**COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES**

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

FOR INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE GRANTS

Deadline: 30 September 2022, 16:00

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

# NOTICE

This Call for Applications is part of the Project*Support to Electoral Reforms in North Macedonia* (hereinafter: the Project).

Formally registered civil society organisations (CSOs) are eligible to apply.

Under this Call for Applications, CSOs are eligible to submit **only one application**. The Project will automatically eliminate all applications submitted by CSOs that apply more than once.

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# 1. Background

*Support to Electoral Reforms in North Macedonia* is a project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

The Project’s overall objective is to support democratic and credible election processes that facilitate political participation and social integration by enabling voters to freely select their representatives and hold them accountable.

The Project activities are designed to support this objective through the achievement of three outcomes:

* Outcome 1: Strengthened institutions conduct fair and efficient election processes;
* Outcome 2: Internally democratized political parties present citizen-oriented policies and election programs;
* Outcome 3: Empowered citizens hold political parties and elected officials accountable.

The Project works with a range of stakeholders – civil society organizations (CSOs), political parties, public authorities, and citizens – to further advance the knowledge of and expertise in electoral processes and international good practices. In advancing the Project’s goals, IFES supports the State Election Commission (SEC), lower levels of election administration – Municipal Election Commissions (MECs) and Electoral Boards (EBs) – political parties, and collaborates with other election-related institutions (primarily with the Ministry of Justice) and CSOs, both at national and local levels.

In addition to the above, Project beneficiaries are government agencies such as the Ministry of Information, Society and Administration, Agency for Audio and Audio-visual Media Services, State Statistical Office, the Ombudsperson, State Audit Office, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice; political parties, voters and citizens.

The Project started its implementation in August 2019 and it is expected to end in June 2023.

**Previous efforts:** Throughout 2020 and 2021, the Project designed and implemented a comprehensive capacity support program for 40 individual Community Mobilizers (CMs) to develop knowledge and skills in political participation and community mobilization, and create opportunities for greater interaction between elected officials, government representatives and groups of citizens. This was achieved through a series of trainings/workshops, mentorship and coaching, as well as the implementation of *innovative initiatives (2I)* which helped monitoring political and government promises and increasing public awareness in the respective areas. CMs ‘reported’ on the progress in their realization during town hall discussions, public debates, advocacy and lobbying or using a more detailed monitoring matrix developed and populated with Project support.

This Call for Applications targets CSOs that are registered as **associations and foundations** under the Law on Associations and Foundations.

# 2. SMALL GRANTS for inovative initiatives

## 2.1. Overall objective and outcomes

The purpose of this call is to provide small grants to civil society organisations to plan and implement different innovative initiatives that are aimed towards producing greater citizen engagement, including of vulnerable groups, leading to improved political accountability and transparency in local communities. The objective is to encourage community engagement and demand political accountability and transparency from elected officials. The proposed actions must be in line with and contribute to the project *Support to Electoral Reform in North Macedonia*.

**Overall Objective:** to support democratic and credible election processes that facilitate political participation and social integration by enabling voters to freely select their representatives and hold them accountable.

The applicant should identify a community problem or solution that was promised (in the electoral program) to be addressed by the local government or/and is incorporated in the current local government’s program, and mobilize the community to remind local authorities of their given promises.

Innovative initiatives should include, but not be limited to, the following:

* Presentation of the results of monitoring the selected topic at local level (individual meetings, town hall discussions, targeted presentations for different stakeholder groups, roundtables, video production, guest-speaking on local TV/radio outlets, social media);
* Collecting local community opinions about the monitored issue (what is their perception, is the issue sufficiently addressed and is it in the process of implementation);
* Debates between local self-government officials (responsible for acting on the monitored issue) and experts in the topic to exchange opinions about the achieved progress or the lack thereof;
* Organizing wider groups of citizens from the local community to remind local government officials (and political parties) of their promises (concert, peaceful protest march etc.);
* Guerrilla actions aimed at sharing/disseminating the monitoring results, presented as leaflets, posters, videos etc.;
* Organizing signing of petitions/open letters to responsible local self-government institutions;
* Development of simple IT applications aimed at mobilizing the local community regarding the monitored issue;
* Organizing and hosting online or in-person forums dedicated to the issue and collect the opinions of the local community members about the monitored issue and to what extent it is addressed;
* Other activities that lead to fulfilling the Project overall objective and outcomes.

