



Civic Engagement Programme

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Call for Proposals

2nd window projects – small grants

2025

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Abbreviations

CB	Capacity Building
CEP	Civic Engagement Programme
CHF	Swiss Franc
CSDF	Civil Society Development Foundation
EA	Executing Agency
EU	European Union
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
GC	Grant Contract
GSC	Grant Selection Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PO	Programme Operator
PSEAH	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment
REPF	Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation
RON	Romanian Leu
SCO	Swiss Contribution Office in Romania
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SRCP	Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme
SteeCom	Steering Committee
VAT	Value Added Tax

General information about the Civic Engagement Programme

The Civic Engagement Programme is part of the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme and the second Swiss Contribution, earmarked for certain EU Member States and a key element of Switzerland's European policy, which aims to promote cohesion and stability in Europe, and to strengthen and develop bilateral relations with partner countries.

The Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme (SRCP) amounts to CHF 221,500,000 and its overall **objective** is to contribute to **the reduction of economic and social disparities within Romania**, by pursuing five specific objectives: (1) promoting economic growth and social dialogue, reducing youth unemployment; (2) managing migration and supporting integration, increasing public safety and security; (3) protecting the environment and the climate; (4) strengthening of social systems and (5) civic engagement and transparency.

The Civic Engagement Programme (CEP) has a total funding allocation of CHF 14,000,000 and aligns with the objectives of the SRCP. The CEP's **goal** is **to strengthen civic space in Romania** so that its inhabitants participate more actively in public affairs, influence policy making, and contribute to democratic reforms, transparency, accountability and systemic social change in Romania through their engagement in civil society spaces and in favor of the wellbeing of the population.

In order to achieve its goal, the following **outcomes** will be pursued in the CEP:

Outcome 1

Improved ability of civil society's actors (in particular NGOs) to collaborate in favor of Romania's inhabitants.

Outcome 2

Improved environment for civic engagement.

The intervention strategy of the CEP, as outlined in the Bilateral Framework Agreement between Switzerland and Romania, will consist of two distinct funding instruments available to NGOs: **1st window**: large grants, through projects delivering impact at the national and/or regional level with an integrated approach, and **2nd window**: small grants, through small projects for civic engagement, dialogue and participation, thus covering relevant areas of the Programme.

The CEP is also mainstreaming, **as cross-cutting themes, social inclusion** as well as **climate change mitigation and adaptation measures**.

These **Guidelines for Applicants** outline key information for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) interested in applying for a grant under the **Call for proposals for the 2nd window projects** of the **CEP**, and includes an overview of the call, eligible projects and examples of activities, eligibility requirements, application and selection procedure, and rules of implementation.

The Programme Operator (PO) for managing and administering the CEP is a consortium consisting of the Civil Society Development Foundation (lead organization), Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation and KEK-CDC, appointed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), following a tender process.

1 Overview of the CEP 2nd window projects

1.1 Main areas

The 2nd window projects address two Areas that are targeting to contribute to achieving the CEP objectives:



1.2 Type of grants and financial allocation

Within the Call for the 2nd window projects, will be supported small grants projects, with a mandatory focus on civic engagement, dialogue, participation and empowerment, that deliver impact at local/national level.

2 nd window projects: small grants, single round	
Grant amount per project (minimum and maximum)	CHF 50,000 - CHF 200,000
Duration of the projects (minimum and maximum)	12 - 24 months
Financial allocation	The total allocated amount is CHF 7,000,000, with the following specific allocation: • CHF 2,000,000 for Area 1 – Civic engagement and advocacy – focusing on civic activism– estimated number of projects: 12 • CHF 2,000,000 for Area 1 – Civic engagement and advocacy – focusing on biodiversity protection, conservation and management of natural resources – estimated number of projects: 12 • CHF 3,000,000 for Area 2 – Empowerment of vulnerable groups – estimated number of projects: 18

Publication date of the Call for Proposals	17.10.2025
Opening date of the application process (takes place exclusively online, on https://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro)	21.10.2025
Application deadline	17.12.2025, 16:00 (Romanian Time)
Capacity Building activities within the supported projects	Up to 20% of the total budget of the project must be allocated for Capacity Building activities. These activities will be established and detailed in cooperation with the Programme Operator at the beginning of the project implementation.

1.3 Target groups

In the context of the CEP, target groups refer to the groups of individuals or communities that the proposals aim to address or support.

Under the 2nd window projects, the target groups include, but are not limited to, the following:

-  Citizens, especially in rural or small urban areas, where active civic participation remains untapped. Promoting civic engagement aligns with the values of social justice and equal opportunities, also benefiting activists, volunteers, and young leaders.
-  Vulnerable groups, including girls and women, children and youth at risk, youth from marginalised communities, ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, people suffering from addictions, survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking, immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers, individuals at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion, elderly, people with disabilities or suffering from chronic diseases, unemployed, homeless, etc.
-  Public decision makers (e.g. representatives of public authorities and institutions, elected officials) and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. schools and universities, academia, media representatives, NGO representatives, community leaders, business community, professional groups and associations, experts and practitioners, informal/civic groups and networks/NGOs etc.)

1.4 Programme Indicators

The Programme Indicators serve the purposes of accountability and communication. Each proposed intervention must be developed taking into consideration the Programme Indicators, as they will be used to monitor the progress and outcomes of the supported projects.

All projects must select and report against at least one Outcome Indicator , as well as any two Output Indicators	
Outcomes and Outputs	Indicators
Outcome 1. Improved ability of civil society's actors (in particular NGOs) to collaborate in favour of Romania's inhabitants	1. Number of civic actors with improved capacity or better network abilities
Output 1.1 Population and volunteers are mobilized in the social, media and environmental domains	2. Number of volunteers mobilized in CEP supported activities
Output 1.2 NGOs address and articulate the most urgent social, environmental and media-related concerns	3. Number of public communication campaigns designed to inform, engage, and mobilize action
Output 1.3 Vulnerable people and victims of violence benefit from improved services	4. Number of direct beneficiaries (vulnerable, victims of violence etc.) benefitting from services
Outcome 2. Improved environment for civic engagement	5. Number of laws, policies and other public measures enriched by civic engagement
Output 2.1 Enhanced consultation mechanisms and collaboration with local, regional or national authorities	6. Number of consultations with local, regional or national authorities
Output 2.2 CEP funding has enabled media actors to address relevant challenges towards the access to information and independent media in Romania	7. Number of self-regulation measures taken by independent media outlets meant to ensure the quality of journalism and the public access to public interest information 8. Number of independent media/journalists' public common actions/positions in view of protecting the profession of journalists 9. Number of instruments/resources (professional and/or open to the public) that serve to pre/debunk misinformation and disinformation, and improve media accountability
Output 2.3 CEP funding has enabled civil society initiatives and actors to address relevant challenges towards the participation and democratization of the Romanian society	10. Number of civil society initiatives addressing relevant challenges 11. Number of people (including vulnerable groups) reached by empowerment measures

1.5 Eligible projects

The 2nd window targets small projects within two Areas:



Projects under the 2nd window are encouraged to adopt measures that stimulate civic engagement, dialogue, participation and empowerment, such as: supporting/providing civic education, citizen participation and good governance, social inclusion, media pluralism and transparency, rural development, biodiversity protection, and management of natural resources.

