchdog work and policy engagement. Advocacy-oriented organisations face insufficient and discriminatory funding patterns, with politically sensitive topics (e.g., gender equality, LGBTIQ+ rights, minority integration, environmental justice) are especially exposed to cuts and marginalisation. Limited access to resources specifically for advocacy, research and public policy work further hinders CSOs' influence and impact.

- Hostile narratives, disinformation and legal intimidation. The operating space is further constrained by smear campaigns, delegitimisation, and strategic lawsuits (including SLAPPs), which collectively discourage participation, increase risk and reduce the sustainability of advocacy work—particularly for organisations representing marginalised groups.

- Insufficient cross-sector cooperation and weak links with academia. The aforementioned Needs Assessment points to fragmented collaboration with academic institutions, limiting access to data analytics, policy research and strategic planning tools—precisely the inputs required for credible, policy-relevant advocacy and for strengthening CSOs' influence in public debate.

These constraints are not sector-specific; they affect advocacy actors across fields (human rights, anti-discrimination, environmental justice, women's rights, migrant protection), but are particularly damaging in policy areas where public investment exists without transparent outcomes, robust evaluation, or independent oversight. The CSF Croatia therefore prioritises evidence-based advocacy as a practical mechanism to close the gap between public resources, policy commitments, and real-life impacts on communities.

2.2.3 Expected results

Expected results in Output 1.1 include increase in the participation of CSOs in democratic processes at local, national and EU levels. In practical terms, this means that supported projects should demonstrate how they will influence policy processes through evidence, structured advocacy and engagement with decision-makers. This will be reflected in their more consistent and impactful contributions to applied research, policy analysis, public consultations and institutional dialogue. Civic engagement will grow as CSOs enhance their capacity to mobilize constituencies as well as to build alliances with other CSOs, media, and academia. Projects are expected to demonstrate a clear and credible pathway from activities to results, including how evidence will be translated into concrete advocacy outcomes.

[4] https://ceraneo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/CIVIL-SOCIETY-INDEX-IN-CROATIA-FOR-2021.pdf; https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/68185f44-c7b2-4f29-a3da-973e6ec80dd7/content;

Each project is expected to align with these main expected results, and report on them narratively as well as quantitatively, through the use of selected indicators.

To track progress, projects should indeed 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.**

Each project must contribute to:

– at least one indicator at the outcome level, and

– at least two indicators at the output level.[6]

However, indicators alone will not be sufficient to demonstrate results; applicants must also explain the qualitative change their project aims to achieve.

For the purpose of project design, applicants are advised to focus on the relevance and feasibility of selected indicators rather than on their number. Indicators should reflect results that are within the reasonable influence of the project.

Outcome/ Output	Expected programme results	Indicator	Description of the indicator	Unit of measurement
Outcome 1	Democratic values and rule of law strengthened	Number of national, regional or local laws, policies or regulations proposed by or commented on by CSOs	This indicator measures the total number of instances where CSOs have formally proposed or formally commented on draft or existing policies, laws, or regulations at any level of government (national, regional, or local). "Proposed by CSOs" means that a policy, law, or regulation has been initiated or submitted in written form by one or more supported CSOs to a (local) government authority for consideration or adoption. Examples: - A CSO coalition drafts and submits a proposed environmental regulation to the Ministry of Environment. - A CSO develops a model law or policy paper formally shared with legislators or public agencies. "Commented on by CSOs" means that a supported CSO or group of CSOs provides formal, documented input or feedback on a draft or existing policy, law, or regulation through official consultations, written	Cumulative number

[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.

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

Outcome/ Output	Expected programme results	Indicator	Description of the indicator	Unit of measurement
			submissions, position papers, or public hearings. Examples: - A CSO submits written comments on a draft gender equality bill during a public consultation. - A CSO presents recommendations during a parliamentary hearing or local council meeting.	
		Number of times CSO inputs in a policy initiative are acknowledged by public authorities	This indicator reflects greater government recognition of civil society contributions to policymaking, effectiveness of CSO advocacy and policy impact and enhanced legitimacy and role of CSOs. Total number of times CSO inputs in a policy initiative (law, policy, strategy, etc.) are referenced in writing or adopted by government or other institutions at any level (local or national). Acknowledgement is defined as: a. Direct references to CSO inputs in official documents (e.g., laws, policies, strategies, reports, meeting minutes). b. Inclusion of CSO recommendations in action plans, draft regulations, or programme designs. c. Recognition of CSO inputs in communication materials (e.g., press releases or public statements by officials). The same input can be acknowledged several times: it should be counted every time it is acknowledged in writing. Verbal acknowledgment in public forums, consultation meetings, or hearings do NOT count towards this indicator as these must be verifiable, i.e., recorded in writing.	Cumulative number
Output 1.1	CSO participation in democratic processes increased	Number of consultation processes with a public institution facilitated by CSOs	This indicator reflects increased civic participation and public interest in shaping policies, and more inclusive policymaking. Total number of consultation processes with public decision-making bodies that are organised or facilitated by supported CSOs. This indicator highlights the role of CSOs in bridging citizens and government to ensure inclusive and responsive decision-making. Public participation can be defined as a process through which the government actively seeks	Cumulative number

Outcome/ Output	Expected programme results	Indicator	Description of the indicator	Unit of measurement
			the opinions of citizens (interested and affected groups) for a policy initiative. The consultation processes can be at any level: local or national. Consultation processes refer to structured, interactive forums or processes aimed at gathering input, feedback, or recommendations from stakeholders (e.g., citizens, interest groups, experts) on policy, programmatic, or governance issues. Examples of consultation processes facilitated by CSOs include: a. Public hearings b. Town hall meetings c. Stakeholder workshops d. Online or offline focus group discussions e. Surveys or citizen panels contributing to a decision-making process For consultation processes to count towards this indicator, the supported CSOs must be actively involved in organising, managing, or moderating the consultation processes.	
		Number of policy advocacy outputs delivered by supported CSOs	This indicator reflects CSO's engagement in influencing government policies, laws, and regulations. Policy advocacy targets policymakers, legislators, and government agencies. This indicator tracks the total count of tangible products produced and disseminated as part of policy advocacy efforts led by supported CSOs Policy advocacy outputs include (but are not limited to): a. Policy briefs b. Position papers c. Press releases or media coverage d. Legislative proposals e. Parliamentary submissions (oral or written) To count towards this indicator, the advocacy outputs must have been actively disseminated, presented, or shared with the intended audience(s), such as government bodies, legislators or policymakers. Reports/publications, legal actions, consultations with/meetings with public	Cumulative number

Outcome/ Output	Expected programme results	Indicator	Description of the indicator	Unit of measurement
			authorities facilitated by supported CSOs as well as awareness-raising/advocacy campaigns do NOT count towards this indicator as other indicators track these.	
		Number of evidence-based publications produced and disseminated by supported CSOs	This indicator reflects informed CSO advocacy, policy influence, and public awareness, and CSOs' role in generating and sharing knowledge. Total number of evidence-based publications on a topic relevant to the CSF programme that have been produced and disseminated by supported CSOs under the Grants. Evidence-based publications are written works, such as articles, reports, or books, that rely on systematically collected, analysed, and interpreted data to support their claims or conclusions. They use systematic research, analysis, or a reliable body of existing data to underpin their content. These publications adhere to a rigorous methodology to ensure that their findings are reliable, valid, and applicable to real-world contexts. To count as disseminated, the publications must be shared with stakeholders, including policymakers, practitioners, or the public, through channels like print distribution, online publication, workshops, or presentations.	Cumulative number

2.2.4 Possible activities

Project activities should be a part of a coherent advocacy intervention, rather than stand-alone actions. Projects primarily focused on training, events, or awareness-raising, without a clear and demonstrable link to policy influence, will not be considered competitive. To support the achievement of the expected results, applicants are invited to consult the non-exhaustive list of eligible project activities set out below.

1. Policy-relevant research and analysis

- Design and implementation of applied research, studies and analyses addressing issues related to democratic governance, rule of law, human rights and civic space;
- Collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to identify policy gaps, implementation challenges or unintended effects of laws, strategies or public investments;
- Legal, institutional and policy analyses supporting advocacy objectives;
- Cooperation with academic institutions, independent researchers or subject-matter experts to ensure methodological soundness and credibility.

2. Development of evidence-based advocacy strategies and policy proposals

- Translation of research findings into structured advocacy strategies with clearly defined objectives, target institutions, stakeholders and decision-making processes;
- Stakeholder and power mapping to identify entry points for policy influence;

- Preparation of policy briefs, recommendations, position papers, shadow reports or alternative policy proposals grounded in evidence;
- Co-creation of advocacy agendas within coalitions, networks or platforms.

3. Engagement in public policy dialogue and democratic decision-making

- Participation in formal and informal consultation mechanisms, advisory bodies, working groups and public hearings at local, national or EU level;
- Organisation of structured policy dialogues, expert roundtables or deliberative formats involving CSOs, public authorities and other relevant stakeholders;
- Advocacy actions aimed at improving transparency, accountability and inclusiveness of public decision-making processes;
- Contributions to EU-level policy processes relevant to civic space and democracy, including alignment with European strategies and monitoring frameworks.

4. Independent monitoring and impact assessment

- Monitoring of the implementation and effects of laws, policies, strategies or publicly funded programmes, particularly where outcomes or impacts are insufficiently assessed;
- Development and application of methodologies and indicators for assessing policy impact on citizens and communities, including marginalised and under-represented groups;
- Preparation of independent monitoring or impact assessment reports intended to inform policymakers, civil society and the wider public;
- Use of monitoring findings to refine advocacy positions and policy recommendations.

