CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES
CONGRÈS DES POUVOIRS LOCAUX ET RÉGIONAUX

The Congress
Le Congrès

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Call for proposals for initiatives
on transparency and citizen participation in Ukraine

The Congress of local and regional authorities launched a call for municipalities from Ukraine, whose representatives have participated in the workshops "Mayors, leaders for change" organised during 2014 – 2017, within the project "Promoting local democracy in Ukraine".

The Call for proposals aims to support selected municipalities in planning, designing and implementing sustainable and replicable citizen participation actions, with the larger aim to encourage local authorities to become more open, inclusive, responsive, transparent and accountable to citizens, and to take gender perspective into account.

An Information session was held on 11 May 2017 and as a result, a set of Frequently Asked Questions was prepared to provide further support to mayors and their teams in the finalisation of their project proposals.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can municipalities whose representatives did not take part in the workshops "Mayors leaders for change" apply with a project proposal?

Unfortunately, no. Only those municipalities whose Mayors or heads of councils took part in the workshops "Mayors leaders for change" can apply for a grant within the current call.[1]

2. Who can apply for the grant?

The call is open to Municipalities whose Mayor or Head of local council took part in the workshops "Mayors, leaders for change".[1] Project proposals from NGOs are not eligible.

3. Can a proposal that is being submitted for funding be part of a bigger project? Is it possible that the funding is requested for only this part of the bigger project?

The proposal can be part of a larger project. However, the proposal should have its own goals and tasks, which should be possible to reach and implement during the implementation period of the grant from the Council of Europe, i.e. until 15 November 2017. The documents that are submitted should contain detailed information and justification on the part that needs funding.

Please note that you cannot receive funding for activities which are already covered by another source, as provided by Article 10.3 of the Council of Europe Rule 1374 dd.16.12.2015: "Applicants shall further be required to indicate whether they have received or applied for any additional funding

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[1] The workshops "Mayors, leaders for change" were organised as follows: Kyiv, 11-13 November 2014; Kyiv, 15-16 December 2015; Vinnytsya, 2-3 March 2016; Kyiv, 18-19 May 2016; Lviv, 5-6 October 2016; Kharkiv, 1-2 February 2017; and Odessa, 15-16 February 2017.

from the Council of Europe or other sources in respect of the same action or project or for its operational expenditure and what the respective amounts of additional funding are."

4. The call reads that "Municipal staff shall not be funded by the grant and no more than 1/3 of the total estimated budget should be spent on technical services, such as purchase of technical equipment and/or renovation of municipal premises". Does this mean that there may be no more than 1/3 of the total project budget or no more than 1/3 of the grant amount?

The abovementioned limitation is related to the amount of funding that comes from the Council or Europe therefore no more than a third of the grant allocated can be spent on technical services. There is however no limit regarding the contribution of the municipality, which can cover technical services. Costs for refurbishment (office renovation, restoration) of current premises are not eligible costs unless they are directly related to project activities.

The remaining 2/3 of the grant should be used for "soft outputs", mostly directed towards increasing transparency, raising the awareness of the population on municipal activities, information sharing, capacity building, organising meetings and discussions, publishing brochures, conducting surveys, etc.

5. What technical services will be considered eligible for funding? Is the creation of the online resource (website, portal etc.) considered to be a technical service and therefore eligible to no more than 1/3 of the grant?

The Council of Europe Rule 1374 dd.16.12.2015 defines which costs shall be considered eligible. All costs must be "necessary for the purpose of the grant". The grantees must demonstrate both during the proposal phase and the reporting phase exactly how the costs have contributed to the activity. They must not be incidental costs, but rather must have a clear bearing on the outcome of the activity.