In order to contribute to changes in the two Areas, advocacy actions are supported in fields as good governance, civic activism, youth inclusion, social services and inclusion of vulnerable groups, anti-discrimination, promotion of gender equality, prevention and combating of gender-based violence, environmental protection, combating climate change etc. Projects are encouraged to address the root causes of problems, with the aim of contributing to positive effects/changes in public policies or an improved implementation of the existing methodologies.



Capacity Building activities are mandatory to be included in the projects.

AREA 1:

Area 1 **supports integrated measures to increase citizens' education on civic and human rights** and to **actively support them in exercising/enforcing their rights**. In addition, the engagement of citizens in monitoring, control and advocacy activities of non-governmental organisations at local and/or central level will be improved. In the long term, citizens will become more involved in community life and in the decision-making processes, having the power to assure accountability.

Using specific instruments and developing new techniques, NGOs shall reach out towards citizens and **empower/encourage** them to engage more **actively and responsibly** to influence **practices and policies**, support the **principles of the rule of law**, take action against and report violations of civic and human rights, expose and report corruption, identify and respond to fake news, respect freedom of expression or advocate for environmental protection and climate change.

Projects to be supported under this Area should focus on the following topics:

- civic and human rights education to strengthen civic engagement and promote non-discrimination and solidarity;
- civic engagement by providing citizens with participation tools for getting involved in community life and public decision-making processes, and improvement of areas such as law enforcement, public services, environment protection, community development and social inclusion.

Educational programmes on civic and human rights shall include actions that directly involve citizens in community life and public decision-making processes.

Note: Biodiversity protection, conservation and management of natural resources shall be supported only as part of measures to promote civic participation, advocacy and active citizenship.

AREA 2:

Area 2 supports **actions to achieve social justice and inclusion of groups in vulnerable situations**, to **activate and empower** these groups to know and claim their rights and entitlements towards the authorities, to be **proactive and access available services**, to **demand from the authorities** the development of necessary services, to advocate for these peers, to strengthen their resilience, coping mechanisms, skills and abilities to integrate (in education, employment, etc.), to **participate in community life**, including decision making process.

NGOs will be supported in **addressing the root causes of exclusion and injustice** affecting vulnerable groups, and in actively promoting their social inclusion. Interventions should lead to **sustainable changes** such as enabling vulnerable groups to actively participate in civic and advocacy activities, strengthening their knowledge of rights, available services, and mechanisms to claim them, and fostering positive changes in the general public attitudes/practices.

Projects to be supported under this Area should address the following topics:

- causes of inequalities and exclusion;
- issues related to the mobilization and empowerment of vulnerable groups;
- awareness raising and advocacy for social justice and the inclusion of vulnerable groups;
- development of new/improved models and services to cover existing gaps and better meet the needs of vulnerable groups.

For both Areas under this Call, partnerships with other NGOs with complementary expertise (e.g., human rights, community development, education, healthcare, social care, housing, economic growth – including social economy, employment, and training) **will add significant value, ensuring a sustainable and integrated approach** to the proposed interventions.

Furthermore, the supported projects will facilitate the exchange of best practices, and the development and use of organizational and project management tools, and, where possible, integrate the expertise and knowledge of Swiss organizations. This will further strengthen cooperation and solidarity within the civil society sector.

All applications must comply with the principles of transparency, knowledge sharing and transfer, climate change mitigation, sustainable development (including economic and social development, and environmental protection), good governance, gender equality, and social inclusion, as **social inclusion and climate change mitigation and adaptation measures** are **cross-cutting themes** along the Civic Engagement Programme.

1.6 Non-eligible projects

The following types of projects are not eligible:

- projects aiming solely or substantially for academic research, feasibility studies, conferences and other one-off events, individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
- projects aiming solely individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- projects involving only training activities;
- projects for emergency support, except if they form an indispensable part of a project;
- projects including re-granting activities (e. g. using the granted funds to make grants or loans to other organizations or natural/legal persons);

- projects focused on the purchase of equipment, buildings or offices;
- projects that exclusively develop the Applicant's current activities (the project application must be elaborated for a specific project, as a set of well-defined and correlated activities, which will lead to concrete results within a well-defined time frame).

1.7 Location of the projects

Projects supported under the 2nd window should primarily be implemented in Romania, delivering impact at local level, but can also aim for a broader geographical impact by potentially covering multiple counties. Exceptions may be made for specific events, such as certain parts of activities involving knowledge exchange, training sessions, study visits, or participation in seminars/conferences which may occur abroad (e.g., in Switzerland or in other countries).

1.8 Eligible activities

Activities listed below are **only examples** that can be part of a project which has to be understood as a defined group of activities implemented to develop a response to a specific need, done in a logical sequence to achieve a set of predefined targets using the given resources. The lists are indicative rather than exhaustive:

Area 1 - Civic engagement and advocacy – focusing on civic activism

- Supporting active citizens' participation in civic activities by:
 - Educating and mobilizing citizens, groups, local authorities and the local businesses to cooperate in solving concrete local problems with local resources (through volunteering, community facilitation, participatory needs assessment and prioritization, designing and implementing community projects etc.);
 - Initiating and/or facilitating effective public consultations and participatory public decision-making processes;
 - Monitoring public authorities, public policy proposals, advocacy campaigns and public reactions through participatory approaches;
 - Mobilizing citizens to hold public institutions and local authorities accountable through campaigns, petitions, voter engagement, public debates, and other online or offline tools;
 - Encouraging volunteering initiatives undertaken by all ages (including undergraduates, elderly people);
 - Innovative (artistic, cultural, educative) actions to encourage civic participation;
 - Developing awareness-raising campaigns adapted to the target groups for a genuine citizens participation.
- Creating secure and inclusive spaces where communities can come together to identify and address local challenges, report human rights violations, defend human rights, promote equal treatment, and collaboratively design and implement community development initiatives using local resources.
- Educating citizens, including students, in civic and human rights (outside the established formal system) through debates, study groups, educational programmes, interactive activities, experiential, innovative and creative methods etc.
- Implementing training programmes for civic activists and community leaders to strengthen advocacy, mobilization, and communication skills.
- Designing and implementing evidence-based advocacy campaigns based on the expressed needs, and with the full and active participation of the communities and constituents.
- Developing and disseminating community-led policy briefs and position papers; developing guidelines, methodologies, studies, monitoring reports, surveys, as well as undergoing comprehensive data collection and research on civic and human rights.

- Providing/improving legal support and litigation (counselling, legal assistance) for supporting citizens' participation related cases, or for victims (as well as for witnesses and third parties) of discrimination and human rights violations.
- Assuring representation for different voices, communities, and political perspectives in mainstream media.
- Supporting media literacy by:
 - Educating citizens and improving critical thinking, freedom of speech, pluralism of opinions;
 - Combating discrimination, racism and hatred in public discourse;
 - Combating, as well as recognizing and reacting to fake news;
 - Combating manipulation in media and raising awareness about the dangers of receiving and propagating disinformation;
 - Improvement of digital capacities.
- Developing or promoting instruments/resources that serve to pre/debunk misinformation and disinformation.
- Supporting fact-checking platforms to verify news, statistics, or government claims through social media, local news, or through collaborations with media organizations.