5. Dissemination of evidence and advocacy outputs

- Targeted dissemination of research findings and policy recommendations to public authorities, media, civil society and other stakeholders;
- Development of communication materials that translate evidence into accessible, policy-relevant formats (e.g. policy briefs, summaries, visualisations);
- Organisation of public presentations, briefings or stakeholder events supporting evidence uptake in policy debates;
- Outreach to affected communities and constituencies to ensure that advocacy is grounded in lived experience.

6. Coalition-building and cross-sectoral cooperation for advocacy

- Establishment or strengthening of thematic coalitions, platforms or alliances for coordinated advocacy;
- Joint advocacy initiatives involving CSOs from different thematic fields or regions;
- Cooperation with independent media, academia or other societal actors to amplify evidence-based advocacy and public accountability;
- Participation in national, regional or European advocacy networks relevant to the project objectives.

7. Learning-oriented and adaptive advocacy approaches

- Reflection and learning processes to assess advocacy effectiveness and adapt strategies over time;
- Documentation and sharing of advocacy methodologies, lessons learned and transferable practices;
- Contribution to collective learning within the civil society sector on evidence-based advocacy.

The following activities are **not eligible** under this Call:

- Provision of direct social services or humanitarian assistance not linked to policy analysis or advocacy objectives;
- General awareness-raising or public campaigns that are not grounded in research, policy analysis or a clearly defined advocacy strategy;
- Party-political activities, electoral campaigning or support to political parties or candidates;
- One-off events, conferences or publications without a coherent advocacy framework and follow-up;
- Academic or theoretical research without a clear link to public policy influence or advocacy use;
- Training or capacity-building activities focused primarily on internal organisational development;
- Routine organisational operating activities not directly related to the implementation of advocacy activities under the supported programme;
- Activities that do not demonstrate a clear link between evidence generation and policy influence.

2.2.5 Conditions

When designing project proposal, applicants must take into account that projects proposals will not be considered for funding if they:

- do not include at least one project activity/set of activities whose implementation will directly contribute to the achievement of mandatory output 1.1 and at least two corresponding indicators;

- do not show OR explain a clear link between the implementation of the proposed project activities and a measurable contribution to the achievement of mandatory outcome 1 and at least one corresponding indicator;

- do not present a credible link between evidence generation, advocacy activities and expected policy-level change

Also, applicants should bear in mind that within the framework of this Programme, **the provision of social services can only be supported if these services are necessary for enhancing advocacy, community participation, and/or civic engagement.**

3. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND PARTNERS

All eligible applicants, partners and project proposals must abide by the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and comply with the fundamental rights and obligations enshrined in relevant instruments and standards. The applicants and partners will confirm this in the Applicant and Partner declarations of compliance accordingly. Selection Committee and Steering Committee will have the authority and obligation to propose the rejection of the project application in case the aforementioned principles are not respected or disregarded.

3.1 Eligible applicants

The applicant is the entity responsible for the overall initiation, preparation and implementation of the project (the project promoter). Eligible applicants are CSOs that are established and registered in Croatia and fall within the following definition:

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

More specifically, eligible applicants must meet the following general conditions:

- Are non-profit, being organisations that have not been created nor operate to generate personal profit. Although it may have paid staff and may engage in revenue-generating activities, it does not distribute profits to its members nor to its board. Where revenue-generating activities are undertaken, these do not represent the purpose of the non-profit organisation, but are a means to support its mission and values;
- Have members who do not have any direct commercial interest in the outcome of the work of the organisation or of its commercial activities, and the organisation does not pursue the commercial or professional interests of its members. This definition therefore excludes trade- and professional associations, where the aims and purposes of the association is to further the specific interests of its members only;
- Are voluntary in nature, formed voluntarily by groups or individuals, and where the organisation is membership based, membership is not compulsory for any group or individual.
- Conducts transparent financial operations validated through Register of Non-profit Organizations (RNO) with Croatian Ministry of Finance or provide sufficient evidence of the transparent financial operations by other means.

More specifically, and in line with national laws and regulations, following types of CSOs are considered eligible **if they fulfil the above principles**:

Association – established, registered and operating in accordance with the Law on Associations (Official Gazette 74/14, 70/17, 98/19, 151/22)

Foundation - established, registered and operating in accordance with the Law on Foundations (Official Gazette 106/18, 98/19, 151/22)

Artistic organisation – established in accordance with the Act on the Rights of Self-Employed Artists and the Promotion of Cultural and Artistic Creativity, and registered in the Register of Artistic Organisations (Official Gazette 43/96,44/96, 127/100, 177/04)

Cooperative – registered in the Register of Non-Profit Organisations and established in accordance with Article 66(1) of the Cooperatives Act (Official Gazette 34/11, 125/13, 76/14, 114/18, 98/19)

Organisations falling outside the above categories may be considered eligible on a case-by-case basis if they fall within the above stated definition and fulfil the principles described above.

Important:

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).

Religious institutions and political parties, social partners[7] or profit-distributing cooperatives are not eligible applicants.

CSOs led by marginalized groups, working on democracy, the rule of law and human rights, and active in the field of advocacy are strongly encouraged to apply.

3.2 Eligible project partners

Projects may be implemented in partnership with project partners. Partners share a common economic or social goal with the project promoter, which is to be realised through the implementation of the project. 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[8], Beneficiary States[9] or Bosnia and Herzegovina,, Serbia, or Montenegro;
- An international organisation or body or agency thereof;
- Informal, ad hoc and self-help organisations (including grassroots organisations) that are not registered legal entities (hereinafter referred to as "informal groups"). Informal groups are considered eligible project partners provided that:
    - their members are legal residents or based in either the Donor States, Beneficiary States or a country outside the European Economic Area that has a common border with Croatia;
    - 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 **Croatia**, who signs the partnership agreement on behalf of the group.

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 Croatian or in English, and should contain the following: i) provisions on the roles and responsibilities of the parties; ii) 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; iii) currency exchange rules for such expenditure and reimbursement; iv) provisions on the forms of grants for all costs in the project and their calculation method; v) requirements for the submission of proof of expenditure and/or proof of conditions fulfilled where unit costs or lump sums are used; vi) provisions on audits of the project; vii) a detailed budget, which foresees flexible rules for shifts between budget headings; and viii) provisions on dispute resolution.

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

[7] Social partners are defined as trade unions and employers' negotiating bodies, as defined by the EU

[8] Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

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

A project partnership shall not be mistaken for sub-contracting. Project partners always share a common economic or social goal through the implementation of the project, and are actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of the project. In contrast, sub-contracting is aimed at one or several specific deliverables, e.g. services or equipment to realise a specific activity within the project. Sub-contracting shall always be carried out based on an appropriate service or purchase contract. Please see further details on sub-contracting in chapter 4.3.1.

3.3 Number of proposals and partnerships

Each individual applicant can submit **only one project proposal** in this call as a **lead applicant**.
The same organization can be a partner in one or more projects in this call.

Each organization can participate in **one or more project proposals in a partner role under this Call**.

In the event that the Applicant submits more than one application, the application that was submitted first chronologically will be considered in the administrative evaluation process, while the others will be rejected.

4. PROJECT CONDITIONS

Project duration	Between 18 and 24 months
Project grant amount	Between € 100.000 and € 150.000
Indicative start of project implementation	November 1, 2026
Final date of eligibility of expenditure (depending on the start of the project implementation)	no later than 30 April 2031

The cumulative amount of grant funding awarded to a single entity under the Civil Society Fund in Croatia shall not exceed EUR 210,000. For the purposes of this calculation, the total grant amount awarded to an entity in its capacity as Project Promoter and/or project partner in projects selected under individual calls shall be taken into account.

4.1 Co-financing

The grant rate of the project is 100%.

4.2 Location of the project

In order to contribute to the relevant outputs, outcomes and objective of the Call as well as the overall objective of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms, i.e. to reduce social and economic inequalities in the EEA and strengthen bilateral relations between the Croatia and donor states, it is expected that the majority of project activities will be implemented in Croatia.

4.3 Eligible expenditure

Eligible expenditures of projects are those actually incurred by the Project Promoter or the project partner, which meet the following criteria:

• Incurred within the eligibility period defined in the project contract;

• Directly related to the subject of the project;

• Indicated in the approved project budget;

• Proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;

• Used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective(s) of the project;

• Compliant with the principles of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness;

• Identifiable and verifiable, and are recorded in the accounting records of the Project Promoter/Partner (not applicable to costs reported under Simplified Cost Options - SCOs);

• Compliant with applicable national legislation.

Expenditures are considered to have been incurred when the cost has been invoiced, paid and the subject matter delivered (in case of goods) or performed (in case of services and works). Exceptionally, costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the final month of eligibility are also deemed to be incurred within the dates of eligibility if the costs are paid by the end of the next month after the final date of eligibility.

4.3.1 Eligible cost categories

(a) the cost of personnel:

Staff costs may include:

1. Employees working under employment contract (including social security charges and other statutory costs)

2. Natural persons working under a contract other than an employment contract, provided that:

- The person works under the instructions and supervision of the project promoter/project partner and, unless otherwise agreed with the project promoter/project partner, in the premises of the project promoter/project partner.
- The results of work belong to the project promoter/project partner.
- The person is integrated in the project implementation similarly to regular staff.
- The remuneration is comparable to employees performing equivalent tasks under an employment contract with the project promoter/project partner.
- The person does not act as an external expert or subcontractor.

Personnel costs in this Call are to be calculated as real costs.

(b) travel and subsistence:

Travel must be clearly linked to the delivery of the project and carried out by the staff of the project promoter/project partner and/ or project participant (including volunteers). When choosing transport and accommodation, costs should be reasonable and represent good value for money.

Important:

• Travel and accommodation costs of participants of trainings/events should be budgeted for and reported under category “Consumables and supplies”
• Travel and accommodation costs of external experts and service providers should be budgeted for and reported under Costs of services (subcontracting).

