Working Together to Improve Governance and Anticorruption

OPEN SOCIETY INITIATIVE FOR EUROPE

2020

Eligible countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.

Goal of the Call for proposals

Open Society Initiative for Europe (OSIFE) announces a call for proposals to support civil society actors working in the field of anti-corruption, countering state capture and promoting good governance of public institutions.

Across the region, citizens often face public institutions which are unaccountable, corrupt and undermine democratic processes and the quality of public services. To address this, interventions only focused on monitoring, advocacy and legal reform have largely proven insufficient to generate positive change. At the same time,we witness promising experiences of public sector-civil society collaborations on these challenges, also in the region.

In addition, the fast-evolving coronavirus crisis brings new corruption risks to the region. These risks relate to the public health crisis and to the overall responses by governments to deal with the aftermath of the coronavirus crisis.

In this context, OSIFE calls for applications for civil society-driven initiatives using transparency, accountability and public participation processes to improve public institutions and to address the emerging corruption risks.

Track 1. Supporting collaborative approaches to good governance and anti-corruption. These initiatives should:

- be implemented in collaboration with public institutions at local/city, regional or national institution level, potentially (but not necessarily) also working together with business/private sector stakeholders
- tackle important governance or corruption problems that affect the lives of communities
- implement solution-oriented and practical approaches to improve the governance of public institutions and their impact on citizens

Track 2. Support civil society actors to address and mitigate the corruption risks related to COVID-19 global crisis. These initiatives should:

- clearly address a specific corruption risk emerging due to the coronavirus crisis and public authorities' responses to the crisis.
- implement solution-oriented approaches to not only expose and document these new corruption risks, but include realistic and concrete actions to address them.

Submission deadline: 30 June 2020

1. Guidelines

The first track of this Call for Proposals seeks project applications that identify a governance problem in a given public institution and propose a transparency, accountability and/or participation process to address it. Applicants under track one are encouraged to introduce their ideas and plans on how they plan to work in partnership with local or national level government/public institutions to address these challenges and problems. Applicants are encouraged to submit a plan for collaboration with the public institutions they plan to partner with (see below in "desirable criteria" section). Successful applications will demonstrate what concrete results and impact their projects will bring for citizens, and show why the proposed tools and methods for advancing on these goals are relevant. There is a wide range of transparency, accountability and participatory tools and processes that can be used. For a non-exhaustive list of examples please refer to here and here.

The second track of this Call for Proposals seeks applications that address a new corruption risk emerging as a consequence of the coronavirus crisis and the public institutions' responses to the crisis. Under this track, applicants are encouraged to describe the corruption risk, its relationship to the coronavirus crisis and explain how they plan to address it. Successful applicants will propose activities that go beyond simply exposing corruption to also include solutions on how to address it.

By public institutions we refer to institutions that are controlled and/or operated by the government and exist to provide services and/or ensure that citizens enjoy their rights. (e.g. Local/ Regional or National Government, Ministry or Department, Regulatory Authorities, Judicial, health and educational institution).

Please note that proposals will not be judged based on their English-language proficiency, but purely based on the quality of the proposals against the evaluation criteria (see below).

1.1 Eligible applicants:

OSIFE invites applications from:

- registered civil society and/or non-profit organizations (or consortia of organizations) with a background in anti-corruption and/or good governance field more broadly, working at local and/or national levels in one of the following countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.

OSIFE **will not fund/ Non eligible:**

- Partisan political activities, i.e**. activities that express support for a certain political party or support for political parties or elected officials are not eligible**. We will not consider supporting them in any form. Political party-affiliated associations are likewise not eligible to apply.

In the context of this call, we will also not fund

- Projects exclusively focused on monitoring and exposing corruption or other governance problems.

- General civic activism (without a specific link to solution oriented approaches using transparency, accountability or participation processes);

- Academic research on corruption or governance, or mapping studies.

- General organizational/ core funding requests that only provide financial sustainability to current work.

Desirable but not compulsory: Projects in partnership with public institutions at local or national level(s), Applicants are encouraged to submit a statement of support or collaboration issued by staff or representatives of the local or national level government institution(s) with which they intend to work in partnership. This statement can take various forms (such as an email, a letter, a memorandum of understanding, etc.), and can be in English or in the language of the country. The statement of support should indicate that the respective public institution is willing and able to play the role indicated in the project proposal.