Area 1 - Civic engagement and advocacy – focusing on biodiversity protection, conservation and management of natural resources

- Organizing practical educational activities on biodiversity protection, sustainable use of natural resources and climate change through experiential, innovative and creative methods (outside the established formal system).
- Fostering a culture of active participation in biodiversity conservation, sustainable natural resource management and climate change action.
- Organizing training and mentoring programmes for environmental activists and community leaders on environmental law, climate policy, and advocacy tools.
- Policy monitoring and advocacy initiatives through participatory approaches on biodiversity protection, sustainable natural resource use and, climate change, which could include:
 - Reviewing and assessing related and relevant policies and facilitate dialogue between NGOs and local/national decision makers;
 - Improving the implementation and monitoring of related and relevant legislation through the direct involvement of NGOs and citizens;
 - Advocacy and watchdog/monitoring activities aimed at raising awareness and mobilising action against environmentally harmful public or private projects;
 - Public awareness and capacity-building initiatives that ensure access to objective and reliable information;
 - Developing and using effective and innovative tools and systems for civic participation.
- Litigation of environment/climate change related cases (counselling, legal assistance, etc.).
- Facilitating citizen science initiatives, such as community-based biodiversity mapping and monitoring, to document environmental degradation and promote conservation priorities.
- Developing and promoting citizen initiatives for biodiversity protection, sustainable natural resource use and climate action.
- Implementing joint campaigns with local media, influencers, and artists to raise visibility of biodiversity loss and promote civic responsibility for conservation.

Area 2 - Empowerment of vulnerable groups

- Mobilizing vulnerable groups to advocate for their needs and act on behalf of vulnerable peers by:
 - Improving access to relevant information (about rights and entitlements, employment opportunities, etc.);
 - Changing the attitudes and behaviours of vulnerable groups in order to be more proactive in claiming their rights;
 - Teaching advocacy techniques.
- Advocating for the social inclusion of vulnerable groups: improvement of legislation, law enforcement and institutional practices, improvement/development of services for vulnerable groups etc.
- Promoting and implementing self-help and empowerment strategies/initiatives for combating social exclusion.
- Developing new or improved models (methodology, type of service, evaluation tool, research etc.) to address the needs of vulnerable groups.
- Initiating and facilitating effective public consultations with locally elected members, community leaders, and authorities, and promoting participatory decision-making processes to ensure that legislation and policies address the needs and rights of the most marginalized individuals and foster social inclusion with the active participation of vulnerable groups.
- Organizing roundtables, community forums with key stakeholders, dedicated public panels, building support groups and safe spaces for vulnerable groups (peer support groups, setting up community centers or shelters, counselling, emergency support).
- Ensuring access to basic and/or integrated and innovative services such as housing, employment, education, health care, and encouraging community participation in social, cultural or political events.
- Providing/improving legal support and litigation in relation to social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups (counselling, legal assistance, etc.).
- Campaigning to raise awareness, challenge stereotypes, counter hate-speech and support positive changes in attitudes and practices related to: human rights, gender equality, intersectional discrimination, poverty, substance abuse or dependency, equal opportunities and social cohesion etc.
- Designing inclusive community development programmes dedicated to marginalized groups.
- Identification and exchange of good practices, cooperation, mutual learning, development of working and learning methods (including transferable mentoring programmes), instruments (research, data collection, community surveys, investigations, reports, case studies manuals), protocol guidelines and toolkits.
- Promoting digital inclusion initiatives (e.g., digital literacy programmes, access to technology and the internet) to reduce the digital divide and improve access to services and opportunities.
- Developing workshops for relevant local stakeholders to promote social inclusion, addressing the root causes of exclusion and discrimination faced by vulnerable groups, and challenging and transforming the social norms that perpetuate inequality and marginalization.

Analytical activities such as studies, reports, data collection are eligible as part of more complex projects (i.e. preparatory work for the proposed advocacy campaigns, data-based argumentation to public policy proposals or public decision-making etc.).

Training activities are also eligible as part of more complex projects that include additional activities (follow-up activities, mentoring, coaching etc.) in order to produce changes for the selected target groups.

Provision of social services shall only be supported as part of actions addressing awareness raising, advocacy and empowerment of targeted vulnerable groups.

1.9 Capacity Building activities

Projects supported under the 2nd window will include **a well-developed component for strengthening the organizational capacities** of the Applicant and Partner organizations.

In drafting the Application, up to 20% of the total budget of each project must be allocated for Capacity Building (CB) activities.



The costs for CB activities are eligible for both the Applicant and NGO Partner organizations.

The organizations selected for funding will go through the following steps in order to establish the CB activities at the beginning of the project implementation:

- each organization (both Applicant and NGO Partner/s) will undertake an individual self-assessment using CSDF's organizational development matrix, which evaluates 10 key performance management indicators: Governance, Financial aspects, Knowledge Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, Organizational Structure, Leadership, Human Resource Management, Beneficiary Involvement/Constituency, Advocacy and Networking, and External Communication;
- once the organizations have completed their individual assessments, they will participate in an online meeting with CSDF to review and validate the accuracy of the assessments;
- based on the assessment results and the online meeting conclusions, each organization will develop an action plan and budget to be integrated into the project for the CB component. The final plan will be agreed upon together with CSDF and will include tailor-made activities needed to improve the capacity of the organization, from strategic planning processes, to creating and implementing fundraising and communication plans, to development of human resources (e.g. professional development practices etc.).

1.10 Communication and information activities

Each supported project must include specific information and communication activities to inform stakeholders and the general public about the support provided through the Civic Engagement Programme and the resulting benefits. These activities must align with the regulations of the Programme, must be budgeted in a reasonable and efficient manner, tailored to the project's size, type, and objectives, and follow the **minimal obligatory requirements**:

1. Respect the **branding elements** outlined in the Communication and Information Manual, including the use of logos, color schemes, typography, and templates. The Swiss support will be explicitly visible on sites with infrastructure works, on physical objects, in publications (such as leaflets, fact sheets, infographics etc.) and on other communication materials related to the project (such as social media posts, media releases, events, conferences, seminars, fairs and exhibitions).
2. Organize **at least two communication activities regarding the progress, achievements and results of the project**, with at least one opening and one closing event, online or offline (such as a conference with stakeholders, a press conference or press event).
3. **Constantly publish information** about the project's progress, results, relevant events etc., on a dedicated project page/section on the organization's website (if existing) and/or on the organization's social media accounts.
4. Ensure **a minimum of one media appearance per year** featuring the project (published article, television/radio news broadcast, interview conducted on radio/television, podcast etc.). Track media coverage by keeping records of project-related mentions, press-

releases and broadcasts (publication name, date, article title, a link to the online version).