Given that the objectives of the project may be pursued in a direct or indirect way, namely: by the setting up of participatory democratic systems, or by the pursuit of an action through the use of a participatory democratic scheme, costs of technical services could be eligible in two ways:

- ‣ The grantee sets up a system which facilitates citizen participation in local government. This could take the form of a website, telephonic services, or opportunities and/or spaces for physical interaction. Technical services to support this system may be considered eligible.
- ‣ The grantee uses a participatory democratic system to decide upon (and eventually undertake) a municipal project. In such a case, directly related technical services may be required both to facilitate the decision making process (see above) and to complete the project which has been decided upon. If the project decided upon includes technical services, this may be considered eligible.

Regarding IT services and other technical services, they must be necessary for the purpose of the grant, and the cost cannot exceed 1/3 of the total amount of the budget of the grant award.

If creating an online resource is one of the goals of the project, and this reasonably falls within the aim of the grant project (citizen participation), such a service would not be considered to be purely technical, although it may include a purchase of technical equipment. Such equipment purchases are subject to limitation (its value cannot be more than 1/3 of the grant award), but contracts with experts who use the equipment are not subject to these restrictions.

6. Is it possible to budget a salary for a programmer who would develop and support a software/webpage?

If a municipality does not have such expertise among its staff members, it is allowed to hire an expert to do so. It is however necessary to justify the need to involve such an expert to achieve the objectives of the project and to remember that the salary can only be covered by the grant for the duration of the project, i.e. until 15 November 2017.

7. In paragraph 1 of Appendix I (Registration Form) line 6: "Date on which the applicant was founded". What date should be specified?

It should be the date of establishment of the municipality, according to the legal documents of the municipality.

8. Is it mandatory to indicate a partner organisation/institution? (Line 4 in paragraph 4 "Project Overview" Appendix I)

No, it is not. The project can be implemented without a partner organisation.

9. Can a NGO perform some project tasks? Can a NGO apply for a grant?

Yes, it can. However please note that providing financial support to third parties (re-granting schemes) is prohibited. The call for proposals is only for municipalities. (Please refer to question 1 and 2)

10. Can a government agency/authority be a partner organisation or does it concern NGOs only?

NGOs as well as public institutions/authorities can be partners during the implementation of the initiatives. For example, it can be the district administration, district council etc. partners for the project can also be local civil society organisations, activist groups or individuals, as well as media, educational institutions, etc., who will be participating in the project activities.

11. Can a municipality pay salaries to its employees involved in the project with the money awarded by Council of Europe?

No, it cannot. Municipal staff shall not be funded by the grant award.

12. Can the costs of salary of the project co-ordinator be included in the budget?

If the project co-ordinator is not an employee of the municipality, the costs of salary can be included in the budget.

It is to be noted that the project co-ordinator is responsible for planning, organising, monitoring and reporting. In other words, she or he is co-ordinating the project activities and ensures smooth project implementation. The Mayor but also any other employee from the local government unit could be the project co-ordinator. In any case, the mayor should be the key driving-force of the initiative.

13. Can a proposal relate to only part of the local community, not the entire community? For example, small and medium entrepreneurs or certain vulnerable social groups?

Yes it can, but it needs convincing justification, detailing in particular how such project is important and relevant for the town (or settlement) and its local community, and how sustainable contacts and interaction with this part of the community will be developed.

14. Do we have to open a separate bank account for the project?

There is no requirement for a separate account at the stage of application. However the municipalities that win the grant award will be requested to open separate accounts that will be used only for the purpose of receiving grant from the Council of Europe. Such measure will contribute to a transparent monitoring of financial expenses and reporting.

All transfers will be done through bank transfer. 70% of the grant will be received by the selected municipality following the signature of the contract. The remaining will be transferred after the project is finished and financial and narrative reports are approved.

Please also note that all calculations and reporting are done in the local currency. VAT and other taxes should be included in your costs. The exchange rate to be mentioned in the Estimated Budget table should be the one indicated on the Central Bank's website on the day that you submit your application.

15. Can a municipality apply with an infrastructure project?

The Council of Europe does not finance any infrastructure projects.