The innovative initiatives should focus on **local issues the addressing of which is within the remit of the local government.**

The Applicant should select a topic that was promised during the local elections of 2021, explore whether this topic is in the work plan, programs and budget of the LSGU for 2022 and organize the activities around that topic.

Examples of activities within innovative initiative may be:

* Advocacy efforts
* Awareness raising
* Awareness raising tools
* Research-related activities
* Organization of events to support the innovative initiative.

The following initiatives will NOT be supported under this Call:

* Gathering support for or promoting a certain political party/coalition;
* Activities involving or promoting hate speech/misinformation/disinformation;
* Activities that do not comply with government protocols for Covid-19 (if any);
* Trainings/seminars/community meetings that are not transparent or inclusive;
* Activities that are likely to cause harm to the participants or pose a risk to others;
* Other initiatives that are not aligned with the Project’s goals;

NOTE: The innovative initiatives are not intended to solve problem(s) or implement promised solution(s) from the electoral programs of the elected local governments.

Examples of different types of innovative initiatives for community engagement and mobilization activities from previous efforts are available at <https://electoralreforms.mk/en/>.

##  2.2. Priorities

Under this Call for Applications, the priorities are the following:

* **Geographical focus:** The final portfolio of grantees should, as much as possible, be located in and/or their activities should take place in local government units across all 8 planning regions;
* **Focus areas:** The innovative initiatives should focus on local issues, the addressing of which is within the remit of the local governments and was promised as part of the local governments’ electoral programs.

## 2.3. Available Funds

The amount made available under this Call for Applications is around 6,600,000 MKD. The Project reserves the right to change this amount (increase or decrease) depending on the outcomes of the Call for Applications. It also reserves the right not to award any or all of the available funds.

## 2.4. Co-Financing

Under this Call for Applications, co-financing from other donors than SDC is not required but encouraged.

# 3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Under this Call for Applications there are five sets of eligibility criteria:

1. **Actors**, i.e. applicants registered under the Law on Associations and Foundations;
2. **Grants**, the maximum size of the grant and duration of the innovative initiative;
3. **Activities**, i.e. type of actions/activities that are encouraged/expected within this Call;
4. **Costs**, i.e. type of costs that may be taken into account in determining the amount of the grant;
5. **Number of applications,** the number of submitted applications per applicant.

## 3.1. Actors

### 3.1.1. Applicants

In order to be eligible for a grant under this Call, the applicant must be registered in North Macedonia under the Law on Associations and Foundations;[[1]](#footnote-2)This call for applicants is open to CSOs with democratic values, beliefs and attitudes.

The applicant should provide:

* **Implementing staff**

The key personnel responsible for the implementation of the innovative initiative. The applicant is required to provide CVs of the implementing staff for this Call. The key personnel is responsible for the grant implementation.

* **Community mobilizers**

Two community mobilizers. The proposed community mobilizers should be between the ages of 18 and 29 (preferably up to 23-24 years old). The applicant is required to provide CVs of the two community mobilizers proposed for this Call.

The community mobilizers are not responsible for the grant’s management; however, they are encouraged to participate in the implementation of grant activities.

The role of the community mobilizers will be to closely follow and monitor political parties’ promises reflected in electoral programs and government policies at local and central levels, and hold them accountable for their performance and actions. Their role will be to inspire and mobilize their communities to raise their voices, join them in the monitoring activities and demand responses and accountability from the political parties and government representatives. Through these activities, the community mobilizers will contribute to a changed behavior of the political parties towards the electorate and towards citizens in general.

**Capacity building program for community mobilization**

The implementation of innovative initiatives by the CSOs will be accompanied by a comprehensive capacity support program for community mobilization. The two proposed community mobilizers will be enrolled in a capacity building program for community mobilization to develop knowledge and skills in political participation and community mobilization, and create opportunities for greater interaction between elected officials, government representatives and groups of citizens.

