

ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN LITHUANIA

ON-GOING CALL

GUIDELINES FOR THE APPLICANTS OF AD-HOC PROJECTS

Last updated 13.02.2020

Submission of ad-hoc project proposals: *on-going, but no later than 1st June 2023
(23:59 Lithuanian time)*

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1. EEA AND NORWAY FINANCIAL MECHANISMS 2014 – 2021

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND

The EEA and Norway Financial Mechanisms 2014 – 2021 are funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway with the aim to reduce economic and social disparities in Europe, and to strengthen the relations between Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and 15 Beneficiary States in Europe (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia).

According to the agreements between the EU and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, at least 10 % of EEA Grants are allocated to the strengthening of civil society through the Active Citizens Fund (ACF). A total budget of €9,000,000 will be allocated for the ACF in Lithuania in the period of 2014 - 2021.

The general objectives of the ACF Program is to **strengthen civil society and active citizenship and empower vulnerable groups**. The Program also aims at **strengthening of bilateral cooperation** between civil society organizations from Lithuania and entities from the Donor states as well as **promoting regional exchange and networking**, with a view of sharing knowledge and best practice across civil society.

The objectives of the ACF are based on the common values of respect of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights, including rights of persons belonging to minorities.

Areas of support of the ACF are:

- Democracy, active citizenship, good governance, and transparency;
- Human rights and equal treatment through combating discrimination based on race or ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or identity;
- Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups;
- Gender equality and fighting gender-based violence;
- Environment and climate change.

1.2 EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN LITHUANIA

In particular, the ACF Program in Lithuania aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Outcome 1. Increased citizen participation in civic activities
- Outcome 2. Strengthened civil society watchdog and advocacy role
- Outcome 3. Increased support for human rights
- Outcome 4. Vulnerable groups empowered
- Outcome 5. Enhanced capacity and sustainability of civil society

- Bilateral outcome. Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the Program
- Regional Civil Society Initiatives outcome. Strengthened regional (cross-border) cooperation in the civil society sector

The ACF Program in Lithuania shall be implemented through the following calls:

- Open call #1 for small, medium, large projects – December 2019
- On-going call for ad-hoc projects – February 2020
- Open call #2 for small and medium projects – November 2021

Restriction of one project proposal per Applicant doesn't apply to ad-hoc projects. Applicants that have submitted and/or are implementing outcome 1-5 project (small, medium or large) can still apply for the grant for the ad-hoc project.

1.3 MANAGEMENT OF THE ACF FUND IN LITHUANIA

The Fund Operator for the Active Citizens Fund in Lithuania is **the Open Lithuania Foundation** in consortium with the OSFL Projects and Geri Norai LT.

Open Lithuania Foundation (OLF) has substantial experience in re-granting and in running operational Programs designed to strengthen civil society, active citizens and the CSOs at large. **OSFL Projektai** (OSFLP) possesses extensive re-granting experience and in-depth technical knowledge of audit and accounting practices applied in Lithuania and particularly in the NGO sector. **Geri norai LT** (GN) offers tailor-made support for early-stage social entrepreneurs, local action groups in the regions, linguistic and ethnic minorities, etc.

2 PROVISIONS OF THE ON-GOING CALL

2.1 INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR THE CALL

Total indicative budget of the on-going call for ad-hoc projects is **€75,000**.

2.2 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants for grants under the Active Citizens Funds are NGOs that are established in the Republic of Lithuania and fall within the following definition: "A non-profit voluntary organization established as a legal entity, having a non-commercial purpose, independent of the local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties, and commercial organizations. Religious institutions and political parties are not considered NGOs."

More specifically, eligible Applicants must meet the following requirements:

- an Applicant is a legal entity that has been registered in Lithuania for at least one year.