(c) the full purchase price of new or second hand equipment, provided that it is proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project**;**

(d) costs of consumables and supplies;

(e) costs entailed by other contracts awarded by the project promoter or project partner for the purposes of carrying out the project, provided that the awarding complies with the applicable rules on procurement[10]

(f) costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the grant contract e.g. audit costs

(g) indirect costs, e.g. rent, utilities, administrative and accounting staff costs, IT support and maintenance and general office maintenance.

Costs related to reconstruction, renovation, or refurbishment of real estate shall not exceed 50% of the eligible direct cost of the project.

4.4 Ineligible expenditures

The following costs shall not be 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 imposed by the project contract;
- costs related to purchase of land or real estate;
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- exchange 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;
- excessive or reckless expenditure; and
- re-granting.

4.5 Form of eligible expenditures

Within this Call, eligible project expenditures may take the form of actual incurred costs or flat-rate simplified cost option (SCO). SCO refers to pre-defined amounts or percentages that represent the best possible approximation of actual (real) eligible costs incurred in practice when implementing an action. SCOs are an alternative to reimbursement based on real costs. When SCOs are applied, tracing of every euro of expenditure to supporting documents is not required.

Following forms of grant are available within this Call:

- Option A – flat rate SCO. – staff cost budgeted as actual incurred cost (basis cost) and 40 % of eligible direct staff costs to cover all remaining eligible costs. Indirect costs are included in the "all other eligible costs" covered by the flat rate and cannot be claimed separately.

- Option B. – direct costs budgeted as actual incurred cost in eligible cost categories, indirect costs are calculated as flat rate of 7% of direct eligible costs. Reimbursement of actual eligible costs incurred by the Project Promoter and/or Project Partner for the purpose of successful completion of

[10] For contracts above EUR 15,000 and the Project Promoter shall ensure fair competition between potential providers for example by way of effective price comparison.

the Project. The Project Promoter must provide proof of expenses for all of the direct costs (e.g., the cost has been invoiced, the invoice paid, and the subject matter delivered or performed).

The specific SCO to be applied, its rates/amounts, and calculation methods are defined in advance and confirmed in the Project Contract and Partnership Agreement. Once agreed, SCOs cannot be modified during the project to compensate for under- or overspending.

Retrospective application of SCO for projects already selected and being implemented based on real costs is not allowed.

The applicant shall submit a project budget based on template A or B available within the E-grant system. Please note that the inclusion of an expenditure item in a project budget approved by the Fund Operator shall not be considered as confirmation of the eligibility of that expenditure item.

4.6 Procurement rules

National and European Union law on public procurement shall be complied with at any level in the implementation of the project.

Notwithstanding provisions of national law that exempt CSOs from public procurement, the project contract shall contain provisions on procurement within projects that are above the European Union thresholds for procurement.

For contracts above EUR 15,000 and below the European Union thresholds, the Project Promoter shall ensure fair competition between potential providers for example by way of effective price comparison.

4.7 Payment of the grant

The grant will be paid in euro (€).

The grant will be paid in instalments defined in the project contract. For details see section 8.3.1.

5. HOW TO APPLY

The Programme uses the E-grant system for all administrative and project-related operations connected with its grant activities.

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

The deadline for applications is August 31, 2026, at 23:59 Zagreb time.

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

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

Work in the E-grant system is divided into three levels:

- Completion and submission of the grant application
- Evaluation of grant applications – administrative and expert assessment of project applications
- Project module, which includes:
    - Basic project documents
    - Submission and approval of project reports

- Monitoring and processing of project output data, as well as communication between the Project Promoter and the Fund Operator.

5.1 Instructions for Completing and Submitting the Grant Application

After logging into the online grant system and selecting the relevant call, outcome and output the applicant completes the application form. The application form is fully integrated into the E-grant system, where applicants can find detailed instructions directly within the system.

Instructions are provided only for the budget section of the application, with the aim of clarifying its correct preparation, as follows:

5.1.1 Instructions for Preparing the Budget

Applicants shall begin by selecting one of the two budget types available in the budget section of the application.

Types of Budget forms:

Type A – suitable mainly when personnel costs represent the majority of the total project budget.

Cost categories:

- Personnel costs – must be documented (based on real personnel costs).

- Other costs – calculated as a flat rate of 40% of declared personnel costs for project grant. No supporting documentation is required for these costs.

Type B – recommended when the majority of direct costs are non-personnel costs such as services, materials, or travel.

Cost categories:

- Direct project costs – must be documented by supporting documentation.

- Indirect costs – calculated as a flat rate of 7% of declared direct costs (no supporting documentation is required).

The next step in completing the budget form is to click “Project” which indicates whether the project will be implemented with or without a partner/partners. After making this selection, a table will expand where, in the column “Planned expenditures / budget”, you should enter the estimated project costs. Based on entered data, the system will then present two budget type options (A or B) reflecting the available simplified cost methods. The system automatically verifies the minimum and maximum grant amounts applicable to each grant type. If the limit is exceeded, an error message will appear.

The third step in completing the budget form – click the “Type of budget” to select the budget type the Applicant will use when submitting the grant application.

Below we provide instructions for completing the budget as well as the requested documentation for project financial reporting for budget type A and B.

Instructions for completing the budget:

Budget Type A:

Under Budget Type A, the budget includes two categories of expenditures:

Expenditure Category	Instructions for Completion	Requested documentation for financial reporting
1. Personnel Costs	Based on actual salary/remuneration payments: In this case, the "Hourly Rate Calculation Table" is not required. Enter the planned salaries/remunerations in the budget according to the instructions in the E-grant system. The amount of the monthly remuneration may vary according to the actual calculation and payment.	Monthly – pay slips and proof of salary payments
	Add new rows to include additional staff members; the total amount of personnel costs is displayed on the right side of the screen.	
2. Other Costs	Determined as a flat rate of 40% of personnel costs	Not reported

Budget Types B:

For Budget Type B, the budget consists of six expenditure categories. The table below presents the budget structure, along with instructions for completion and the requested documentation for financial reporting for each type of expenditure category.

Expenditure Category	Instructions for Completion	Requested documentation for financial reporting
Direct Costs		
Personnel Costs	Complete according to the instructions provided for Budget Type A	Same as for Type A
Travel Expenses	Provide justification/consistency with project activities and describe the calculation method	In full compliance with the Accounting Act and the Travel Allowances Act
Consumables	Provide justification/consistency with project activities and describe the calculation method. Indicate whether the expenditure is related to renovation or refurbishment These expenses may represent a maximum of 50% of total eligible direct costs.	In full compliance with the Accounting Act and procurement rules
Services / Subcontracting		
Equipment Costs		
Other Direct Costs	Provide justification/consistency with	In full compliance with the Accounting Act

	project activities and describe the calculation method	
Indirect Costs (flat rate)	7% of eligible direct costs	Not reported

The final table of the budget is the Summary, with separate columns for the applicant and the partner, including a dedicated control total for expenditures related to renovation or refurbishment.

Note on Budget Adequacy:

When assessing a grant application, the Fund Operator verifies the adequacy, justification, and realism of the requested amount. Budgeted amounts must align with the project's objectives, activities and planned outputs and must correspond to standard market prices and the scope of activities described in the project proposal.

Budget items that are unreasonable or insufficiently justified may be adjusted or reduced during the project assessment process.

5.2 Mandatory Annexes to the Grant Application

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

Annex No. 1a: Partnership Declaration (if the project is implemented in partnership);

Annex No. 1b: Partnership Declaration in English (if the project is implemented in partnership with a foreign organization)

Annex No. 2: Applicant Declaration by the person responsible

All forms for Annexes are available at www.eea-csf.hr and in the E-grant system of the Programme.

All Annexes must be submitted in .pdf format.

In addition, the Project applicant shall include in their application the Statutes of partners – if this is not freely available online (if applicable).

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

6. ADMINISTRATIVE, ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Prior to the quality evaluation of the project proposals, the eligibility of the applicants and administrative compliance assessment will be done based on the administrative and eligibility compliance criteria presented in tables below. The Fund Operator can request for additional information or clarifications referring to administrative compliance criteria.

6.1 Administrative criteria

Administrative compliance is checked against the following criteria:

Criteria	**Meeting the criteria**		**Notes**
Application is submitted via E-grant system.	YES	NO	Rejection

Application is submitted within the deadline given on the front page and in chapter 5 of this document.	YES	NO	Rejection
Application form is completed in Croatian language.	YES	NO	Rejection
Declaration by the legal representative of the Applicant, signed and stamped, is submitted in E-grant system	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Short summary on the project is prepared in English language.	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Partnership declaration of each partner, as per chapter 5.1, signed and stamped, by the legal representative of partner is submitted in E-grant system.	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Applicant submitted only one proposal to the Call	YES	NO	Only the first delivered proposal may remain in the process of assessment, while other are rejected as ineligible[11].

6.2 Eligibility criteria

Eligibility is checked against the following criteria:

Criteria	**Meeting the criteria**		**Notes**
Applicant is an eligible civil-society organization as per chapter 3.1 of these Guidelines.	YES	NO	rejection
Partner organisation(s) is (are) eligible as per chapter 3.2 of these Guidelines.	YES	NO	rejection
Project duration is between 18 and 24 months.	YES	NO	rejection
Requested grant amount is between €100.000 and €150.000.	YES	NO	rejection
Applicant is registered at RNO and conducts transparent financial operations.[12]	YES	NO	rejection

[11] If the applicant determines that it has submitted an incomplete application before the application deadline, the applicant may send an official message to the e-mail address csf@zaklada-slagalica.hr to withdraw such application and submit a new application before the application deadline. It is not possible to send a new application, correction of the submitted application or supplement to the application after the deadline for application as defined in these Guidelines.