The community mobilizers will get familiar with and utilize the Project-developed monitoring tools in their efforts for community mobilization.

## 3.2. Grants

### 3.2.1. Grant Size

Grants for innovative initiatives shall be up to 300,000 MKD per grant. The Project reserves the right to change this amount (increase or decrease in the frame of above-mentioned amounts).

NOTICE: The planned budget costs should be in MKD and without VAT.

### 3.2.2. Duration

The duration of a grant may not be lower than four (4) months nor exceed six (6) months.

## 3.3. innovative Initiatives/Activities

This Call for Applications supports innovative initiatives that include one or more of the following types of activities:

* Presentation of the results of monitoring the selected topic at local level (individual meetings, town hall discussions, targeted presentations for different stakeholder groups, roundtables, video production, guest-speaking on local TV/radio outlets, social media);
* Collecting local community opinions about the monitored issue (what is their perception, is the issue sufficiently addressed and is it in the process of implementation);
* Debates between local self-government officials (responsible for acting on the monitored issue) and experts in the topic to exchange opinions about the achieved progress or the lack thereof;
* Organizing wider groups of citizens from the local community to remind local government officials (and political parties) of their promises (concert, peaceful protest march etc.);
* Guerrilla actions aimed at sharing/disseminating the monitoring results, presented as leaflets, posters, videos etc.;
* Organizing signing of petitions/open letters to responsible local self-government institutions;
* Development of simple IT applications aimed at mobilizing the local community regarding the monitored issue;
* Organizing and hosting online or in-person forums dedicated to the issue and collect the opinions of the local community members about the monitored issue and to what extent it is addressed;
* Other activities that lead to fulfilling the Project overall objective and outcomes.

## 3.4. Costs

Under this Call for Applications, most of the usual operational costs will be **eligible**, including:

* Costs for gross-salaries for the key personnel (implementing staff) involved in the implementation of the proposed innovative initiative;
* Partial operational costs for the CSO’s regular work (office rents, electricity/heating, equipment (petty inventory, office supplies), phone bills etc.) that are relevant to the proposed initiative;
* Direct costs for the proposed innovative initiative that will occur during its implementation period;
* Indirect costs – amounting to maximum 10% of the total costs for I Human resources + II Operative costs + III Direct Costs

(Indirect costs include: supervisory costs, general services, incalculable expenses and travel costs, general administrative costs, occupancy costs, equipment, capital expenditure, maintenance, amortization, acquisitions, representation, networking, web site, advertising materials, training new employees, fees, taxes (without VAT), interest, insurance etc. Unlike labor costs, indirect costs are not directly linked to the organization’s employees.)

Under this Call, the following costs will **not be eligible**:

* Costs of activities that are completed by/at the date of signature of the grant contract;
* Cost declared by the Grantee that are financed by another donor;
* Core funding of the applicant or its partners (i.e. mainly for organizational expenses);
* Projects supporting political parties;
* Purchase of vehicles, equipment, furniture and other large inventory;
* Purchase or renovation (fully or partially) of fixed assets (land, buildings, etc.),
* Credits to third parties;
* Currency exchange losses;
* Debts and debt service charges;
* Activities concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in work­shops, seminars, conferences and congresses.
* Re-granting.

## 3.5. Number of applications

Applicants should be aware that, under this Call, they are eligible to submit only one application. In the event that an applicant submits more than one application, all applications submitted by that applicant will automatically be rejected.

# 4. APPLICATION Process

## 4.1. Application Form

Applications for this Call for Applications must be submitted by means of an Application Form. This Application Form consists of the following parts:

**PART A. APPLICANT,** introducing the applicant;

**PART B. INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE ACTIVITIES**, including a summary of proposed activities and relevance of the activities and short overview of the budget.