- an Applicant fulfills the requirements set in of the Law on Development of Non-Governmental Organizations¹.
- shareholders of an Applicant is not the consortium members of the Fund Operator.
- an Applicant is a non-profit organization that has not been created nor operates to generate personal profit. Although they may have paid staff and may engage in revenue-generating activities, they do not distribute profits to their members nor to their board. Where revenue-generating activities are undertaken, these should not represent the purpose of the NGO, but should be a means to support its mission and values.
- an Applicant must have members who do not have any direct commercial interest in the outcome of the work of the organization or of its commercial activities and should not pursue the commercial or professional interests of its members. Trade- and professional associations, where the aims and purposes of the association are to further the specific interests of its members only, are not eligible.
- an Applicant must be voluntary in nature, formed voluntarily by groups or individuals, and usually involving an element of voluntary participation in the organization.
- an Applicant must 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.
- An Applicant must have some degree of formal or institutional existence, unlike informal or ad hoc groups, involving formal statutes or other governing document(s) defining their mission, objectives and scope.
- An Applicant must have transparent structures and elected chair/board, and are accountable to their members and donors.
- an Applicant must be independent of the local, regional and national government and other public authorities.
- an Applicant must be independent of political parties and commercial organizations.

Lithuanian Red Cross Society is considered as eligible applicant if it fulfils the above principles.

Political parties, religious institutions, social partners² or profit-distributing cooperatives are not considered as NGOs and therefore are not eligible. SME and other profit generating organizations holding the status of social enterprise are not considered eligible applicant, whereas NGO having a status of social enterprise can be eligible applicant.

Faith-based organizations are eligible if they meet the principles identified above and if the funded activities do not directly or indirectly promote religious doctrine, mission or proselytism related to the beliefs of a particular faith (beyond basic religious/cultural awareness-raising).

Organizations that have not paid amounts due, following a final court decision in connection with the NGO Program 2009-2014 in Lithuania, shall not be considered eligible applicants.

¹ <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/d415a500124111e48595a3375cdcc8a3?jfwid=zaydj67xa>

² Social partners are defined as trade unions and employers' organizations, as defined by the EU.

All eligible applicants, partners and project proposals shall follow the principles of common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and the respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities³ (based on race or ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or identity). The applicants and partners will confirm this in the Applicant and Partner declarations of compliance accordingly. The Selection Committee will have the power to suggest a rejection of a project if it establishes that the applicants, partners and project do not follow the mentioned principles.

2.3 ELIGIBLE PARTNERS

A project may be implemented in partnership with one or more project partners whose partnership should not be mistaken for sub-contracting. Project partners, on the one hand, always share a common economic or social goal through the implementation of the project, and cooperate throughout the entirety of the project realization. Sub-contracting, on the other hand, is aimed at one (or perhaps several) specific deliverables, services or equipment to realize a particular activity within the project. Sub-contracting shall always be carried out based on an appropriate service or purchase contract, according to the applicable public procurement rules.

Eligible partner(s) must meet one of the following requirements:

- a Partner is public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organization established as a legal person in Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway, or in a Beneficiary State (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia), or in a country outside the EEA that has a common border with Lithuania;
- a Partner is an international organization or body or agency thereof, actively involved in, and effectively contributing to the implementation of the project;
- a Partner is an informal group, ad hoc or self-help organization that is not registered legal entity in Lithuania⁴.

Organizations that have not recovered amounts due, following a final court decision in connection with the NGO Program 2009-2014 in Lithuania, shall not be considered eligible partners.

All Partners must share a common goal and actively contribute towards achieving the aim(s) of the project, as defined in the application. The role and specific obligations undertaken by each Partner must be clearly defined and justified in the application.

A Partner(s) declaration must be submitted to the Fund Operator together with the application. Before signing the grant contract with the FO, the Applicant shall sign a partnership agreement with each of

³ Article 1.2 of Protocol 38c on the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms (2014-2021)

⁴ Such organisations must however meet the requirements that they are not for personal profit, act for public good, are voluntary and nondiscriminatory in nature, independent of local, regional and national government and other public authorities, and are independent of political parties, religious institutions and commercial organisations. Informal groups shall be represented by one single person, who signs the project partnership agreement on behalf of the group. An informal group cannot not be a direct recipient of the project grant. Expenditure related to the involvement of the informal group shall be borne by the project promoter.

the project partners, clearly defining the objective of the partnership, activities, and tasks undertaken by each entity, budget share, reporting obligations and other commitments. If the partnership involves foreign entities, the partnership agreement(s) can be in English. The template of the partnership agreement will be provided by the Fund Operator.