5. Ensure that at **least 10 good quality photos** (minimal resolution is 1920*1080p) from project activities are sent to the PO. Share and grant PO with full usage rights.
6. Provide at **least one story showcasing the project's overall impact**. The story should focus on positive change, resilience, growth, or lessons learned, and can be told through an interview, article, video report or other engaging communication channels. The stories can be used by the PO for further communication of the Programme.
7. If the Application is selected for funding, each Applicant will develop a **Communication Plan** using the designated template, outlining target audiences, communication channels, the timeline for communication and information activities, and measurement tools to track communication progress and assess project visibility (e.g., website traffic, social media engagement, media coverage, petition signatures, etc.).

2 Administrative and eligibility criteria

2.1 Eligible Applicants, Partners and Collaborators

2.1.1 Eligible Applicants

A. Eligible Applicants are **non-governmental and non-profit organizations**, legally established in Romania, based in Romania, organized and operated in accordance with the relevant Romanian laws, respectively:

- Associations, foundations or federations legally established in Romania, that acquired legal personality and operate under the Government Ordinance 26/2000 and/or the Law 21/1924 on associations and foundations (with subsequent amendments and completions), or
- National Red Cross Society in Romania, established under the Law 139/1995 (amended and supplemented by the Law 524/2004) and its structures with legal personality.

B. In addition to the criteria mentioned above, potential Applicants have to fulfil the following conditions:

- a) be able to operate in the domain addressed by the project in accordance with their statutes (or equivalent); and
- b) act in the public arena and for the public good on concerns and issues related to the well-being of people, groups or society as a whole; and
- c) be independent of government and other public entities¹, as well as political parties; and
- d) be independent of commercial entities² (such as companies, autonomous public entities, individual enterprises etc.); and

¹ To assess if an organization fulfils this condition, the PO will mainly check the following aspects:

- it does not have more than half of the members local, regional and/ or national institutions and / or authorities;
- it does not have more than half of the voting members of the Board of Directors/ General Assembly local, regional and/ or national public authorities or their representatives (natural persons);
- it does not have the organizational and operational structures established so that decisions are mostly influenced by local, regional and / or national public institutions and/ or authorities.

² To assess if an organization fulfils this condition, the PO will mainly check the following aspects:

- it does not have more than half of the members profit-making entities;
- it does not have more than half of the voting members of the Board of Directors/ General Assembly, profit-making entities or their representatives (natural persons);
- it does not have the organizational and operational structures established so that decisions are mostly influenced by profit-making entities.

- e) do not promote, either directly or indirectly, a religious doctrine, mission or proselytism related to the beliefs of a particular faith (beyond basic religious/cultural awareness raising); and
- f) have transparent structures and an elected chairperson/board of directors, and are accountable to their members and donors; and
- g) be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project, not acting as an intermediary.

C. Additionally, potential Applicants must meet the following **eligibility criteria**, which apply to the past **5 (five)** years:

- a) have not promoted or engaged in documents or actions that contravene PSEAH (prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment) standards;
- b) have not promoted or engaged in documents or actions of sexual harassment, moral harassment in the workplace, or any form of harassment, sexual assault, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation, discrimination, as well as any other form of abuse or attempted abuse against a person in a position of vulnerability, in a relationship of power or trust, or any form of physical, psychological, or coercive aggression or violence;
- c) have not promoted or engaged in documents or actions that have violated or aimed to restrict fundamental human rights, as defined by the Romanian Constitution and the jurisprudence of the Romanian Constitutional Court, national legislation, and other international treaties to which Romania is a party in the field of fundamental human rights, at the level of the European Union and the Council of Europe, including through the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights;
- d) have not promoted or engaged in acts or actions of discrimination, including by supporting a cause or making public statements that have discriminated against a person, a group of persons, or a community based on race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social category, beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, chronic disease, HIV infection, or belonging to any other disadvantaged category;
- e) have not promoted or engaged in public behaviour that fosters nationalist-chauvinist propaganda, incitement to hatred, violence, and discrimination, or behaviour aimed at or resulting in the violation of dignity or the creation of an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive atmosphere against a person, a group of persons, or a community, directly or indirectly related to their belonging to a certain race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social category, beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, chronic disease, HIV infection, or any other disadvantaged category;
- f) have not used, promoted, or displayed in their activities or in public spaces symbols, messages, or ideologies associated with organizations, movements, or extremist groups prohibited by the national legislation.

The eligibility criteria will be verified through an independent review conducted by the Programme Operator, in accordance with the following available sources:

1. the existence of a decision or judgment by an authority, public institution, or court that establishes and/or sanctions the Applicant for violating the documents or actions mentioned in section C letters a)-f);
2. the existence of a complaint from other NGOs indicating that the Applicant engaged in documents or actions mentioned in section C letters a)-f);
3. the existence of activities or projects through which the Applicant carried out documents or actions mentioned in section C letters a)-f);
4. the initiation, support, or signing of position papers, endorsements, petitions, or requests addressed to authorities, public institutions, or other natural or legal persons through which the organization engages in documents or actions mentioned in section C letters a)-f);
5. the existence of statements made by the Applicant and/or its representatives in the public space, including on social media or in mass media, through which they engage in documents or actions mentioned in section C letters a)-f) – for this criterion to be

- considered, the statements must be confirmed by at least three verifiable public sources, such as online press, social media platforms or other recognized publications;
6. any other verifiable and credible public source, including social media, demonstrating the violation of the documents and actions mentioned in section C letters a)-f) – for example, but not limited to, reports from national, European or international NGOs, independent journalistic investigations, etc.

The Programme Operator is not limited in its compliance analysis solely to the existence of a decision or judgment by an authority, public institution, or court that establishes and/or sanctions the Applicant. The Programme Operator has the right to base its decision on the above-mentioned verification sources.

The eligibility criteria mentioned in section C, will be verified after the technical and financial evaluation, and before the decision is taken by the Grant Selection Committee. In case the Applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria outlined in section C, the Application will not be recommended for funding.

D. Non-eligible Applicants include:

- a) any legal entities who do not meet all criteria mentioned in section 2.1.1 A-C;
- b) public institutions;
- c) political parties;
- d) religious institutions (religious cults, religious associations established under the Law 489/2006 on freedom of religion and general regime of cults);
- e) social partners (trade unions and employers' organizations);
- f) natural persons;
- g) for-profit entities.

Applicants will be considered non-eligible and will **not be awarded grants if they fall under one of the supplementary situations below:**

- (1) are bankrupt, are in the administration of a judicial authority or are being winding up, have suspended the activity, are subject of proceedings concerning these issues or are in a similar situation following the application of a similar procedure provided for in the national legislation or regulations in force;
- (2) are guilty of serious professional misconduct proven by any means the PO can justify;
- (3) have not fulfilled obligations related to the payment of social security contributions or taxes to the state budget in accordance with the national legislation;
- (4) have been the subject of a final decision *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization or any other illegal activity to the detriment of financial interests, without the evidence that corrective action has been taken in this respect in recent years;
- (5) have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations in connection with a procurement procedure or other grant award procedure financed by the Swiss Government or other international donors;
- (6) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the PO as a condition of participation in the Call for Proposals or failing to supply this information.



Each Applicant is required to submit a Declaration of eligibility (Annex 3) stating that the Applicant (and Partner/s, if the case) meet all the eligibility criteria outlined above. The Declaration of eligibility shall be completed, signed with a wet or certified electronic signature by the legal representative of the Applicant, dated, scanned (if needed) and uploaded as a digital document, together with the Application form.