[12] Applicants who are non-profit CSO by their legal status, by transparent financial operations, are required to have submitted to the FINA, for the Croatian Ministry of Finance, an annual revenue and expenditure account and a balance sheet or annual

In case the application will miss certain parts (documents or information) that can be supplemented according to the above criteria, applicants will be invited to provide respective missing parts within five (5) calendar days. An invitation to provide the missing parts of the application will be sent to the e-mail address of the applicant listed in the application form (e-mail address of the contact person).

6.2.1 Appeals

After the administrative and eligibility assessment process is completed, ineligible applicants will be notified of the rejection of their application from further evaluation. Applicants of ineligible project proposals will have 8 calendar days available for appeal against the eligibility decision. Appeals will be considered by the Appeal Committee.

Appeals must be submitted through the E-grant system and must clearly justify the grounds for reconsideration, based on procedural or factual errors. The contestant cannot modify the content of the initially submitted application, but the Appeal Committee may request additional information from the contestant. The Appeal Committee may uphold or reverse the original decision. The outcome of the appeal is final and is communicated to the applicant via the E-grant system. The appeal will be considered by the Appeal Committee of the FO and applicants will be informed within ten (10) calendar days. The decision on the appeal is irrevocable. No further appeal on the same application could be formulated afterwards.

Temporary suspension of appeal processing

By way of exception, the processing of appeals, including their examination, requests for additional information, decision-making and notification of decisions to applicants, is suspended from 2 to 22 October 2026, inclusive. Processing will resume on 23 October 2026.

The suspension period shall not count towards the ten (10) calendar-day deadline for notifying applicants of the decision on their appeals. For deadlines that have not expired before the suspension begins, the remaining time shall resume running on 23 October 2026. This provision does not reopen deadlines that expired before the suspension began. Contestants will be notified individually through the E-grant system of the suspension and the date by which they will be informed of the decision.

The suspension does not alter the deadline for submitting appeals, which was extended to 1 October 2026 by a separate decision of the Fund Operator for the applicants covered by that decision.

7. SELECTION PROCESS

Temporary suspension of the procedure

Further processing of project applications received under this Call is temporarily suspended from 2 October to 2 November 2026, inclusive. The suspension covers administrative and eligibility checks, assessment of applications, selection, adoption and publication of grant award decisions, and contracting. The suspension of appeal processing and the calculation of the corresponding deadlines are governed by the specific provision in Section 6.2.1.

Procedures will resume on 3 November 2026 from the stage at which they were suspended, with previously completed procedural steps and documentation preserved. During the suspension, the Fund Operator shall ensure the safekeeping of submitted applications and documentation and the registration of incoming correspondence.

financial statement of receipts and expenditures for last closed financial year, in accordance with the accounting regulations of non-profit organizations, whereby the Annual Financial Report is visible in the Register of Nonprofit Organizations.

The temporary suspension does not alter the eligibility conditions or the assessment and selection criteria, nor does it permit changes to the content of submitted project applications. The deadline for submitting project applications, which expired on 4 September 2026, is not reopened.

7.1 Selection criteria

Applications that meet the administrative and eligibility criteria outlined in chapters 6.1 and 6.2 of these Guidelines will be assessed by at least two impartial experts appointed by the Fund Operator, both independent of the Fund Operator.

The experts will independently score the project application according to the selection criteria presented in the grid below. The selection criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading is given a score. The application can be given an overall score of maximum 100 points. Detailed description of each selection criterion with scoring guidance and their weighting is available in Annex 3 of these Guidelines.

If the difference between the scores given by the two experts is higher than 30 % of the highest score, reviewers' meetings will be held with the Fund Operator. The latter shall not be used in cases where scoring of the third evaluator does not, in any way, contribute to granting the project proposal.

Selection criterion		**Score**	**Weight**	**Max. score**
1	**Relevance**			**25**
1.1	Relevance of the problem and evidence base	0-5	2	10
1.2	Alignment with the Call and results framework	0-5	2	10
1.3	Relevance for target groups and expected change	0-5	1	5
2	**Project Design and Feasibility** **A proposal scoring below the equivalent of 3/5, i.e. 60% under this criterion will be rejected.**			**25**
2.1	Intervention logic and coherence	0-5	2	10
2.2	Feasibility of the activities and the overall project	0-5	3	15
3	**Capacity and Partnership**			**15**
3.1	Operational and professional capacity	0-5	2	10
3.2	Relevance and added value of partnership	0-5	1	5
4	**Financial quality and efficiency**			**15**
4.1	Budget coherence and justification	0-5	1,5	7,5
4.2	Value for money	0-5	1,5	7,5
5	**Sustainability and expected longer-term effects**			**10**
5.1	Expected sustainability of project outcomes	0-5	2	10

6	**Cross-cutting priorities and Common Values**			**10**
6.1	Inclusion of marginalised and under-represented groups	0-5	1	5
6.2	Alignment with fundamental values (human rights, rule of law, democracy)	0-5	1	5
	Total score			**100**

An application must score at least 80 points to be recommendable for funding.

Projects that receive a score of 0 on any of the subheadings, **except under sub-criterion 3.2,** will be rejected. Projects that receive a score below 60% under criterion 2 Project Design and Feasibility, will be rejected.

After the conclusion of expert evaluation of all project proposals, based on received scoring, the ranking list of applications will be prepared by the Fund Operator. The proposed ranking list will be examined by the Selection Committee, who will make recommendations to the Steering Committee on project proposals that shall be funded. The final decision is made by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is composed of three members drawn from the governing bodies of the organisations within the Fund Operator consortium. The decision of the Steering Committee is final and there is no right of appeal.

Selection Committee and Steering Committee will have the authority and obligation to propose the rejection of the project application in case the principles referred in Article 1.4.1 of the PIA are not respected or disregarded.

Acceptance of an application does not imply an obligation to award it up to the amount claimed by the applicant. The amount claimed may be decreased by the Selection Committee and/or Steering Committee based on the evaluators' findings on the appropriateness of the financial plan. Based on the findings of the evaluators on the appropriateness of the activities for achieving the project objectives, the Selection committee and/or Steering Committee may reject financing of activities that do not contribute to the objectives.

7.2 Notification on selection

Applicants will be notified on the selection of their project proposals via e-mail indicated in application form, in accordance with the indicative timeline in section 13.

The Fund Operator will publish the grant decision on the Programme's website www.eea-csf.hr after it has been taken and will notify the result in writing to all applicants within 15 working days via the electronic grant system, using the contact details provided by the organisation. The notification will include the scores of the application, the conditions of support (if any) and, in the case of unsuccessful applicants, the justification of the reasons for rejection.

8. PROVISIONS ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

After the final decision on selection of project, the applicant will receive a project contract based on standard contract sample as presented in the call documentation. Before the signature of the contract, negotiations between applicants and Fund Operator to determine final definition of project activities and costs are possible.

8.1 Contract provisions

For each approved project, a project implementation contract shall be concluded between the CF Slagalica and the Project Promoter setting out the terms and conditions of the grant, as well as the role and responsibilities of the parties. In case a delay in project implementation occurs due to objective reasons, Project Promoter can request for a prolongation of the project for a maximum of 3 months. The request will be considered by the Fund Operator. Prolongation of the project does not impact the financial plan of the project.

The Project Contract includes, in particular:

• the commitment of the Project Promoter to act in accordance with the values and principles of the Programme;
• a summary of the main expected results (outputs and outcomes) of the project including indicator(s) and target value(s):
• obligations related to financial and both narrative and indicator reporting;
• responsibilities for data collection and storage:
• the maximum grant amount;
• the grant type, overview, and method of calculating eligible expenditures;
• the start and end dates of the eligibility period for expenditures;
• requirements for cost reporting (submission of supporting documents and/or evidence of fulfilment of conditions in the case of simplified cost options);
• provisions for project change management and approval;
• provisions ensuring timely and unimpeded access for monitoring, audits, and evaluations;
• obligations concerning information and publicity;
• the right of the Fund Operator to suspend payments or request reimbursement of funds from the Project Promoter;
• provisions for dispute resolution and jurisdiction;
• provisions on disclaimer of liability in accordance with Article 17.2 of the Programme Implementation Agreement (PIA);
• a contracted project budget;
• provisions on procurement;
• provisions on termination of the contract;
• references to partnership agreements or letters of intent, where applicable;
• provisions on record-keeping;
• provisions on irregularities and related reporting procedures,
• waiver of responsibility.

The Contract also establishes the obligation of the Project Promoter to inform all project partners about any parts of the Contract that concern them, and to notify them in advance of any project changes that may affect their participation.

Any amendments to the Contract shall follow the conditions set therein and must take the form of a written Addendum (which may be initiated either by the Project Promoter or the Fund Operator).

Annexes to the Project Contract:
• Project Results Framework
• Project Budget

The Project Contract is signed electronically through the E-grant system, with the exception in cases where the Project Promoter is unable to sign the contract electronically.

8.2 Partnership Agreement

If a project is implemented in cooperation with one or more project partners, the Project Promoter is obliged to conclude a written Partnership Agreement with each project partner before signing the Project Contract. A draft of the Partnership Agreement must be submitted to the Fund Operator for approval.

The Partnership Agreement must include at least the following provisions:
• Roles and responsibilities of the parties – clearly defined duties and responsibilities of the Project Promoter and the Partner in project implementation, monitoring and reporting;
• Financial arrangements – a detailed project budget for the Partner, including the rates and values applied under simplified cost options, where relevant;
• Obligations concerning financial and technical reporting;
• Communication obligations related to project promotion and visibility;
• Obligation of the Project Promoter to inform the Partner of all provisions of the Project Contract relevant to the Partner and of any subsequent changes that may affect it;
• Project audit – provisions ensuring access for the Fund Operator and auditors to the Partner's documents for monitoring and verification purposes;
• Dispute resolution – provisions defining the procedure for resolving disputes and the competent jurisdiction.