Partnerships are encouraged, but not obligatory. All Partners must share a common goal and actively contribute towards achieving the aim(s) of the project. Partnerships must be based on the qualitative, meaningful and timely contribution of all partners involved in the project (recommended partners' share in the project - 20% - 50 % of the project's activities and budget).

2.4 ELIGIBLE APPLICATION

Only one (1) ad-hoc project application may be submitted at a time by the same Applicant organization. Another application for ad-hoc project may be submitted only after the previous one is finalized (final report is approved by the Fund Operator).

Grant size of ad-hoc projects is min €1,000 – max €5,000, duration of the ad-hoc project - min 1 month – max 6 months.

3 FOCUS OF THE ON-GOING CALL FOR AD-HOC PROJECTS

3.1 OUTCOME 2 - AD-HOC PROJECTS

In order to support organizations' rapid advocacy, legal, communicational or other quick response actions being carried out to address emerging needs caused by undermining of human rights or rule of law principles by policy-makers, public and private institutions, anti-democratic actions, violation of any vulnerable people rights, the ACF in Lithuania offers ad-hoc projects grants – a separate strand under the Outcome 2 with the total budget of €75,000. The ad-hoc projects can be also initiated as a rapid reaction to the unexpected social, ecological or other problems with possible significant societal consequences.

Being a part of Outcome 2, the ad-hoc projects are expected to address citizens' and CSOs' engagement in and contribution to public policy decision-making at local and national level; to promote and/or monitor transparency and accountability of public institutions, to reinforce CSOs' evidence-based advocacy and watchdog role, research, analysis and initiatives affecting decision-making processes; to develop digital tools and platforms and employ media for better public participation and involvement in public policy decision making.

Under this outcome, the Program will encourage CSOs through their joint advocacy actions to actively contribute to the development of national, regional, and local public policies, legal regulations and public decisions.

Each ad-hoc project must contribute to the Outcome 2, correspond to the chosen output(s) and measure the achievement of the respective indicators.

Applicants should specify the project's outputs and output indicators in the project application form. For each selected project output, applicants must select at least one of the corresponding predefined indicators. If they wish, applicants can also specify additional indicators for measuring the achievement of the output(s). Applicants are also required to define target values for each output indicator. For further information, please consult the ACF results framework published at <https://apf.lt/en/rezultatai/>.

A project can be set more comprehensive and also follow other objectives and outcomes beyond the ACF Program. In any case, projects should be coherent.

In the table below, expected outcomes, outputs and respective indicators on the level of the ACF Program in Lithuania are presented. This information should serve as a guide for the development of project ideas.

Outcome 2	Indicators
Strengthened civil society watchdog/advocacy role	Number of national policies and laws influenced by CSOs
	Number of CSOs using evidence-based research to support their advocacy and policy work
Outputs	Indicators
Policy input submitted by CSOs	Number of CSO policy submissions aimed at influencing polices, legal regulations and public decisions
Transparency and accountability of public institutions promoted	Number of monitoring initiatives by supported CSOs promoting transparency and accountability of public institutions
	Number of campaigns by supported CSOs promoting transparency and accountability of public institutions
	Number of CSOs actively using the media to further their advocacy work
	Number of digital tools developed to promote public participation in civic activities/involvement in public policy decision making
Intersectoral CSO cooperation supported	Number of joint advocacy initiatives by supported CSOs

The following types of activities can be supported through ad-hoc projects:

- development and implementation of campaigns (a set of short, intensive activities that uses the media skillfully and reaches out to wide target groups with strong communication);
- joint mobilizing and advocacy actions (grass-root initiatives taking concrete steps, e.g., petitions, demonstrations, legal consultations or assistance, with the involvement of the broader public towards achieving a realistic, achievable and current solution to a social problem that is in line with the outcome 2 „Strengthened civil society watchdog/advocacy role“ of the ACF program);

- ad-hoc coalitions, formed to solve a specific problem, where the mobilization of citizens, their groups or organizations is necessary to achieve the goal.