Supporting documents proving the compliance to the eligibility criteria will be requested during the contracting phase.

2.1.2 Eligible Partners and Collaborators

Projects may be implemented in partnership with one or more Partners that share a common goal with the Applicant with regard to the implementation of the project. Partner/s shall be actively involved in and effectively contribute to the implementation of the project.

The following legally established entities are **eligible to be Partners**: **non-governmental organisations** and **public entities** (such as local and central public authorities, public institutions/agencies, decentralized governmental public services, territorial administrative units, universities etc.) **established as a legal person** either in **Romania** or **Switzerland**.

Partnerships between experienced and less experienced NGOs, both Romanian or Swiss, are not mandatory, but highly encouraged, in order to improve results and peer learning, as well as secure interventions in less-favoured regions.

In case of partnerships with Romanian NGOs, the Partner/s must:

- a) meet the eligibility requirements set for the Applicants under section 2.1.1 A, B, C and D; and
- b) act in the domain addressed by the project or complementary ones.

In case of partnerships with NGOs from Switzerland, the Partner/s must:

- a) be non-profit and non-governmental organizations legally constituted in Switzerland with minimum 50% of the Board members being Swiss nationals; and
- b) act in the domain addressed by the project or complementary ones; and
- c) meet the eligibility requirements set for the Applicants under section 2.1.1 B and D b-g.

Partnerships with Swiss organizations are not mandatory, however they are encouraged and valued if they enhance cooperation and networking among NGOs, thereby contributing to the overall strengthening of civil society in Romania.



A project partnership shall not be mistaken for subcontracting.
The Partner/s is/are administrating part of the Project Budget.



Entities from countries other than Romania or Switzerland **are not eligible to participate as Partners under this Call**.

Collaborators

Applicants may collaborate in the implementation of the project with entities that demonstrate the added value and contribute to the success of the project.



Collaborators hold a distinct status from Partners: they are not direct recipients of the project grant, do not manage parts of the project budget, nor incur expenses within the project in their own name.

Under the 2nd window, collaborations with private and public entities from Romania and/or Switzerland are encouraged. The following entities are examples of potential collaborators: universities, other educational institutions or research institutes, local and central public authorities, public institutions/agencies, and deconcentrated governmental services at local level, informal or *ad hoc* local groups, self-help organizations (including grassroots organizations) that are not registered as legal entities in Romania or Switzerland.

Partners and Collaborators must demonstrate the capacity to effectively implement or contribute to relevant activities within the project. If applicable, Applicants are required to highlight the added value brought by the involvement of Partners and Collaborators in the implementation of the project, through their project proposals.

2.2 Number of proposals per Applicant/Partner

An **Applicant** organization may **submit maximum 1 (one) proposal** under the 2nd window. There are no restrictions regarding the number of proposals submitted in which an organization participates as Partner.

In case an organization submits 2 (two) proposals or more under the 2nd window as Applicant, the PO will request the organization to indicate the application that will enter the administrative and eligibility verification in order to comply with the limitation established. If the organization does not respond in 5 calendar days from the receipt of the PO request, all its applications will be rejected and none of them will enter the administrative and eligibility verification.



Organizations that **have already been selected for a grant/were funded under the 1st window**, either as Applicants or Partners, are **not eligible** to apply for funding under the **2nd window** projects (neither as Applicant or Partner).

2.3 Eligible costs

2.3.1 General principles regarding the eligibility of expenditures

The current section contains useful information on the eligibility of costs and that all Applicants and Partner/s should take into consideration.

In the budget all amounts will be expressed in CHF and include VAT.



Note that **co-financing** is not mandatory. Optional co-financing (financial or in-kind) is encouraged, but will **not be included in the Project Budget**.

To be eligible, the expenditure of the project must meet the following criteria:

- are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of the project as specified in the Grant Contract;
- are connected with the object of the Grant Contract and are indicated in the Project Budget;
- are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
- are used for the sole purpose of achieving the objectives of the project and its expected outcomes, in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the Applicant and Partner/s, determined according to the applicable accounting standards and according to the generally accepted accounting principles;
- reflect the real expenditures and are calculated in accordance with the activities of the project;
- comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation in force in Romania and Switzerland (if applicable).

Expenditures are considered incurred when they have been invoiced, paid, and the goods delivered or services/works performed. As an exception, costs invoiced in the final month of eligibility are also eligible if paid within 30 days after the eligibility period ends. Personnel costs for the project's last month of implementation are eligible if paid within the aforementioned timeframe.

The internal accounting and auditing procedures of the Applicant and Partner/s must permit direct reconciliation of the expenditures and revenue recorded in the analytical/cost center accounting of the project with the amounts reported in the financial statements on the project and supporting documents.

2.3.2 Direct costs

Direct costs of a project are costs that can be directly assigned to the project (meaning that the cease of the project leads to the cease of the costs) and which are in accordance with the accounting principles and internal rules used by the Applicant and/or Partner/s. All direct costs must comply with the eligibility criteria and specificities mentioned in section 2.3.1 General principles regarding the eligibility of expenditures.

The following types of expenditures are classified as **direct costs**:

- costs of personnel assigned to the project, comprising actual remuneration including social security charges and other statutory costs as applicable, provided that this corresponds to the Applicant's and Partner's usual policy on remuneration. Please note that the project manager can work within a project exclusively under a labor contract;
- costs related to honoraria for experts in case of independent activities;
- costs related to travel and subsistence allowances for personnel and volunteers taking part in the project, provided that they are in line with the Applicant's and Partner's usual practices on travel costs;
- costs for the transport of participants, goods, materials;
- costs related to new or second-hand equipment and goods (such as computers and peripherals, furniture, vehicles etc.);
- costs related to the procurement of PC software;
- costs related to expansion and renovation works (construction, renovation and upgrades of buildings);
- costs related to subcontracting services assigned by the Applicant and/or Partner/s for the project implementation (publications, studies/researches, audit, costs for conferences/workshops, communication actions and other subcontracted services etc.);
- other costs directly related to the project such as: costs for communication (phone, internet, mail, online meeting platforms, etc.), costs related to consumables (stationery), rent and utilities;
- other direct costs such as bank charges etc.



Note the established thresholds for the following categories of eligible costs:



costs related to expansion and renovation works (construction, renovation and upgrades of buildings), up to a maximum of **10% of the total budget** of the project and duly justified in the context of the project. In case these types of costs are envisaged, the Applicant, during contracting, must prove the right of ownership or the right of use of the infrastructure for the entire **project duration and for at least 5 years after completion of the project**. Moreover, the building constructed, renovated or upgraded cannot be sold, rented out or mortgaged during the period of time mentioned above. Only in exceptional and duly justified cases, these costs may target buildings owned by the Partners. In the case of these investments, expenses will be incurred in the initial phase of the project so that activities with beneficiaries can be implemented for a **minimum of 6 months** before the completion of the project. The renovated spaces shall be properly maintained by setting aside appropriate resources, insured against losses such as fire, theft or other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least 5 years following the completion of the project



costs related to Capacity Building activities, up to a maximum of **20% of the total budget** of the project



indirect costs, up to a maximum of **10% of the total direct costs of the project**

2.3.3 Indirect costs

Indirect costs are those eligible costs that cannot be identified by the Applicant and/or Partner/s as being directly attributed to the project, but which can be identified and justified by its accounting system. Indirect costs of the project shall represent a fair apportionment of the overall overheads of the Applicant or the Partner. They may not include any eligible direct costs. Applicants and Partner/s may apply a **flat rate of up to 10% of the total direct project costs** to cover indirect costs, which corresponds to the actual indirect costs.