If the Partner is an entity from a Donor State, an international organisation, or its agency, the Partnership Agreement shall be drawn up in English.
If the Partner is an entity based in Croatia, the Agreement shall be drafted in Croatian.

The Project Promoter must use the Partnership Agreement template provided by the Fund Operator. The Agreement ensures transparent and effective cooperation, establishes clear rules for financing, reporting, auditing, and dispute resolution, and forms a mandatory part of project implementation.

8.3 Project Payments and Reporting

Each Project Promoter will be assigned a grant officer, staff member of the Fund Operator consortium, who will keep regular contact with the Project Promoter and can be approached with questions, issues to be discussed or success stories any time (in working hours) throughout implementation via messaging in the online grant system, telephone or in person.

The assigned grant officer will visit the Project Promoters on site at least once a year during implementation and may also visit at other times to review developments, needs and provide support as and when necessary.

The submission of narrative (both qualitative and quantitative reporting) and financial reports is a mandatory condition for the execution of the interim and final payments. The number of project reports depends on the project size and duration. Reports have to be approved by the Fund Operator before payments are made. The Fund Operator can request for additional information on implementation progress at any time.

8.3.1 Project Payments

Project financing is provided under the EEA Civil Society Fund at a rate of 100% of the total eligible project costs.

Payments of the project grant shall take the form of advance payment, interim payments and final payment. The level of advance payment to projects shall be set out in the project contract.

The level of advance and final instalments shall be linked to the project budget and duration as follows:

Grant Type	Project Duration	Advance Payment	Interim payment(s)	Final Payment (retention)
Project Grants EUR 100 000 – EUR 150 000	18–24 months	25% - 40%	Max. 60%	10% - 15%

The advance payment is to be paid up to 15 working days from the start date of the project as stipulated in the Project Contract, or from the receipt of the project contract signed by the Project Promoter's statutory representative (if the latter executes after the start date of the project).

Interim payment(s) up to 60% of the grant, based on payment request upon approval of the Interim Monitoring Report of the project (includes narrative and financial part) submitted by the project promoter within required deadlines according to the Project Contract. The number of interim payments and its amount depends on the length of the project (i.e. number of interim monitoring reports submitted) along with the payment request. A condition to prove declared expenditures in the amount of at least 50% of previous payment must be fulfilled concurrently. The transfer of interim payment is made in 15 working days from the receipt of payment request signed by the promoter's entitled representative, following the written approval of the individual report.

The final payment/payment of the final balance in the range of 10% - 15% of the grant, or up to the maximum grant amount according to the actually declared eligible project expenses, is based upon approval of the Final Report. Final payments/retained amounts are to be paid up to 15 working days after the date of the written approval of the final narrative project report and the final financial project report.

Approval of interim and final project reports shall be completed within 60 days from the submission of all required information.

In exceptional cases, where projects are assessed as high-risk based on a risk analysis conducted and documented by the Fund Operator, the Fund Operator may take a justified decision to modify the payment scheme — by reducing or cancelling advance financing, or by requiring the Project Promoter to provide a financial guarantee in advance, in order to mitigate financial risks associated with pre- financing.

8.3.2 Project Reporting

Project reports are fully integrated into the E-grant online system, which collects sufficient information on project progress, achievement of objectives and results, statistical data, and financial settlement.

Each project report follows a predefined format and consists of two sections:

- Narrative part
- Financial part

Reports must be completed and submitted via the E-grant system in the required format.

1. Interim Project Report

To be submitted semi-annually (for the periods: January – June, July – December) within 15 working days after the end of each calendar semester and shall include:

a. Narrative part:

Provides comprehensive, structured, and verifiable information enabling assessment of actual project progress and results in relation to planned outcomes and outputs, covering:

- Summary of activities implemented during the reporting period.
- Progress towards project expected results, clearly distinguishing outputs and outcomes, each supported by quantitative and/or qualitative evidence.
- Monitoring of indicators, including baseline, current, and target values; data sources; and interpretation of data in terms of performance and effectiveness.
- Analysis of deviations from the implementation plan, indicator targets, schedule, or budget outlining causes, implications, and corrective actions taken.
- Communication and outreach activities, detailing their contribution to achieving project results, including behavioural change, stakeholder engagement, visibility actions, dissemination of results, and overall effectiveness of communication strategies.
- Lessons learned and recommendations to support adaptive management and the scaling of successful approaches during the remaining implementation period.

b. Financial part:

A list of project expenditures incurred. Supporting documentation for expenditures is required once per year.

2. Final Project Report

To be submitted within 30 days after project completion and shall include:

a. Narrative part:

Structured in the same way as the interim report, but covering the entire implementation period, and focused on achieved results.

b. Financial part:

A list of all expenditures incurred with supporting documentation for the full duration of the project. Supporting documentation already submitted with interim reports does not need to be resubmitted.

Detailed information on reporting, supporting documentation and verification procedures will be found in the Guidelines for Project Promoters.

Important!

For partners from Donor States receiving support not exceeding EUR 5.000, submission of proof of expenditure is not required.

In case of project partner(s) from Donor states receiving support above EUR 5.000, or project partners that are international organisations or bodies or agencies thereof regardless of the amount of support received, 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 legal framework of EEA and Norway Grants, the national law and relevant national accounting practices **shall be accepted** as sufficient proof of expenditure. In such a case:

- The cost of the report is considered an eligible cost, providing that it complies with the eligibility rules defined in the guidelines, Project contract and it is included in the budget;

- Upon request by the FMO, EFTA Board of Auditors/The Office of the Auditor General of Norway a project promoter or project partner shall grant access to the supporting documents on the basis of which the report was issued;

- The certification process can be governed by the International Standard on Related Services (ISRS) 4400 (Revised) "Engagements to perform agreed-upon procedures regarding financial information" as published by the IFAC (International Federation of Accountants).

The annually audited financial statement of an entity cannot replace the specific auditor's certificate confirming that the claimed costs are incurred in accordance with the guidelines, Project contract, the relevant law and national accounting practices.

9. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Project promoters are obliged to inform the public on receiving a grant from Civil Society Fund. In all written publications, communications and products, at publication of project products, public events, such as conferences, seminars, fairs or exhibitions, related to project activities, project promoters are obliged to make explicit and visible the support of the Donor countries.

Guidelines for informing and communicating are available on the web site: www.eea-csf.hr.

Project Promoters will be required to prepare a Communication Plan.

The Communication Plan shall cover at least the project implementation period and shall include at least the following elements:

1. communication objectives and target groups, including stakeholders at national, regional and/or local level and the general public – project promoters must ensure that they reach the widest possible audience, including important stakeholders at the appropriate (e.g., local/regional) level

2. the strategy and content of information and communication measures, including activities, communication tools and timeframe, having regard to the added value and impact of the EEA and Grants' funding

3. at least two information activities on progress, achievements and results in the project

4. measures for making information on the project available on the web, either through a dedicated website or through a dedicated webpage on the organisation's existing website with linking between the pages, or, alternatively, through an active social media profile for the project where a website does not already exist.

Where a social media profile is created for a project and, the social media profile must remain visible and all information shall remain accessible after the final eligibility date of the project

5. information on the administrative departments or bodies responsible for implementation of the information and communication measures, including a contact person

6. an indication of how the information and communication measures are to be evaluated in terms of visibility and awareness of the project and the EEA Grants, their objectives and impact, and the role of Donor States

When designing, planning and organising all communication activities, applicants/project promoters must explicitly point out the support of Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Republic of Norway through the EEA Grants i.e. Civil Society Fund (logo and funding statement). Also, participants in project activities must be informed about funding from the Civil Society Fund, as well as funding from Donor States

10. INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA SUBMITTED BY PROJECT APPLICANTS TO THE CIVIL SOCIETY FUND IN CROATIA

With personal data submitted (included) in application to public calls of the CSF in Croatia and reporting documentation by the applicants, CF Slagalica as Fund Operator and SOLIDARNA - Foundation for Human Rights and Solidarity and Association for Civil Society Development SMART as partners and fund co-operators will be acquainted. Hence, the fund operator and co-operators enter the role of common personal data controllers. Submitted personal data will be used for the purposes of implementation of public calls (application assessment, informing of applicants) and in applications rewarded with grants also for preparation of grant agreements, for monitoring, control of co-financing and for related informing of beneficiaries or for other related business communication (request for additional information, informing on financial means) as well as for the purpose of proving of eligibility for funding.

Co-financing of a selected project means establishing a contractual relation between CF Slagalica and the applicant in which CF Slagalica assumes the liability of the co-financing party and has therefore, together with its partners, the right to monitor and control the implementation of the project. Such contractual relationship as well as submission of application to a public call (as a request for such contractual relationship) represent legal basis for all personal data processing by CF Slagalica, SOLIDARNA - Foundation for Human Rights and Solidarity and Association for Civil Society Development SMART as noted in this information.

With the whole application, including personal data submitted with it, also third persons can get acquainted, and that is Financial Mechanism Office (Financial Mechanism Office, Rue Joseph II 12-16, 1000 Brussels, Belgium), donor states and their authorized persons.

In accordance with GDPR and respective national legislation, individuals whose personal data is included in application to public call have the right to be **acquainted with all of their personal data, to correction, in the case of conditions as laid down by applicable regulations also the right to deletion, restriction of processing** and to their portability. Individuals concerned can address their requests or questions regarding their personal data processing to CF Slagalica.

Please note: At submission of project proposal application to public call of CSF Croatia, legal representative of applicant organisation is obliged to sign a statement that they are aware of and in agreement with processing of personal data included in project proposal and relevant parts thereof.

11. COMPLAINT MECHANISM

In accordance with the terms and conditions for the Civil Society Fund in Croatia, the Fund Operator has established a Complaints Committee. Complaints/alerts may be submitted in case of suspicion

of irregularity, bad governance, corruption in implementation of Civil Society Fund in Croatia programme, including those on possible misuse of funding projects submitted by general public.