The lists of activities is non-exhaustive.

It is expected that the activities shall:

- raise awareness towards concrete and accurate social problem or issue;
- contribute to the solution of the problems to change or improve the present situation;
- use diverse digital tools to address wider target groups or to contribute to the public policy;
- use the media/the press in a conscientious manner and can reach publicity;
- contribute to legal assistance to the particular group or individual that is oppressed;
- improve governance;
- ensure transparency and accountability;
- address citizens' and CSOs' engagement in and contribute to public policy decision-making;
- actively contribute to the development of national, regional and local public policies

However, conferences, festivals, annual or other regularly occurring events organized without fundamental changes from year to year, summer camps, cultural or sports events with mainly recreation purpose, simple charity activities, projects aiming basically to build the local community are not considered eligible for ad-hoc projects.

3.2 FINANCIAL PROVISIONS OF THE CALL

3.2.1 PROJECT GRANT RATE

The ACF Program can provide funding of up to 90% of the eligible costs of the project budget. The co-financing shall be provided in the form of cash or in-kind contribution in the form of voluntary work. In-kind contribution in the form of voluntary work may constitute up to 100% of the co-financing for ad-hoc projects under Outcome 2.

For the calculation of the in-kind contribution, the cost for each hour of voluntary work shall be defined on a case by case basis, depending on the character of work delivered. The unit prices shall be set in accordance with a usually paid salary for such work. They shall fall within the range between €3.72 per hour (minimum gross hourly wage in Lithuania) and €7.70 per hour (the average gross hourly wage in Lithuania), including the employer's social contribution.

3.2.2 ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

Eligible expenditures of projects are those actually incurred by the project applicant or the project partner, which meet the following criteria:

- they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract;

- they are connected with the subject of the project contract and they are indicated in the detailed budget of the project;
- they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
- they are used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective of the project and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the project promoter and determined according to the applicable accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles; and
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

Expenditures are considered to have been incurred when the cost has been invoiced, paid and the subject matter delivered (in case of goods) or performed (in case of services and works). Expenditure is considered to have been incurred when the last of these three conditions is met. The project promoter must have documentation to justify the fulfillment of all three conditions. Exceptionally, costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the final month of eligibility are also deemed to be incurred within the dates of eligibility if the costs are paid within 30 days of the final date of eligibility.

Indirect costs and depreciation of equipment are considered to have been incurred when they are recorded on the accounts of the project promoter and/or partner.

The internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the expenditures and revenues declared with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

Project promoters and partners are obliged to keep a separate account evidence for the project.

Direct expenditure

The eligible direct expenditures for a project are those expenditures which are identified by the project promoter and/or the project partner, in accordance with their accounting principles and usual internal rules, as specific expenditures directly linked to the implementation of the project and which can therefore be booked to it directly. The following direct expenditures are eligible provided that they satisfy the criteria set out in the previous paragraph:

- the cost of staff assigned to the project (employments contracts, civil law contracts, freelance contracts), comprising actual salaries plus social security charges and other statutory costs as applicable, provided that this corresponds to the project promoter's and project partner's usual policy on remuneration;
- travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project, provided that they are in line with the project promoter's and project partner's usual practices on travel costs;
- cost of new or second hand equipment, provided that it is depreciated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the project applicant and generally accepted for items of the same kind. Only the portion of the depreciation corresponding to the duration of the project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the project will be taken into account. The equipment should serve the project related purpose for at least 5 years upon

completion of the project, except if fund operator and project promoter agree differently in the project contract;

- costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the project;
- costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a project promoter for the purposes of carrying out the project, provided that the awarding complies with the applicable rules on public procurement; and
- costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract for each project (e.g. dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the action, audits, translations, reproduction), including the costs of any financial services (especially the cost of financial guarantees).

