

GUIDELINES

Call for Proposals: Civil Society Fund for Roma Integration 2020

Roma Initiatives Office

The Roma Initiatives Office (RIO) invites Roma-led national coalitions and networks (formal or non-formal) among Roma¹ and pro-Roma organizations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey to apply for support for national-level monitoring and advocacy aimed at ensuring that Roma-specific targets are included in major policy reforms and national budgets.

The Civil Society Fund for Roma Integration 2020 is part of RIO's Paruvipe portfolio—paruvipe means “change” in the Romani language—which supports advocacy aimed at influencing public decision-making and service delivery. Our work within Paruvipe is about seizing political opportunities, extending our partnerships with pro-Roma civil society, and experimenting with new models for influencing national governments, and in particular national budgets. We support policy-oriented and strategic actions that promote structural changes that could help better the lives of Roma, hold governments accountable, improve government decision-making and public service delivery, and promote and protect the rights and freedoms of Roma.

BACKGROUND

Building on the lessons and spirit of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015, a new intergovernmental initiative, Roma Integration 2020, is being started in 2016. It will be implemented within the framework of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and co-funded by the European Union and the Open Society Foundations. This initiative provides for a regional structure for Roma inclusion in the Western Balkans and Turkey. It aims to contribute to closing the socio-economic gap between Roma and non-Roma and to strengthen the institutional obligations of governments to incorporate and deliver specific Roma integration goals within mainstream policy developments. The initiative is grounded in the EU accession process, complementing and feeding the activities of the European Commission.

Roma Integration 2020 is not intended to integrate Roma communities but rather to assist national governments with integrating Roma-specific policy measures into: (1) mainstream socio-economic policies and public service delivery; and (2) national budget planning and service delivery processes. More information about Roma Integration 2020 is attached.

¹ RIO defines a Roma NGO as an organization in which at least 50% of the membership (in the case of associations), the governance body, and the senior management openly declare their Roma ethnic origin.

PURPOSE

The Civil Society Fund for Roma Integration 2020 will provide support to civil society networks and coalitions to contribute to the fulfillment of the commitments made by national governments within Roma Integration 2020.

The expected role of civil society is similar to the watchdog role it played in the Decade of Roma Inclusion. However, there are notable differences.

Coalitions should be self-organized and as representative as possible and should provide well-argued policy input to the national political process. More concretely:

- National coalitions are expected to organize themselves, as there will not be centralized coordination of civil society efforts by the Open Society Foundation or the RCC.
- Participation in activities will be through a process of self-selection—i.e., coalitions will be expected to design a mechanism for selecting civil society representatives to take part in various meetings—be transparent, inclusive, diverse (including Roma women and young people, for example) and have wide geographic coverage.
- The work will be driven by national agendas. The focus is on sectoral policy reforms taking place in the countries and the budget planning process—not on specific Roma integration strategies—where particular policy knowledge is required and should be secured by the coalitions.

The initial project timeline is 12 months. However, applicants need to design projects with a three-year horizon and expect funding for a total of 36 months, subject to a review by RIO of the initial year.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicant organizations must fulfill the following criteria:

- 1) **Broad-based national coalition** – RIO will provide only one grant in each of the countries covered. National coalitions are expected to develop projects that take into consideration national contexts and policy priorities, and to work within the structure of the overall aims and objectives of Roma Integration 2020. Coalitions must demonstrate a commitment to Roma inclusion and be democratic and transparent.
- 2) **Roma-centered** – Coalitions must demonstrate Roma leadership or partnership with a Roma organization on an equal footing in all phases of the project. Roma should also benefit from the policy change targeted by the project.
- 3) **Expertise in budgetary processes** – Coalitions must include at least one partner with a strong track record in budgetary processes, including budget planning and monitoring of spending at the national and local levels.
- 4) **Diversity** – Coalitions must demonstrate that they work through broad and diverse membership bases. They are expected to demonstrate substantial involvement of Roma women and youth in project management and activities as well as geographic coverage that is as wide as possible.
- 5) **Location** – Projects must take place in the eligible countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey

APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Please submit your application in English through the [Open Society Foundations Grant Portal](#).

The deadline for submission is **July 25, 2016 (by midnight CET)**. Late submissions will not be considered.

Applicants should submit a narrative proposal, a budget, and all relevant appendices. The attached Guidance for Narrative Proposals does not constitute a proposal template. Applicants are expected to define their own project proposals in line with the identified needs and expected results. While we are flexible as far as the form is concerned, the proposal must describe all the crucial project elements. Incomplete proposals will not be considered for support. Please keep the narrative part of the project under 10 pages, excluding the annexes.

The budget must be submitted in the spreadsheet provided and must strictly follow the template and accompanying guidelines. The requested amount preferably should not constitute more than 30 percent of the lead applicant's total expenditures for 2015.² Please also provide information about any ongoing applications or negotiations regarding support from other Open Society programs or foundations.

Applicants will also be requested to fill out a detailed organizational survey to enable an assessment of their organizational capacity.

Shortlisted applicants (one coalition per country) will be guided in the further development of their proposals and have an opportunity to meet with pre-selected applicants from the other participating countries in order to present their proposals and identify regionally important targets and approaches. Grantees will have access to additional funding to engage experts for regional efforts and organizational development.

The expected start date for projects is October 1, 2016. Applicants should expect to be notified of RIO's decision by mid-September 2016.

² The Open Society Foundations' total contribution includes support from any Open Society program or foundation, and from other parts or affiliated entities of the Open Society network.

Annex: Guidance for Narrative Proposals

- I) **Cover page:** Please provide the title of the project and information about the lead applicant and partner organizations, including contact details for the organizations and responsible personnel.
- II) **Context:** Please describe the main reforms currently taking place in your country and how they affect Roma. Please also describe the existing institutional and policy structures that can be used for advocacy and which roles they can play in the project. Additionally, please describe other actors relevant to the reforms and their positions *vis-a-vis* your project, as well as the potential roles they can play.
- III) **Description of the coalition/network:** Please provide information about the composition of the coalition, describing each member's role as well as explaining how the work of the coalition will affect the organizational strategies of its members; the governance and decision-making structures of the coalition; and its transparency and accountability principles. In particular, describe how the coalition shares information among its members and with the public, and how it consults constituencies, in particular women and young Roma.
- IV) **Core work:** Based on the issues described in the context, please describe your monitoring and advocacy plans focusing on at least one sector-specific policy and the national budgetary process. Additionally, coalitions should use their monitoring findings to inform the EU accession process and to submit their input at key moments (budget planning, progress reports, parliamentary hearings, etc.). Please provide a timeline of the policy processes that you will target, mapping the institutions, actors, and tools you will use.
- V) **Change path:** Please describe the kinds of change you expect to achieve through your project. Please be realistic and map the steps you need to undertake this. Please also map the actors who have the power to solve the problem and whom you will need to influence, and assess their political willingness.³ Describe when, how, and with whom you plan to influence them. Please also list your indicators for success.
- VI) **Monitoring methodology:** Please provide an outline of the methodology to be used for research and monitoring of national policies and budgets.
- VII) **Budget:** Please provide a budget narrative summary. In addition to submitting the required budget template, please provide information about the lead applicant's total expenditures for 2015 as well as its sources of funding.

³ An initial assessment of the current position of allies and opponents would be helpful. For reference, please see, for example: <http://www.evaluationinnovation.org/sites/default/files/ORS%20PMR%204-2016.pdf>