Complaints/alerts can also be submitted anonymously. Complaint/report/alert must be justified and consisted of the following information:

- Description of the irregularity (including whether it is alleged or real and how it occurred);
- Period the irregularity refers to or the timeline of its occurrence;
- How did the reporting person become aware of the irregularity;
- Identification of the individuals or legal entities related to the irregularity, and other information.

The decisions related to the administrative compliance and eligibility verification as part of the selection process are not subject to verification by the Complaints Committee, but will be handled by the Appeal Committee referred to in section 6.2.1. The final decision of the Steering Committee whether to approve or reject support to a project is not subject to complaint/appeal.

All complaints are first assessed by the Fund Operator. A complainant who is not satisfied with the conclusion made by the Fund Operator has the right to take the case to the Complaints Committee, which includes two members who are external to the Fund Operator and its Board and does not include programme staff responsible for grant management.

The complaints must be submitted electronically to the following email: prigovori.csf@zaklada-slagalica.hr.

12. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR THE APPLICANTS

The support for preparing the project proposal will also be available **via e-mail**, **up to 8 days** before the deadline for submission of project applications which is **September 4, 2026**. All written questions and requests for information related to this Call should be addressed ONLY to the e-mail address csf@zaklada-slagalica.hr. The Fund Operator is under no obligation to provide answers to questions received after August 27, 2026. The deadline for submitting answers to all written queries is one week, and all relevant questions and answers will be published weekly on the Fund's website www.eea-csf.hr. No individual replies will be given to questions to ensure the equal treatment of all applicants. Questions and answers will be published on the programme's website. It is therefore advisable to consult the website regularly.

The **presentation of the Call** and information workshop will be held online, on the Zoom cloud platform, on June 29, 2026 from 11 to 13 (mandatory registration link for the event: https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/bObAuAc7S7ujM52dcGJvzQ). The objectives, purpose and focus of the Call, the application process and forms of support to applicants will be presented in detail at the information workshops.

Video of the online information workshop will be published on the Fund's website, for further support.

13. TIMELINE

Amendment to the timeline due to the temporary suspension

Procedures under this Call are temporarily suspended from 2 October to 2 November 2026, inclusive, within the scope specified in Sections 6.2.1 and 7. Procedures related to selection, adoption and publication of grant award decisions, and contracting will resume on 3 November 2026.

The dates for the publication and presentation of the Call, the period of applicant support and the deadline for submitting project applications set out in the table remain unchanged.

The previously indicated provisional dates for application checks and assessment, the Selection Committee meeting, adoption of the grant award decision, publication of results and the start of project implementation are subject to revision for activities not completed before the suspension began. The Fund Operator will publish an updated indicative schedule for these activities on the Programme website, www.eea-csf.hr, no later than 3 November 2026. Until that schedule is published, the previously indicated dates for these activities shall not be considered confirmed.

The deadline for notifying an applicant of the decision on an individual complaint shall be calculated in accordance with the specific provision in Section 6.2.1 and shall not depend on the indicative schedule for the other stages of the procedure.

Timeline for the Call

June 19, 2026	Announcement of call
June 29, 2026	Presentation of the Call
Until August 27, 2026	Consultations and e-mail communication
September 4, 2026, 23:59 (Zagreb time)	Deadline for submission of application
September 2026	Application is checked against administrative and eligibility criteria
September – October 2026	Independent experts evaluation
October 2026	Selection Committee meeting
October 2026	Decision on applications to be funded taken by Steering Committee of the Fund Operator
October – November 2026	Announcement of applications awarded funding on the Programme's website www.eea-csf.hr
November 2026	Provisional start of projects

14. CONTACT

Web site: www.eea-csf.hr

Community Foundation Slagalica: csf@zaklada-slagalica.hr

Phone: 031 213 255, Mon – Fri, between 10 and 14 o'clock

ANNEX 1: CHECKLIST FOR APPLICANTS

CHECKLIST FOR APPLICANTS	Yes/No
Administrative criteria	
Submission deadline: Compliance with the deadline given on the front page and in Chapter 5 of the Call text and Guidelines for Applicants	
Submission method and language: Applications must be submitted electronically via the e-grant platform in Croatian language as per Chapter 5 of the Call text and Guidelines for Applicants.	
Required documents: Applications must include all relevant supporting documents and attachments as per Chapter 5 and Annex 1 of the Call text and Guidelines for Applicants	
Project duration: 18-24 months	
Requested amount: 110.000-150.000 €	
Eligibility criteria	
Organisation eligibility: See Chapter 3 on eligible applicants and partners.	
Financial and time limits: The requested grant amount and proposed implementation period must be within the permissible limits provided in the call.	

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS
• Applicant Declaration by the person responsible • Partnership declaration(s) (if applicable) • Statutes of foreign partners if not freely available online (if applicable)

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.

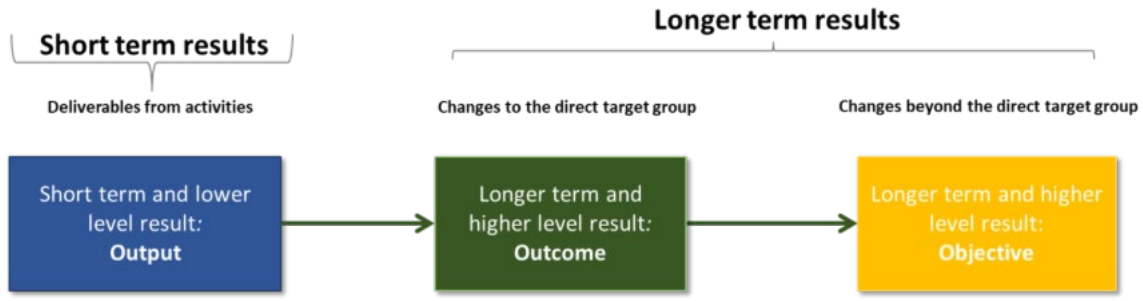
In results-based management, focus is first and foremost on the overall results to be achieved. For the EEA Civil Society Fund, this means focus is on the overall objective. The overall objective is, "A vibrant and resilient civil society protecting and promoting democracy, the rule of law and human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

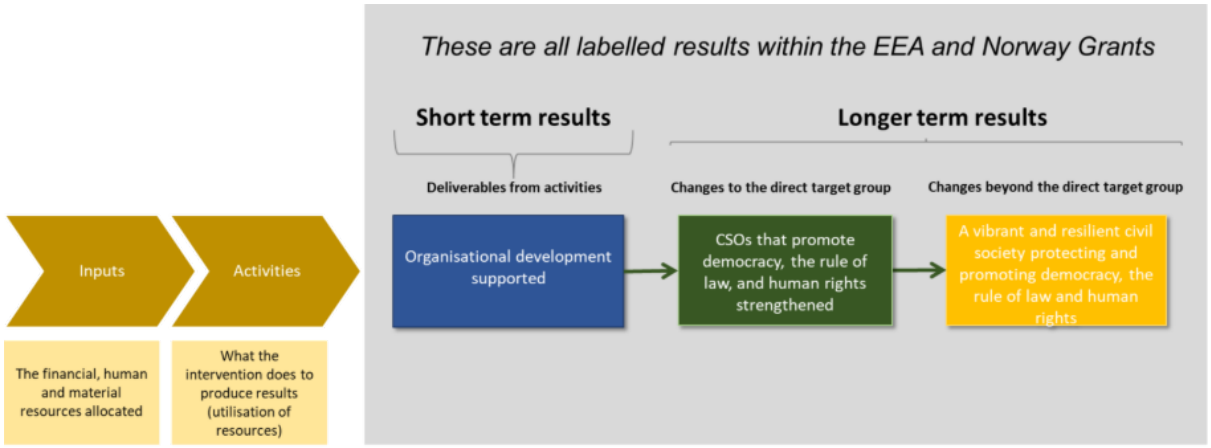


Here is one of the result chains for the EEA Civil Society Fund:

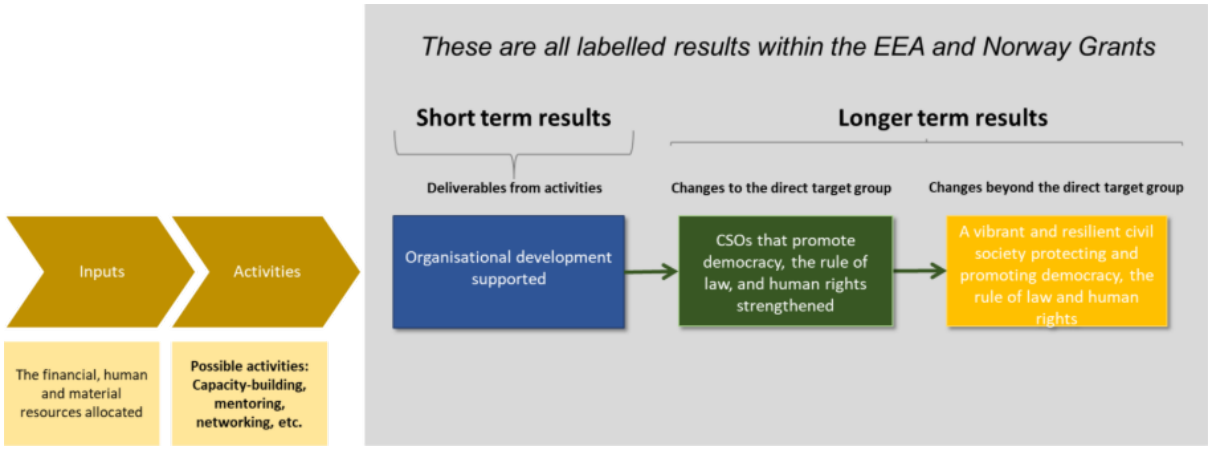


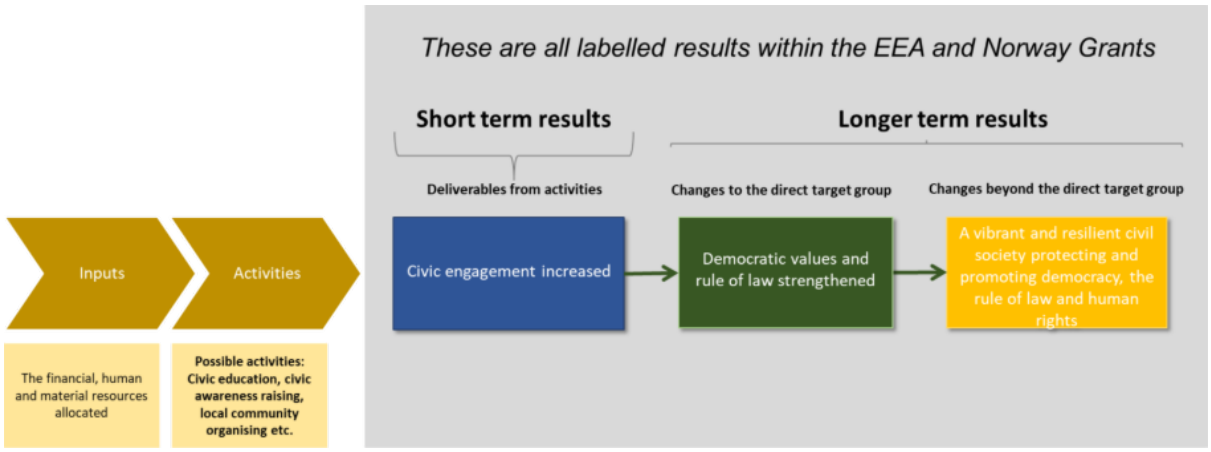
To achieve the outputs, it is necessary to implement activities using the available resources which can be called inputs.

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.

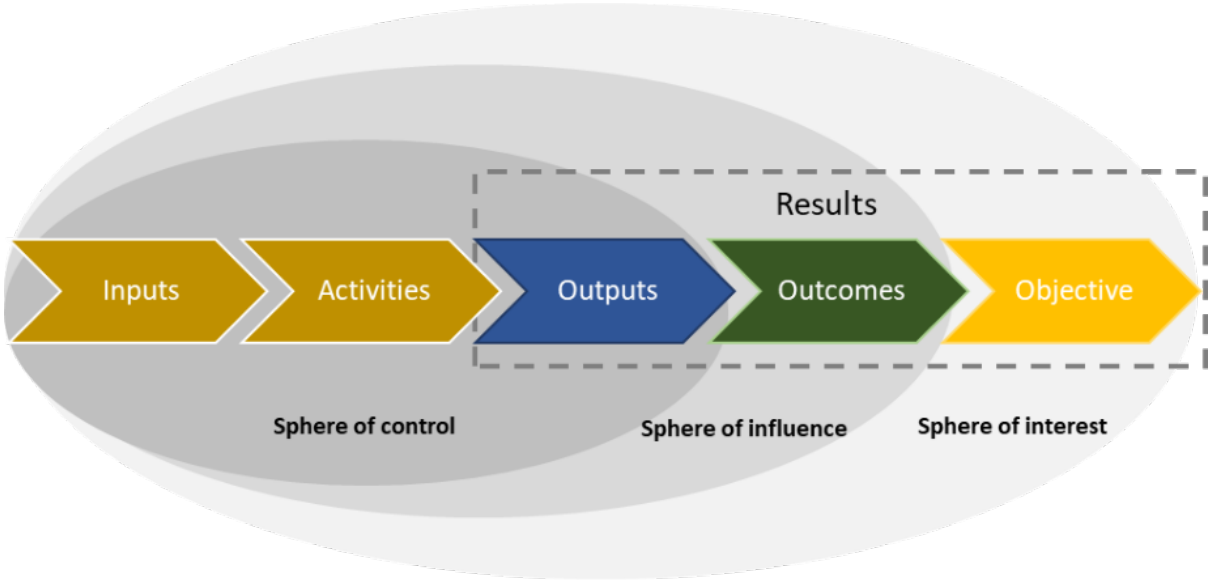




There are assumptions for how one level in the result chain connects to the next. For example, it is an assumption that if CSOs are supported to develop their organisations, then they will be stronger as CSOs. For each assumption it is useful to either provide evidence or plan for evidence through for 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.

ANNEX 3: DETAILED EVALUATION GRID WITH SCORING GUIDANCE

The project proposal will be evaluated against clearly defined criteria. Each sub-criterion is scored on a scale from 0 to 5, with detailed guidance provided for each score level to ensure transparency and consistency of assessment.

High-scoring proposals:

- clearly define the problem
- demonstrate a credible contribution to Outcome 1 and Output 1.1
- show a realistic pathway from evidence to advocacy and policy influence
- present a feasible and coherent implementation plan

Criterion 1. Relevance (25 points)				
Sub-criterion	Guidance for assessment	Score	Ponder	Scoring guidance for (Sub) Criterion
1.1 Relevance of the problem and evidence base	To what extent is the problem clearly defined, specific, and relevant to the purpose of the Call? Is it supported by credible evidence, data, experience, or contextual analysis? Does it reflect structural challenges relevant to democracy, rule of law, human rights, civic participation, accountability, or inclusion?	0-5	2	5 – The problem is clearly defined, specific, and directly relevant to democratic participation, rule of law, or human rights. It is supported by credible, up-to-date evidence (data, research, practice-based insights) and demonstrates a clear understanding of systemic causes and context. 4 – The problem is well defined and relevant, with a solid evidence base. Some aspects of the context or structural dimension could be further developed, but overall justification is strong. 3 – The problem is generally relevant but described in a somewhat broad or generic way. Evidence is present but limited, uneven, or not fully convincing in explaining the scale or causes of the issue. 2 – The problem is insufficiently specified or only partially relevant to the Call. Evidence is weak, outdated, anecdotal, or poorly linked to the problem description. 1 – The problem is unclear, overly general, or not relevant to the Call. There is little or no credible evidence supporting its existence or importance. 0 – Insufficient / Not assessable; The problem is not described or cannot be assessed.
1.2 Alignment with the Call and result framework	To what extent does the project clearly and convincingly contribute to Outcome 1: Democratic values and rule of law strengthened and Output 1.1: CSO participation in democratic processes increased? Is	0-5	2	5 – The project demonstrates a clear, specific, and credible contribution to Outcome 1 and Output 1.1, with a well-explained link between activities and expected results. Selected indicators are relevant, realistic, and directly connected to the proposed intervention. 4 – The project is well aligned with Outcome 1 and Output 1.1. The contribution is clear, though some elements (e.g. indicators or explanation of contribution) could be more specific or precise.

	the contribution to the selected programme-level indicators specific, credible, and logically demonstrated?			3 – The project generally fits the Call and references Outcome 1 and Output 1.1., but the contribution is described in a generic or partially developed way. The link to indicators is present but not fully convincing. 2 – Alignment with the Call is weak or unclear. References to Outcome 1, Output 1.1., or indicators are formal or superficial, without a credible explanation of contribution. 1 – The project does not meaningfully align with the Call or the result framework. There is no clear or credible contribution to Outcome 1 or Output 1.1. 0 – Insufficient / Not assessable; No alignment with the Call or result framework can be identified.
1.3 Relevance for target groups and expected change	Are the target groups and end users clearly identified and justified? Are their needs and challenges well described? Is the expected change for target groups realistic, meaningful, and relevant in both the short and longer term?	0-5	1	5 – Target groups are clearly defined, specific, and justified. Their needs and challenges are well understood and supported by evidence. The expected change is concrete, realistic, and clearly articulated for both short- and longer-term effects. 4 – Target groups are clearly identified and relevant. Their needs are well described, though with minor gaps. The expected change is realistic and generally well explained. 3 – Target groups are identified but described in a general or partially developed way. The expected change is plausible but lacks specificity or depth. 2 – Target groups are vaguely defined, insufficiently justified, or not clearly linked to the problem. The expected change is unclear, generic, or weakly explained. 1 – Target groups are not clearly identified or are irrelevant. There is no meaningful description of expected change. 0 – Insufficient / Not assessable; Target groups and expected change are not described.
Criterion 2. Project Design and Feasibility (25 points); A proposal scoring below the equivalent of 3/5, i.e. 60% under this criterion fails this requirement.				
2.1 Intervention logic and coherence	Is there a clear and coherent link between the identified problem, the proposed activities, the expected results for the identified target groups, and the intended contribution to policy or democratic processes? Does the project demonstrate a credible pathway from evidence generation to advocacy and policy influence?	0-5	2	5 – The proposal demonstrates a clear and coherent intervention logic, with a strong and credible link between the identified problem, proposed activities, and expected results. The pathway from evidence generation to advocacy and policy influence is well defined, realistic, and context-sensitive. 4 – The intervention logic is clear and consistent, with a logical link between problem, activities, and results. The pathway to advocacy and policy influence is well described, with only minor gaps or assumptions. 3 – The intervention logic is generally understandable, but some links between problem, activities, and results are not fully developed or convincing. The pathway to policy influence is present but somewhat generic or insufficiently specified. 2 – The intervention logic is fragmented or only partially coherent. Activities are not clearly linked to the problem or expected results. The pathway to advocacy or policy influence is unclear or weakly justified.