Costs related to reconstruction, renovation, or refurbishment of a real estate shall not exceed 50% of the eligible direct cost of the project.

In cases, the Fund Operator determines that the equipment is an integral and necessary component for the achieving outcomes of the project, the entire purchase price of equipment is eligible, the project promoter shall:

- keep the equipment in its ownership for a period of at least five years following the completion of the project and continues to use the equipment for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period;
- keeps the equipment properly insured against losses such as fire, theft or other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least five years following the completion of the project; and
- sets aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of the equipment for at least five years following the completion of the project.

The specific means for the implementation of this obligation shall be specified in the project contract.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are all eligible costs that cannot be identified by the project promoter and/or the project partner as being directly attributed to the project but which can be identified and justified by its accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs attributed to the project. They may not include any eligible direct costs. Indirect costs of the project shall represent a fair apportionment of the overall overheads of the project promoter or the project partner.

Indirect costs incurred in carrying out the project may be eligible for flat-rate funding, but the total must not exceed 15 % of the estimated total eligible personnel costs. Indirect costs do not have to be proven or evidenced in the separate account evidence of the project. The rate of indirect costs applies to the whole partnership; however, the rate can differ between partner organisations.

Project promoters have to be able to demonstrate that indirect costs of the project are proportionate to total administrative costs of their organisation.

In case beneficiaries are international organisations or bodies or agencies thereof, indirect costs can be identified in accordance with existing rules of such organisation.

3.2.3 INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- costs related to preparation of project application
- costs of construction work
- costs of debt, interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges
- charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs and financial services related to accounts required by the contract with Fund Operator;
- costs related to purchase of land or real estate;
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- exchange losses;
- recoverable VAT;
- costs that are covered by other sources;
- fines, penalties and costs of litigation, except where litigation is an integral and necessary component for achievement of project objectives;
- excessive or reckless expenditure.

3.2.4 VALUE ADDED TAX

Value added tax (VAT) is eligible cost only in case the applicant is not entitled for recoverable VAT. Applicants shall be aware of this rule when preparing their financial plan for the projects, and consider only those VAT costs that are non-recoverable by the state.

3.2.5 PROCUREMENT RULES

National and European Union law on public procurement shall be complied with at any level in the implementation of the projects.

Project promoter and project partner(s) shall carry out the procurement in accordance with the Law on Public Procurement of the Republic of Lithuania. If the project promoter and / or partner(s) are not contracting authorities then the procurement shall be carried out in accordance with the regular practice of the organization and / or the internal procurement rules of the organizations. Project partners, which are legal entities operating in the Donor State, carry out the procurement in accordance with the respective legislation of the Donor State. Involving partners in a project to avoid procurement is not allowed.

Notwithstanding provisions of national law that exempt NGOs from public procurement, any procurement procedures related to amounts above the European Union thresholds for procurement shall be undertaken in accordance with the applicable regulations on procurement without regard for such an exemption.

In cases where contracts concluded as part of the implementation of the projects fall below the national or European Union thresholds set for public procurement or outside the scope of the applicable public procurement laws, the awarding of such contracts (including the procedures prior to the awarding) and the terms and conditions of such contracts shall comply with best economic practices, including

accountability, allow a full and fair competition between potential providers, for example by way of effective price comparison, and ensure the optimal use of resources from the ACF in Lithuania. To this end, and in the absence of stricter national laws, in cases of procurement related to an amount of EUR 5,000 or higher but below the relevant European Union thresholds (€193.000), the project applicant shall invite at least three suppliers/service providers to submit offers.

The highest ethical standards shall be observed during the procurement and execution of contracts. The project applicant shall ensure the application of adequate and effective means to prevent illegal or corrupt practices. No offer, gifts, payments, or benefit of any kind, which would or could, either directly or indirectly, be construed as an illegal or corrupt practice, e.g., as an inducement or reward for the award or execution of procurement contracts, shall be accepted.