Indirect costs may include:

- part of the office costs such as utilities, rent, cleaning services;
- part of the administrative costs such as phone, internet, mailing services, online-meeting platforms, certified electronic signature etc.;
- other administrative costs absolutely necessary for the successful implementation of the project, such as costs related to labor contracts of administrative staff, costs of the management of the organization that is not involved directly in the project.

For the entire duration of the project implementation, the Applicant and Partner/s should have an internal methodology in place to define an appropriate calculation formula for the distribution of indirect costs within the project (e.g. number of persons involved in the project/total number of persons within the organization or department; the space used by staff involved in the project/total space occupied by the organization or department; number of working hours on the project/number of total working hours within the organization or department).

2.4 Non-eligible costs

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 the special accounts of the project requested by the PO, provided they are mentioned in the Grant Contract and the costs of the financial services imposed by the Grant Contract;
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- exchange rate losses other than those due to the involvement of Swiss partners;
- expenditure for the acquisition of land and buildings;
- value added tax (VAT), which is abstractly recoverable, by whatever means, even if, *de facto*, the beneficiary does not itself recover the value added tax;
- costs that are covered by other sources, double financing must be avoided;
- fines, penalties, indemnities or other related compensation, including lost profit and costs of litigation, unless the litigation is a necessary component for achieving the objectives of the project;
- excessive or reckless expenditure/extravagant costs (e.g. business travel class, purchasing state of the art equipment where cheaper options would cover the same need);
- expenditures incurred by the Applicant and Partner/s before the signing of the Grant Contract;
- credits and loans to third parties;
- re-granting to third parties;
- individual scholarships and individual sponsorships;
- financial rewards (such as prizes in money or equivalent);
- costs incurred from leasing.

Non-eligible costs that are necessary for implementing the project, as well as any other supplementary costs incurred during the project implementation shall be covered by the Applicant and/or Partner/s.

3 Application and evaluation procedure

The application and evaluation processes are performed exclusively on the online application platform <https://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro>. The **Guidelines for using the online application platform** (in Romanian only) is available both on the platform itself and on the Programme website (<https://elvetiaromania.ro/en>).

3.1 Application procedure

To submit the Application, the following steps must be followed:

Developing and submitting the Application		
Find on the Programme website	Develop the Application	Submit the Application
Guidelines for Applicants and its annexes: Annex 1 – Application form Annex 2a – Project Budget Annex 2b – Guidelines for developing the Project Budget Annex 3 – Declaration of eligibility Annex 4 – Partnership Declaration (if the case) Supporting Documents: Programme Indicators Guidelines Communication and Information Guidelines (in Romanian only) Communication Plan (template) Guidelines for using the online application platform (in Romanian only)	The Application must be formulated clearly and concisely, and must address the problem through a coherent intervention logic. The detailed project implementation plan, including the calendar, project budget (to be uploaded as an annex), organizational capacity, and project sustainability, are part of the Application. In drafting the Application, use the working version (Word format) available on the Programme website. The Application form and its annexes will be filled in Romanian (except for the sections requiring information in English and the Partnership Declaration with Swiss Partners, if the case).	Create/login into your account on the online application platform https://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro. Fill in the Application on the application platform. Make sure that the mandatory annexes are uploaded in the required format (Annex 2a, Annex 3, and Annex 4). Validate the final form of the Application before the deadline.

While the Call for proposals is open, the PO will provide support to potential Applicants through an **info session**, a **help-desk** (via email, phone or meetings) and the publication of the most relevant **FAQs** on the [Programme's website](#).

Questions related to this Call for proposals may be addressed to the following contacts:

- for **Area 1 – civic activism** and for **Area 2**: email cep@fdsc.ro, phone number +40 752 444 305 (Andreea Drăgan, Grant Coordinator)
- for **Area 1 – biodiversity**: email mediu_cep@repf.ro, phone number +40 745 524 454 (Csilla Daniel, Grant Coordinator)
- for matters strictly related to the use of the online application platform: email support@fdsc.ro

A registration number will automatically be generated once the first information of the Application is saved to the application platform. This number will further be used in the correspondence between the PO and the Applicant.



The final version of the Application submitted for evaluation must be completed, have the mandatory annexes uploaded, and be validated on the [application platform](#) before the deadline. Not uploading the mandatory annexes **leads to the exclusion of the application during the administrative compliance and eligibility assessment**.

The deadline for completing and validating the Applications is **17.12.2025; 16:00 (Romanian time)**. After the deadline, the submission of new Application will no longer be possible, nor can any modifications be made to those already submitted, as access to these features of the application platform will automatically be restricted.

We highly recommend filling in and validating the Application well in advance of the deadline specified in these Guidelines. Delaying the submission until the last day may result in system overloads, potentially preventing the submission of the Application on time.

The list of Applications submitted will be made publicly available on the [Programme's website](#).

3.2 Evaluation procedure

All Applications submitted on the application platform before the deadline will enter the evaluation and selection procedure as follows:

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Assessment of administrative compliance and eligibility	Technical and financial evaluation	Decision of the Grant Selection Committee (GSC)	Endorsement of the GSC decision by the Steering Committee (SteeCom)	Announcing the final results of the selection process
Applications are assessed based on the grid for administrative compliance and eligibility . PO requests for clarifications (if the case). The Applicants are informed on the results of the administrative compliance and eligibility verification.	Applications that are compliant with the criteria in Step 1 are assigned to two impartial evaluators and are scored based on the evaluation criteria . According to the total average scores of the evaluators, a ranking list is drafted.	The GSC decides the list of Applications to be financed, specific conditions (if the case), the reserve list and/or the list of rejected Applications.	The SteeCom endorses the decision of the GSC and may have recommendations to be taken into account in the pre-contracting period.	Applicants are informed about the decision of the SteeCom via the application platform.

Step 1: Assessment of the administrative compliance and eligibility

All Applications submitted within the deadline will be assessed according to the administrative compliance and eligibility criteria, based on a Yes/No grid. The assessment of eligibility will be conducted **only for the Applications that are compliant with the administrative criteria**.