				1 – The proposal lacks a coherent intervention logic. Activities appear disconnected from the problem and expected results. There is no credible explanation of how the project will lead to advocacy outcomes or policy influence. 0 – Insufficient / Not assessable; The intervention logic is not described or cannot be assessed.
2.2 Feasibility of the activities and the overall project	Assess the feasibility of the project from four perspectives: 1) Are activities clearly derived from the identified needs and aligned with objectives and expected results? 2) Is the methodology credible and appropriate for achieving a meaningful contribution to Outcome 1 and Output 1.1? 3) Is the project operationally feasible in terms of implementation plan, timeline, roles, and capacities of the applicant and partner(s), if applicable? 4) Are the proposed resources, including duration and budget, realistic and sufficient for delivering the planned results?	0-5	3	5 – Activities are clearly derived from well-identified needs and are fully aligned with objectives and expected results. The methodology is robust, appropriate, and highly credible for achieving meaningful contribution to Outcome 1 and Output 1.1. The implementation plan is clear and realistic, with well-defined roles, timeline, and coordination. The applicant (and partner, if applicable) demonstrate strong operational capacity. Budget and duration are fully justified and proportionate. 4 – Activities are well aligned with needs and results. The methodology is appropriate and likely to deliver the intended contribution. The implementation plan is realistic, with minor inconsistencies. Capacities are sufficient. Budget and duration are generally well justified. 3 – Activities are generally relevant but not fully convincing in their alignment with needs or results. The methodology is acceptable but lacks clarity or depth. Some risks exist in implementation (timeline, roles, or capacities). Budget and/or duration show minor inconsistencies. 2 – Activities are only partially justified or weakly linked to needs and results. The methodology is unclear or not appropriate. There are significant concerns regarding feasibility (capacity gaps, unclear roles, unrealistic timeline). Budget and/or duration are poorly explained or questionable. 1 – Activities are poorly defined and not aligned with needs or results. The methodology is inadequate or missing. The project is largely infeasible given the proposed approach and capacities. Budget and duration are unrealistic or unjustified. 0 – Insufficient / Not assessable; Insufficient information to assess feasibility.
Criterion 3. Capacity and Partnership (15 points)				
3.1 Operational and professional capacity	To what extent do the applicant and partner(s), if applicable, demonstrate the competencies, experience, and organisational resources needed to implement the project successfully? This includes experience in advocacy, public policy work, watchdog activities, research, coalition-building, communication,	0-5	2	5 – The applicant (and partner, if applicable) demonstrate strong and directly relevant experience in advocacy, public policy work, research, or watchdog activities. The team has clearly defined roles and appropriate expertise for all key tasks. Organisational resources and management capacity are sufficient and well matched to the project's complexity. 4 – The applicant demonstrates relevant experience and adequate competencies for implementing the project. Roles and responsibilities are mostly clear and appropriate. Minor gaps exist but do not significantly affect implementation capacity.

	and project/financial management, where relevant to the proposal.			3 – The applicant demonstrates some relevant experience, but it is limited, uneven, or not fully aligned with the proposed activities. Roles are defined but lack clarity or depth. Capacity appears generally sufficient, though some risks are evident. 2 – The applicant has limited or only partially relevant experience. Key competencies required for the project are missing or insufficiently demonstrated. Roles and responsibilities are unclear or inadequately defined. Capacity raises concerns regarding implementation. 1 – The applicant lacks relevant experience for the proposed type of intervention. Key skills and organisational capacities are missing. The team structure is unclear or not credible. 0 – Insufficient / Not assessable; No meaningful information on capacity is provided.
3.2 Relevance and added value of partnership	If the project includes partners, are the roles clearly justified and relevant? Does the partnership strengthen the quality, reach, credibility, or effectiveness of the project? If a donor-state partner is involved, does the partnership demonstrate real bilateral value rather than a formal or symbolic role?	0-5	1	5 – The partnership is clearly justified and strategically relevant to the project objectives. Each partner has a distinct and meaningful role that strengthens the quality, reach, or credibility of the project. Where applicable, the bilateral partnership demonstrates clear added value through knowledge exchange, complementary expertise, or joint advocacy. 4 – The partnership is relevant and well explained. Roles are clear and contribute to project implementation. The added value is evident, with only minor gaps in justification or integration. 3 – The partnership is generally relevant but not fully convincing. Roles are described but may be somewhat overlapping, limited, or insufficiently justified. The added value is present but modest. 2 – The partnership is weakly justified or only loosely connected to the project objectives. Roles are unclear, marginal, or not well integrated into the project design. Limited added value is demonstrated. 1 – The partnership appears formal or unnecessary. Roles are not defined or do not contribute meaningfully to the project. No clear added value is demonstrated. 0 – Insufficient / Not assessable; No partnership is described where relevant, or information is insufficient to assess it.
Criterion 4. Financial quality and efficiency (15 points)				
4.1 Budget coherence and justification	Are the proposed costs clearly linked to the activities, outputs, and implementation plan? Are the assumptions realistic? Is the budget sufficiently explained and transparent?	0-5	1,5	5 – The budget is clearly structured, transparent, and fully aligned with the proposed activities and outputs. All cost items are well justified, based on realistic assumptions, and sufficiently detailed to demonstrate what is being financed and why. 4 – The budget is well aligned with activities and generally well justified. Cost assumptions are mostly clear and realistic, with only minor gaps or inconsistencies. 3 – The budget is broadly consistent with the action plan, but some cost items lack clarity, detail, or justification. Certain assumptions are not fully explained.

				2 – The budget shows weak alignment with activities or outputs. Several cost items are unclear, insufficiently justified, or based on questionable assumptions. 1 – The budget is poorly structured and not clearly linked to the proposed activities. Justification is missing or inadequate. Cost assumptions are unrealistic or inconsistent. 0 – Insufficient / Not assessable; The budget cannot be assessed due to missing or insufficient information.
4.2 Value for money	Is the overall budget proportionate to the expected results? Are the objectives realistically achievable with the proposed budget? Does the project demonstrate efficient use of resources in relation to the scale and ambition of the intervention?	0-5	1,5	5 – The budget is proportionate to the expected results, and resources are used efficiently. The proposal demonstrates a clear link between costs and the scale, depth, and significance of the expected outcomes. 4 – The budget is generally appropriate to the expected results. The project appears cost-effective, with only minor concerns regarding proportionality or efficiency. 3 – The budget is acceptable but not fully convincing in terms of efficiency or proportionality. The link between costs and results is present but could be stronger. 2 – The budget appears disproportionate to the expected results or inefficient in the use of resources. The relationship between costs and results is unclear or weak. 1 – The budget is clearly disproportionate or unjustified in relation to the expected results. Resources are used inefficiently or without clear rationale. 0 – Insufficient / Not assessable; Value for money cannot be assessed.
Criterion 5. Sustainability and expected longer-term effects (10 points)				
5.1 Expected sustainability of project outcomes	To what extent will the project results and key activities continue to generate value after the project ends? How well does the organisation demonstrate the structures, resources, and institutional capacity needed to sustain the project outcomes? To what extent does the project contribute to more lasting changes in the policy or operating environment, ensuring continued benefits for the target groups?	0-10	2	5 – The proposal demonstrates a clear and credible approach to sustaining project results beyond the funding period. Outcomes are likely to continue through established practices, partnerships, or institutional integration. The project shows strong potential to contribute to lasting changes in the policy or operating environment. 4 – Sustainability is well considered and supported by realistic measures. There is a credible likelihood that key results will continue, although some aspects could be further developed. 3 – The proposal includes basic elements of sustainability, but these are not fully convincing or sufficiently detailed. Continuation of results is possible but uncertain. 2 – Sustainability is weakly addressed. Measures are vague, unrealistic, or insufficiently linked to the project's results. Limited likelihood of continuation after the project ends. 1 – Sustainability is not meaningfully addressed. There is no credible plan for continuation of results or activities. 0 – Insufficient / Not assessable; No information on sustainability is provided.
Criterion 6. Cross-cutting priorities and Common Values (10 points)				
6.1 Inclusion of marginalised	Does the project meaningfully include, engage, or benefit	0-5	1	5 – Inclusion of marginalised or under-represented groups is clearly integrated into the core logic of the project. Target groups are specifically defined, their needs are reflected in

and under-represented groups	marginalised and under-represented groups relevant to the Call, including Roma, women, LGBTIQ+ persons, migrants, refugees, persons with disabilities, youth, or residents of under-served areas? Is this inclusion substantive and relevant to the project logic, rather than tokenistic?			the problem analysis, and they are meaningfully involved in the design and/or implementation of activities. The project demonstrates how inclusion contributes to the expected results. 4 – Relevant groups are clearly identified and included in the project design. Their needs are addressed through planned activities, though their role or level of engagement could be further strengthened. 3 – Relevant groups are identified, but inclusion is limited in scope or not consistently reflected across the project. Their involvement is present but not central to achieving results. 2 – Inclusion is mentioned but weakly justified or poorly integrated into the project design. The link between target groups and activities or results is unclear. 1 – Inclusion is superficial, declarative, or not relevant to the project. Target groups are vaguely defined or not meaningfully addressed. 0 – Insufficient / Not assessable; No meaningful information on inclusion is provided
6.2 Alignment with fundamental values (human rights, rule of law, democracy)	To what extent is the project aligned with and actively promotes fundamental values such as human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities?	0-5	1	5 – The project clearly and consistently reflects fundamental values across all elements of the design. These values are actively operationalised through the choice of activities, methodology, stakeholder engagement, and expected results. The proposal demonstrates a strong rights-based approach. 4 – The project is clearly aligned with fundamental values, which are reflected in the design and implementation approach. Minor gaps may exist in how these values are translated into practice. 3 – The project is generally aligned with fundamental values, but this is expressed in a generic or implicit way. Limited evidence of how these values shape the project design or implementation. 2 – The alignment with fundamental values is unclear, superficial, or insufficiently demonstrated. The project design does not convincingly reflect these principles. 1 – The project shows minimal or no meaningful alignment with fundamental values. There are concerns about how the project approaches rights, inclusion, or democratic principles. 0 – Insufficient / Not assessable; No information provided or serious concerns regarding compliance with fundamental values.