4 APPLICATION, EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

All of the call documentation can be found at: <https://apf.lt/>

Call documentation for ad-hoc projects consists of:

- Call text for ad-hoc projects (pdf)
- Guidelines for the Applicants of ad-hoc projects (pdf)
- Ad-hoc project application form (word)
- Applicant's declaration (word)
- Partner's declaration (word)

4.1 APPLICATION, EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF AD-HOC PROJECTS

Indicative timeline of the on-going call for ad-hoc projects

Announcement of the call	13th February 2020
Deadline for submission of project proposals	On-going, until 1st June, 2023, (23:59 Lithuanian time), or earlier, if all funds available for ad-hoc projects (€75,000) are used
Final selection results announced	Ongoing, on quarterly basis (i.e., March 2020, June 2020, September 2020, December 2020, etc.). The evaluation and selection process can be started earlier in the following cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there are at least 3 project proposals submitted to the FO, or - other justified cases when immediate response is needed (e.g., in the case of violation of the rule of law).

Preparation of the project proposal

Applicants submit the filled-in project proposal in accordance with the instructions provided in the application form. In addition to the application form, applicants will also have to submit the Applicant declaration and Partner declaration (if applicable).

Submission of the project proposal

Complete application of the project proposal consists of:

- A scan of completed project proposal form (pdf), followed by the word version (doc or docx);
- A scan of signed and stamped (where applicable) Applicant declaration;
- A scan of signed (and stamped, where applicable) Partner declaration.

The application shall be submitted only in the electronic form to the following e-mail address projektai@apf.lt (this e-mail is intended exclusively for submission of applications. In case of questions regarding the call, the ACF Program, etc., organizations may contact Fund Operator at info@apf.lt or check the F.A.Q. section at <https://apf.lt>).

Ad-hoc project proposals can be delivered to the e-mail provided above **any time**, but **no later than 1st June 2023, 23:59 Lithuanian time**. The Fund Operator reserves the right to terminate the call for proposals earlier, in case if all funds available for ad-hoc projects (€75,000) are used.

Applications delivered to the respective e-mail past the deadline (1st June 2023) will be rejected. Date and time of the arrival of the e-mail with a completed application and all necessary attachments will be considered based on the records of the Fund Operator's server, regardless of the date and time of when it was sent and regardless of the date and time of sending recorded by the sending server. Fund Operator assumes no responsibility for any delays in the delivery of application e-mail (for example, due to large attachments and server occupancy or network disruption, etc.).

Applicants will receive an automatic response on the delivery of their e-mail to the sending e-mail address. In case such a response does not arrive at the applicant's e-mail inbox or spam within 2 hours after sending the application e-mail, the applicant should contact Fund Operator at +370 5 2685511 (within working hours), so the Fund Operator can check the status of the application on their side.

Applications submitted in any other form or way (for example, via fax, regular mail, etc.) or to any other e-mail, shall be rejected.

Project's administrative and eligibility criteria

After the project proposal is received, Fund Operator will carry out an initial administrative check of its eligibility based on the information submitted in the application form and Applicant's declaration on the compliance with the administrative and eligibility criteria.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	YES/NO
The following criteria are elimination criteria, meaning an automatic elimination of the application from further evaluation if it does not comply with even one of these criteria:	
Application is submitted as instructed (filled in in Lithuanian language, submitted at the designated email, submitted signed and scanned copy).	
Application is submitted within the deadline.	
Organization is not in situation of not paid amounts due, following a final court decision in connection with the NGO Program 2009-2014 in Lithuania	
Project duration (including preparation, implementation and evaluation) is between 1 and 6 months.	
Grant amount corresponds to determined frames of €1,000 and €5,000.	
This project proposal is the first application (according to the date and time of delivery) submitted by the same Applicant.	
The Applicant has no other ad-hoc project being implemented or not finalised.	
If needed, the Applicant will be asked to provide missing information for the following criteria:	
All required annexes and documents are submitted with the application form in the formats indicated by the Fund Operator	
Application is signed by the head of NGO or other authorised person (in this case, letter of authorisation is enclosed)	
Applicant declaration, signed and stamped (where applicable), is submitted.	
Partner declaration (for each partner), signed and stamped (where applicable), is submitted.	