1.2 Open call process & other relevant information:

1.2.1 Deadline & submission process
The deadline for submitting applications is **30 June 2020 (Midnight, CET time).** Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Applications need to be submitted through the <u>Open Society Foundations' grantee portal</u>. Please note that the grantee portal requires prior registration that usually takes a couple of days. Questions regarding the grantee portal and technical questions related to the submission process via the portal should be directed to <u>granteefeedback@opensocietyfoundations.org.</u>

Questions regarding the overall application process and the open call should be directed to the following email address: <u>governancecall2020@opensocietyfoundations.org</u>

Applicants are advised to allow a few working days for a response from these email addresses. They are strongly encouraged to start their applications (including on the grantee portal) at least two weeks before the deadline, to allow time for answering questions they may have and for avoiding last-minute inquiries that may prevent from submitting applications.

1.2.2 Selection of grantees
Applications that are submitted by the deadline and meet the eligibility and administrative criteria will be reviewed by a selection committee.

1.2.3 Administrative criteria
- Eligibility criteria
- Completed proposal and budget template

- CVs of relevant staff members working on the project

- Last official annual report of the applicant or brief description of its work in 2019 (if available, in English or if not than in local language)

- A financial report showing income and expenses from 2019

1.2.4 Evaluation criteria

Applications will be evaluated against the following criteria in the selection process:

- Relevance: Does the proposed project's problem statement respond to the goal of the open call?

- Previous work & profile of the organization: What is the organization's previous work on local, regional and national government/public institution level, especially with a focus on solution-oriented approaches and/or addressing corruption risks in the public sector ? What is its profile in the area of transparency, accountability, citizen participation and governance? How are relevant gender considerations reflected within the organization's structure?

- Partnership for the project (for track 1 only): How strong are the partnership elements of this project, including existing arrangements with local government(s) or other public administration institution partner(s)? Is there evidence that the partnering public institution is truly committed to transparency, accountability and participation of citizens within its remit (e.g. via previous work or public statements)?

- Capacity: What are the capacities of the organization (including staffing, resources, financial, and expertise) to adequately implement the proposed project?

- Project approach: Are the planned activities and methods in the proposed project relevant and useful to achieve the project's stated goals? Is there a logical connection between the rationale for the project, its planned activities and its intended outcomes and impact? If relevant, does it include a gender perspective and/or a lens on vulnerable groups?

- Communication & outreach: How does the project intend to share its results, successes and learning beyond its direct stakeholders?

- Impact: Do the intended outcomes and impact respond to the goal of the open call, and with tangible improvements in the accountability, citizen participation and/or broader quality of governance of public institutions (track 1) or with tangible risk mitigation outcomes for new Covid19-related corruption risks (track 2)? What are the concrete results and impact that the project will bring for citizens? Are the indicators for measuring progress on these outcomes well-defined, quantified where possible, realistic and ambitious?

- Budget: Is the proposed budget relevant, proportionate and corresponds well to the planned activities? Is the size of the project budget manageable given the financial resources and capacities of the organization (i.e. ideally the project budget should be less than 1/3 of the organization's total expenditure in 2019). Please note that there is no eligibility limitation on the budget items as far as they are relevant for the implementation of the project and the items are reasonable. However, please also note that the project

funds cannot be used to fund direct cost of public institutions and it should be administered by the applicant civil society organization.

Successful applicants will receive a written notification on their applications by end of August 2020. Please note that unfortunately OSIFE does not have the capacity to provide feedback on unsuccessful proposals. Under this call, OSIFE aims to support 8–12projects in the target countries. Depending on the quality of applications and the evaluation process, OSIFE may support projects only in some of them. The budget allocation for work under Track 1 and Track 2 will be made in the evaluation stage, taking into account the severity and urgency of the newly emerging corruption risks in relation to the coronavirus crisis in the region.

1.3 Duration and amount of grants

Applicants may submit up to two proposals per organization with a budget of **up to a maximum of US$40,000** per proposal using the attached proposal and budget templates. The **duration of a grant can range between 8 and 15 months**. **The project start date needs to be between 20 September 2020 and 1 February 2021**. Grantees may also have the opportunity to receive mentoring by an external consultant during the project period.

Applicants also may request overhead funding up to 20% of the total requested budget (included in the total budget request of up to $40,000 USD) by presenting why it is necessary for the organization and how it will be used for the objectives of this call. Overhead can be flexibly used for salaries, administrative and operational costs. For this, applicants should fill in the relevant fields in the narrative and budget proposal templates.

Organizations can submit applications for only one of the tracks in the open call, or can submit an application which addresses both tracks in a single project.

Interested organizations are invited to join an informational webinar on OSIFE's open call on **20 May 2020, between 2 p.m and 4 p.m. (CET**). We will explain the rationale for this call as well as practical and logistical issues and also allow for a Q&A with OSIFE staff on the open call. To register for it, please email: governancecall2020@opensocietyfoundations.org.

The registration period for the webinar starts on 2 May 2020 and ends on 19 May 2020. Limited places are available, please register in time to secure your place.

Annexes

Proposal template

Budget template