16. Why are the international and national experts referred to in the Estimated Budget Template (Appendix II) necessary?

National and international experts are optional but may need to be involved in case the municipality is lacking expertise on a certain area among its staff member for the proper implementation of the project. The municipality may need, for example, to hire an expert in order to develop specific tools (Code of Ethics, website, etc.) In such cases, and as long as the expert's involvement is properly justified, it is allowed to hire national or international experts and to provide them with fees within the grant award.

It is not compulsory to identify experts at the proposal stage. However, you can attach the CV(s) of key project expert(s) to the proposal if you wish to. The expert and/or trainer should be selected based on needs and expert's qualifications.

The rules of the Council of Europe provide that a consultant can be hired from one source if the cost is less than 5,000 EUR. Likewise, in the case of procurement, if the cost is less than 2,000 EUR, you can apply a one–source procedure. However, if the Ukrainian national legislation is stricter, you should follow national procurement rules.

17. How big and complex a project should be?

It is necessary to plan an optimal number of activities within the project considering the financial and time limitations in order to achieve feasible results.

18. Is it mandatory to take into account gender aspects in the project proposal?

The gender aspect must be taken into account at all phases of the project life cycle: planning phase, implementation phase, closing and evaluation phase of the project. It should be highlighted in the final report.

19. Can the town of Slavuta (Khmelnytsky region) take part in the competition for grant?

Unfortunately, the town of Slavuta cannot participate. An invitation to participate in the workshop "Mayors, leaders for change" held on 2-3 March 2016 in Vinnytsya was sent to the municipality, but no attendance has been registered.

20. Is it allowed by the conditions of the Call to involve and plan costs for an international consultant?

There is no limitation in regards to the citizenship of the experts involved.

21. Are there any specific requirements about the exact % of the co-funding on the side of the Municipality?

There is no specific requirement on the exact amount or %. Co-funding should be indicated in row 17 "Contribution of the Grantee" of the Estimated Budget excel table and in the respective section of the application form.

22. Is it possible to contact a Council of Europe representative or a local expert to get expertise on and check the proposal budget?

All questions should be sent by mail to congress.cooperation@coe.int. The answers will be shared with all eligible municipalities, as all the applicants should benefit of the same information. Moreover, applications cannot be opened/seen by the Evaluation committee or Council of Europe staff before the deadline.

23. Can two municipalities apply in partnership for this call? Can neighbouring municipalities be invited to an event proposed in the project?

The project is granted only to a municipality – the winner of the grant. Nevertheless co-operation with other (neighbouring) municipality/ies can be an added value and is possible. For example, visits to/in other municipalities, or inviting neighbouring municipalities to your community to share good practices, etc. can be planned.

24. Is it possible to plan and organise an event before the start of the project?

Only the activities implemented following the signature of the grant agreement are eligible.

25. What kind of indicators can we use for the proposed activities? Can the project conduct a survey before the project starts and after it?

The poll before the project cannot be financed. However it is a good instrument to demonstrate the existing situation and provide a baseline. The poll on the results of the project is also appropriate, because it can show changes on how the image, reputation and perception of the municipal administration evolved. Indicators can be also related to the number of meetings, number of participants, visits on the website, social networks, discussions in the forum created by municipalities, number of complaints (decreased), adoption of regulations, etc.

26. Can the project cover costs for sociological research, posting articles, publications?

These costs are eligible.

27. How to measure the results, impact of the project?

At the time of the final report, it will not possible to measure the impact of the project. The impact defines the long-term vision guiding the activities implemented.

The results of the project can be of different types: outputs - what was produced, bought, renovated; outcomes - changes in behaviour, mentality - what changed as a consequence of the activities carried out. The methodology to measure those results should be planned from the beginning of the project.

28. Are there any intermediate reports during the project implementation?

The grantees will submit the final report (narrative and financial) at the end of the project. No intermediate reports are requested.

29. How should a municipality prove the number of population?

It should be described in the appropriate section of your application, when describing the profile of municipality. Appropriate sources (links) such as the last census, state statistics office etc. should be provided.

30. Do a municipality need to carry out the closing event?

It is up to each applicant to plan it or not.