**PART C. DECLARATION** **BY THE APPLICANT,** which is Applicant’s statement of conformity with the requirements of the Call for Applications, as well as commitment to implement the proposed activities with the support of the grant;

**PART D. ANNEXES,** containing required supporting documents for the application process:

* Annex 1. Budget and Justification
* Annex 2. CVs (europass format) of the implementing staff
* Annex 3. CVs (europass format) of the two proposed community mobilizers
* Annex 4. Proof of the Applicant’s legal status by provision of a Certificate of Current Status issued by the Central Registry of North Macedonia, not older than 6 months at the point of the opening date of the Call

**PART E. CHECKLIST** to verify that Part A to D have been completed (and in the correct fashion).

## 4.2. Completing the Application Form

All parts of the Application Form, as well as annexes, must be completed. Please use the correct templates published as part of this Call and please do not change their content or format. The correct templates for this Call can be found on the following link: <https://electoralreforms.mk/cm-2022/>

Applicants that will not submit a complete application and will not use the correct templates will be eliminated in the phase of administrative and eligibility check and will not be considered for further evaluation.

Applications must be typed (handwritten applications will not be considered) and submitted in the Macedonian language. Applicants may submit an additional version in a language of their preference, which is one of the languages that are official in North Macedonia at national or local level in accordance with the Law on the Use of Languages and based on the applicant’s place of registration.

This Call will only accept applications that are submitted **by electronic mail** to this address: **applications2ig@mcms.mk**. The Project will **not** accept applications submitted by regular (postal) mail or hand delivery.

## 4.3. Deadline

The deadline for the submission of applications is **30 September 2022** by 16:00 Macedonian time. The date and time of the received email will be considered as relevant proof of application within the given deadline. In response to the application submission email, applicants will receive a notification confirming receipt.

## 4.4. Submitting the Application

Applications must be submitted electronically, as a single e-mail subjected: *Call for Applications – Innovative Initiative Grants* to the following address: **applications2ig@mcms.mk**

Applications must be submitted in ONE e-mail message containing the following documents in their original format (MS Word/Excel, or PDF, where applicable) and not exceeding 20MB in size:

* Completed Application Form
* Annex 1. Budget and Justification (1a. Budget of the 2II; 1b. Justification;)
* Annex 2. CVs (europass format) of the implementing staff
* Annex 3. CVs (europass format) of the two proposed community mobilizers
* Annex 4. Proof of the Applicant’s legal status by provision of a Certificate of Current Status issued by the Central Registry of North Macedonia, not older than 6 months at the point of the opening date of the Call (5 September 2022); scanned versions are acceptable;
* Scanned part C. Declaration bf the Applicant, signed by the applicant’s legal representative.

## 4.5. Helpdesk (questions and answers)

The Helpdesk is at the disposal of potential applicants to collect and answer questions related to this Call for Applications. Questions can be submitted to the Helpdesk via e-mail to this address: **info2ig@mcms.mk**.

Questions should be submitted to the Helpdesk no later than 10 calendar days before the deadline for this Call for Applications. The Project has no obligation to provide answers to any questions that are received later than 10 calendar days before the deadline for this Call.

The Project will provide answers to all questions no later than 5 calendar days before the deadline of this Call for Applications. The Q&A will be made available on the Project website, <https://electoralreforms.mk/en/>.

Applicants are encouraged to consult the Project’s website and Facebook page on a regular basis so that they are timely and adequately informed of the latest updates regarding this Call.

## 4.6. Information Session

The Project will hold one online information session about this Call for Applications, on 14 September 2022 from 12:00. Please consult the Project website <https://electoralreforms.mk/en/> on a regular basis to keep informed of any potential changes related to the information session.

# 5. EVALUATION

The selection process consists of the following steps:

## Step 1 – Administrative Check

The Project will examine the administrative quality of the proposals according to the following criteria:

* **Deadline**. If the deadline has been met, the application will be accepted; if the deadline has not been met, the application will be rejected (even if it has been received);
* **Application Form**. The application has been submitted as required and in the correct Application Form;
* **Annexes**. All of the requested annexes have been submitted as required and in the correct format;
* **Language**. The proposal is in the Macedonian language;
* **Signed declaration**. the Declaration by the Applicant has been included, has been completed, and has been signed by an authorized legal representative;[[2]](#footnote-3)

## Step 2 – Eligibility Check

The Project will examine the eligibility of proposals according to the following criteria:

* **Applicant.** The applicant is a civil society actor with eligible legal status as described in Section 3.1 of these Guidelines;
* **Grant Request**. The grant request does not exceed 300,000 MKD;
* **Duration.** The duration of a Grant is between four (4) and six (6) months;
* **Number of applications per applicant.** The applicant has submitted only one application.