Below is the grid for administrative compliance and eligibility:

I. Administrative compliance		Yes	No
1.	The application form (Annex 1) is submitted via the online application platform https://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro/ and is fully completed in Romanian, with all mandatory fields filled in. Additionally, the following sections – Applicant and Partner/s name, project title and project summary – must be provided in English as well		
2.	The project budget is filled in, respects the format from Annex 2a, is provided in CHF and is uploaded (in Excel format) as a digital document		
3.	The Declaration of eligibility (Annex 3) is filled in Romanian, signed with a wet or certified electronic signature by the legal representative of the Applicant, dated, scanned (if needed) and uploaded as a digital document		
4.	If applicable, the Partnership Declaration/s (Annex 4) is/are filled in, signed with a wet or certified electronic signature by the legal representatives of the Applicant and Partner/s, dated, scanned (if needed) and uploaded as digital document/s		
II. Eligibility		Yes	No
1.	The Applicant is an eligible organization		
2.	The Partner/s is/are eligible entities		
3.	The project duration ranges from a minimum of 12 months to a maximum of 24 months		
4.	The grant amount requested ranges from a minimum of CHF 50,000 to a maximum of CHF 200,000		



Should any Application be submitted with sections containing unintelligible sequences of letters and/or numbers, the PO reserves the right to consider them invalid applications and exclude them from the evaluation process.

While compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria is mandatory, the PO may request clarifications to confirm that the application meets these criteria. Clarifications will be requested only if the provided information is insufficient for an objective assessment of eligibility and administrative compliance. The clarification shall be submitted by the Applicant in no more than 2 working days from the PO's notification. The information exchange will take place on the [application platform](#). Please note that Annexes 2a, Annex 3 and Annex 4 mentioned under the section [3.1 Application procedure](#) cannot be requested in case they missing from the submitted application.



The Application is automatically excluded from further evaluation **if at least one administrative and eligibility criterion is not met.**

The Applicants will be notified via e-mail once the result of the administrative compliance and eligibility assessment is available in their organization's account.

Applicants may appeal the decision over compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria within 10 calendar days from the notification date of the results. The appeal will be formulated in writing, sent by email to the contact address corresponding to the targeted Area mentioned in section [3.1 Application procedure](#) and will include the reason for which such a request is well justified. The Applicant cannot submit new documents in support of the case and cannot modify the content of the initial submitted application. The PO's decision on an appeal is final and will be communicated to the Applicant within 15 working days of receiving the appeal. No further appeals can be submitted for the same application.

The final list of Applications entering the technical and financial evaluation will be published on the [Programme's website](#).

Step 2: Technical and financial evaluation

Applications that meet the administrative compliance and eligibility criteria will enter the **technical and financial evaluation** and be scored on a scale from 0 to 100, by two impartial evaluators.

The evaluation process is conducted against specific criteria, each being assigned a score. The final score of each application is calculated as the arithmetic average of the points given by both evaluators.

The grid for technical and financial evaluation is outlined below:

Technical and financial evaluation grid	
Evaluation dimension and specific criteria	Maximum score
Relevance and impact	35
The Application aligns with the objectives of the CEP and the focus of the targeted area	5
The problem and needs addressed are justified (problem identification, needs, challenges, the target group affected/involved)	8
The intervention is realistic and justified, with a clear and coherent intervention logic, linking objectives, activities, and expected results	8
The beneficiaries are strategically chosen, clearly defined and their needs are properly addressed	5
The results are likely to have an impact towards the envisaged community	3
The project targets rural and/or small urban areas	3
Cross-cutting themes (social inclusion, and climate change mitigation and adaptation) are addressed	3
Feasibility and sustainability	35
The project objectives are specific, measurable and achievable/realistic	5
The activities are adequately described, include innovative approaches, are feasible and the planning is realistic	10
The selected indicators are realistic and correspond to the objectives and activities of the project	5
Communication and information activities are described, measurable, relevant and comply with the Programme rules	5
Risks are properly identified, and appropriate mitigation measures are included	4
Correlation/synergies with similar initiatives is/are properly identified	3
There are properly identified conditions to ensure sustainability of the project and to achieve a multiplication effect	3
Budget	15
Budget and cost effectiveness (coherence between the activities and the proposed budget)	5
Proposed costs are eligible and realistic	5
Allocation for the Capacity Building activities (between 1% - 8% = 2 points, between 9% - 14% = 3 points, between 15% - 20% = 5 points)	5
Experience of the organizations involved	15

The experience, relevance and the added value of the Partner/s and/or Collaborators are proven	3
The partnership with Swiss NGOs contributes to strengthening the Swiss-Romanian cooperation	2
The organizational and project team structure and experience is adequate for implementing the proposed project (number of people involved, roles, responsibilities, project coordination, professional expertise required etc.)	5
The level of professional expertise for project execution are appropriate for the Applicant, Partner/s, and proposed project team	5
Total	100



In case a project receives less than 25 points in the "Relevance and impact" evaluation dimension, it will be excluded from further evaluation.

70 out of 100 points is the minimum score for each Application in order to be selected and recommended for funding.

Should the discrepancy between the scores provided by the two evaluators exceed 30% of the higher score, a third impartial and independent evaluator will be assigned to assess the Application. The final score will be determined by calculating the average of the two closest scores for project ranking purposes.

Step 3: Decision of the Grant Selection Committee (GSC)

Following the technical and financial evaluation, a ranking list will be produced based on the average scores awarded by the experts and an evaluation report will be drafted. It will comprise the list of all the applications that have entered the technical and financial evaluation stage, the average score obtained by each of them and the recommendations of the evaluators, the reserve list and/or the list of rejected applications, along with the compliance analysis with regard to the eligibility criteria included in chapter 2.1.1 Eligible Applicants, section C.

In case two applications have the same average score, the one with the higher score in the "Relevance and impact" evaluation dimension will be ranked higher.

The evaluation report, including the ranking list, will be submitted by the PO to the **Grant Selection Committee (GSC)** consisting of independent experts and representatives of the SCO with relevant expertise and experience. Also, representatives from relevant institutions (ministries, governmental agencies etc.) may be invited as observers. The GSC will review the ranking list and the recommendations made by the evaluators, the analysis made by the PO and decide upon the list of Applications recommended to receive grants, within the amount available for 2nd window projects and each Area. The conclusions of the GSC may include supplementary conditions and clarifications.

Step 4: Endorsement of the GSC decision by the Steering Committee (SteeCom)

The **SteeCom** of the Programme will be informed about the decision of the GSC and will endorse it as being in line with the CEP outcomes, the Regulations of the Programme, and in synergy with the other relevant Support Measures within the 2nd Swiss contribution in Romania.

The SteeCom is responsible for taking the final decision concerning the selection of Applications. The SteeCom may adjust the decision of the GSC in justified cases.

The SteeCom may have recommendations to be taken into account for the selected Applications.



The decision of the SteeCom is definitive and is not subject to appeal.

Step 5: Announcing the final results of the selection process

Once the decision is taken by the SteeCom, the results of the selection process will be accessible via the [application platform](#), in the Applicant's account (the average score obtained for each evaluation criteria and also the total average score of the Application).

The Applicants will be notified via email once the selection results are available in their organization's account on the application platform. The Applicants whose projects are proposed for funding will receive a letter outlining the next steps and conditions they have to fulfil in order to sign the Grant Contracts.

The final list of selected projects will be published on the [Programme's website](#).

The indicative date for the final decision by the SteeCom is set for June 2026; however, this may be subject to adjustment as necessary.

4. Contracting

All Applicants whose projects are selected for funding will receive an award letter outlining the next steps required for contracting. The Programme Operator (CSDF or REPF) will also ask for specific documents to be submitted prior to the signature of the Grant Contract.