## Step 3 – Evaluation of the Application

The Grant Selection Committee will score each application using the following evaluation grid:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1. Relevance of the innovative initiative** (relevance of the proposal to the objectives and priorities of this Call for Applications; the initiative’s focus area, geographical focus, situation analysis, target groups) The geographic area covered by the initiative is well defined and the target groups are defined and realistic. | 40 |
| **2. Design of the innovative initiative** (overall objective, result(s), activities). The objective and results are clear, the activities and their interconnectivity are well defined as well as the target groups and geographical focus. The initiative proposes innovative elements, approach or tools which can be implemented within the given timeframe. | 40 |
| **3. Budget** (activities are appropriately reflected in the budget, the justification of the costs is clear) | 20 |
| **Maximum total score** | 100 |

The **winning portfolio of grantees** is one that matches all of this Call for Applications’ priorities and includes initiatives that received the highest average score across all 3 sections of the evaluation grid above. The Grant Selection Committee may apply **weighting factors** with the aim of reaching a better balance of grantees in accordance with the priorities of this Call (**geographical focus, focus area**).

# 6. ADMINISTRATIVE, LEGAL AND FINANCIAL VERIFICATION

Following the provisional selection of proposals by the Grant Selection Committee, the Project will verify the administrative, legal and financial eligibility of the applicants. For this reason, the Project may request that all applicants whose applications have been provisionally selected supply the following administrative, legal and financial documents:

1. Statute and/or other articles of association;
2. Copies of annual financial reports (or final accounts, profit/loss accounts and balance sheets) for the last three years, notably 2019, 2020 and 2021 (if applicable);
3. Other documents relevant to the grant.

If required, the Project will set a deadline for the supply of these documents. If applicants fail to submit the requested documents within this deadline, their application could be rejected.

The Project will request that the grantees open a **specific bank account** for the innovative initiative grant and to have at least two signatories of this account.

# 7. AWARD

The Project will inform all applicants that have been awarded a grant in accordance with the decision of the Grant Selection Committee. In addition, the Project will inform all rejected applicants.

# 8. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Opening the Call for Applications | 5 September 2022  |
| Information Session  | 14 September 2022, 12:00 |
| **Deadline for submitting applications** | **30 September 2022, 16:00**  |
| Grant Selection Committee Decision | October 2022 |
| Notifications of Awards and Rejections | October 2022 |
| Negotiations and Grant Agreement Signatures | October 2022 |

Please note that this timetable is indicative. The Project may update this timetable at any time. Applicants are therefore encouraged to regularly check the Project website <https://electoralreforms.mk/en/>

# 9. FEEDBACK

The Grant Selection Committee’s decisions are final.

Applicants who believe that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may request a feedback session. Requests must be submitted in writing within 10 days after the announcement of the Grant awards and submitted by e-mail at: info2ig@mcms.mk. Such requests will neither delay nor change the decision of the Grant Selection Committee.

# 10. ANNEXES to the guidelines

Please consult the following annexes:

* [Application Form](https://electoralreforms.mk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ENG-2IG-Application-Form.docx), including annexes:
* Annex 1. [Budget and Justification (1a. Budget of the 2II; 1b. Justification;)](https://electoralreforms.mk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ENG-2IG-Annex-1.-Budget-and-Justification.xls)
* Annex 2. CV template ([europass format](https://electoralreforms.mk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Europass-CV-template.doc)).
1. The Law on Associations and Foundations published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no.52/2010, pp.2-26 http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/623772ADC92FEE42A1DB496E1E190648.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The authorised legal representative is confirmed with provision of Current Status (Tekovna sostojba) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)