Please find below the list of the documents necessary for the Grant Contract signature:

For the Applicant:

- the **certified true copy** of the latest authenticated/certified statute of the organization and of the corresponding final and irrevocable Court decision. If the initial statute and the amendments thereto are not included in a final separate document, then certified copies of the initial statute and of all subsequent/additional documents to the statute, including the corresponding definitive and irrevocable court decisions must be attached;
- the excerpt from the Register of Associations and Foundations, in **original**, issued no more than 90 days before the date of its submission to the PO;
- valid tax clearance certificate, in **original**, issued by the competent fiscal authorities (General Directorate of Public Finance - Ministry of Finance);
- valid tax certificate, in **original**, issued by the National Agency for Fiscal Administration;
- valid organization criminal record certificate, in **original**, issued by the competent authorities;
- a bank statement confirming that both the CHF and RON accounts allocated for the project are owned by the Applicant, and indicating the initial balance (a CHF and RON 0 initial balance is recommended);
- Declaration of eligibility (according to the format from Annex 3), in **original**; The PO reserves the right to request the Applicant any kind of documents in support of the Declaration;
- a **copy** of the Partnership Agreement signed by the Applicant with the Partner/s, in case of projects implemented in partnership;
- the Communication Plan (according to the format provided by the PO);
- CVs of all team members.

For Romanian NGO Partner/s (if the case):

- the **certified true copy** of the latest authenticated/certified statute of the organization and of the corresponding final and irrevocable Court decision. If the initial statute and the amendments are not included in a final separate document, then certified copies

of the initial statute and of all subsequent/additional documents to the statute, including the corresponding definitive and irrevocable Court decisions must be attached;

- the excerpt from the Register of Associations and Foundations, in **original**, issued no more than 90 days before the date of its submission to the PO;
- valid tax clearance certificate, in **original**, issued by the competent fiscal authorities (General Directorate of Public Finance - Ministry of Finance);
- valid tax certificate, in **original**, issued by the National Agency for Fiscal Administration;
- valid organization criminal record certificate, in **original**, issued by the competent authorities;
- a bank statement confirming that both the CHF and RON accounts allocated for the project are owned by the Partner/s, and indicating the initial balance (a CHF and RON 0 initial balance is recommended);
- CVs of all team members.

For Romanian public entities (if the case):

- documents/mentions that prove the entity's legal personality (as the case may be, the version updated at the date of submission of the law/operating regulation/decreed/decision, etc.) or indicating the number, date and name of the legislative acts published in the Romanian Official Monitor;
- CVs of all team members.

For Swiss Partner/s (if the case):

- documents translated into Romanian or English (copy or original) attesting that they are legal entities,
- CVs of all team members.

For projects involving infrastructure activities:

In the case of projects that include costs related to construction, reconstruction, renovation or refurbishment of real estate, the following documents will be requested:

- a **certified true copy** of the documents attesting the right of ownership or use of the building for the entire duration of the project and at least 5 years after its completion; in addition, a declaration may be required regarding the maintenance of the purpose for which the building is being rehabilitated and any other documents to support the declaration, an estimate of quantities elaborated and approved according to the legislation in force, building authorization.

For all projects:

To prove the eligibility conditions, additional documents may be required, if the case, during the pre-contracting period.

If the Applicant fulfils all the requirements included in the letter, the PO (CSDF or REPF) will sign a Grant Contract with the Applicant, who will then become the Executing Agency (EA) and will take the administrative lead during implementation. All the Grant Contracts and further documents elaborated during implementation shall be signed **with a certified electronic signature**.

The estimated date for the beginning of the projects' implementation is August 2026; however, this may be subject to adjustment as necessary.

5. Rules applicable for project implementation

5.1 Reporting

The EAs must prepare and submit the following types of reports for approval to the PO:

- brief half-yearly reports on technical and financial aspects, within 30 days after the first 6 months of each year of project implementation;
- a mid-term/interim report (technical, financial and audit), within 45 days after the completion of the reported period (half of the implementation period);
- a final report (technical, financial and audit), within 45 days after the completion of the project implementation period.

The technical and financial reports will be submitted in Romanian. The audit reports referring to the Romanian EA and Partner/s will be submitted in English and Romanian. In the case of Swiss Partner/s, the audit report will be submitted in English.

5.2 Payments

The PO, respectively CSDF or REPF, will make payments to the EAs according to the payment schedule agreed upon in the Grant Contract. Payments are closely linked to the reporting and auditing schedule.

Payments will be made to the EAs, as follows:

- **an advance payment** representing **50% of the grant amount** will be released within 10 working days after signing of the Grant Contract and submitting the payment request according to the format included in the annexes of the Grant Contract. In all cases, the payment of the advance payment will not take place before the date of commencement of the project.
- **a first instalment** representing **40% of the grant amount** will be released based on the following documents:
 - payment request, and
 - mid-term report (technical, financial and audit) for half of the implementation period.

If at least 70% of the advance payment was not spent within the first half of implementation, mid-term reports will be submitted without a payment request. The payment request will be subsequently submitted together with the financial statement attesting that at least 70% of the advance payment received was spent.

In case the EA spends at least 70% from the advance payment before the mid-term of implementation and needs to receive the first instalment before the mid-term report should be submitted, the EA may request a payment based on:

- an interim report (technical, financial and audit) related to the respective period, and
- a payment request.

This interim report **will substitute** the mid-term report.

- **a final payment** representing approximately **10% of the grant amount** or the balance resulting from the final report (technical, financial and audit).

The final payment will only be authorized when the final report is approved .

All payments will be made by the PO, respectively CSDF or REPF, towards the EA into a special bank account dedicated exclusively to the project, in CHF.

5.3 Audit

Mid-term/interim and final external audits of the project account are compulsory. All financial reports (mid-term/interim and final) will be externally audited by an independent accredited

auditor, observing the audit standards set up in the Terms of Reference for the financial review which will be an integral part of the Grant Contract, and using the audit standard **ISA 805**.

The auditing costs are eligible and must be included in the Project Budget. The frequency of the audit reports is mentioned above under paragraph 5.1 Reporting.

Swiss Partner/s managing a budget below CHF 100,000 will not be required to submit a report from a certified auditor but will be reviewed by the PO.

5.4 Procurement

For all project-related procurement, the EA and its Partner/s must adhere to the principles of free competition and transparency, selecting suppliers that offer the best price-performance ratio while also considering delivery times and guarantees.

All organizations involved in the implementation of the project will follow the specific Procurement rules applicable under the Civic Engagement Programme that are in line with the Romanian legislation for Romanian organizations or Swiss legislation for Swiss Partner organizations.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Application Form

Annex 2a – Project Budget

Annex 2b – Guidelines for developing the Project Budget

Annex 3 – Declaration of eligibility

Annex 4 – Partnership Declaration

Supporting documents

Guidelines for using the online application platform (in Romanian only)

Programme Indicators Guidelines

Communication and Information Guidelines (in Romanian only)

Communication Plan (template)



Civic Engagement Programme

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

www.elvetiaromania.ro

Programme Operator