If the application does not meet one of the criteria, it will be rejected as ineligible. In case the application misses certain parts (documents or information) that can be supplemented according to the above criteria, applicants will be invited to provide respective missing parts within three (3) working days. An invitation to provide the missing parts of the application will be sent to the e-mail address of the applicant listed in the application form (e-mail address of the contact person).

After the administrative eligibility check is completed, ineligible applicants will be notified of the rejection of their project proposals from further evaluation. Applicants of ineligible project proposals will have five (5) working days available for appeal against the eligibility decision. The Appeals

Committee will consider appeals. The decision of the Committee is final. The appeal can be submitted at info@apf.lt.

Evaluation of the project proposal

Two impartial evaluators will assess project proposals passing the evaluation process, and on the basis of their scoring, a ranking list will be prepared and presented to the Selection Committee. Applications shall be checked and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

If the difference between the scores given by the two experts will be higher than 30 % of the highest score, a third evaluator will score the project independently. In such cases, the average rating of the two closest scores shall be used for ranking the project proposals. The latter shall not be used in cases where scoring of the third evaluator does not, in any way, contribute to granting the project proposal (60 iš 100).

Selection Committee will meet quarterly (March, June, September, and December each year) to examine the proposed ranking list and make recommendations to the Fund Operator on grant awarding. In justified cases, based on transparent criteria, the Selection Committee may modify the ranking of the project applications. Fund Operator makes the final decision.

The Selection Committee can meet earlier in the following cases:

- there are at least 3 project proposals submitted to the FO, or
- other justified cases when immediate response is needed (e.g., in the case of violation of the rule of law).

Project proposal evaluation criteria for ad-hoc projects (max. total points - 100)

Criteria		Description	Score
1.	Relevance and importance of the project		45
1.1.	Adequacy of the project type <i>*eliminating criterion: If 0, the project is automatically rejected</i>	<i>To what extent the project complies with the features of ad-hoc project?</i>	10
1.2.	Relevance of the project to the addressed problem	<i>To what extent are the target groups and their needs/problem defined? To what extent the problem addressed is actual? To what extent the project contribute to the solution of defined problem/ addressing the target group's need?</i>	20
1.3.	Coherence of the project with the objectives, expected outcomes of the ACF Program	<i>To what extent the project contributes to objectives and outcome #2 of the ACF Program? To what extent the project contributes to the outputs of the ACF Program?</i>	10

1.4.	Sustainability of intervention	<i>To what extent is made evident which activities and in what way are going to be continued after the project conclusion? Is a sustainable impact for the target group and the larger community planned?</i>	5
2.	Quality of the project implementation		35
2.1.	Feasibility and relevance of proposed activities	<i>To what extent the proposed activities be able to reach the target group? To what extent are planned activities logical and relevant in terms of project outputs? Is project feasible within planned timeframe?</i>	15
2.2.	Adequacy of project results	<i>To what extent are planned target values of indicators adequate and realistic? Is it possible to achieve the expected results by the implementation of the project?</i>	15
2.3.	Quality of communication measures	<i>To what extent are measures planned for communication adequate?</i>	5
3.	Value for money		10
3.1.	Adequacy of budget with proposed activities	<i>To what extent are proposed costs compliant with action plan? Are costs presented sufficiently enough for realization of respective activities and outputs?</i>	5
3.2.	Reasonable and justifiable budget	<i>To what extent does cost justification make evident what the cost entails and at what price? To what extent are cost estimations based on realistic assumptions? To what extent are indicated costs needed for project implementation?</i>	5
4.	Capacity of the project promoters		10
4.1.	Experience of the project team (applicants and partners) in relation to the project	<i>To what extent are experiences of the project team (and partner, if relevant) relevant for the proposed project?</i>	10
			100

Project proposals scoring a minimum of 60 points in the quality assessment will be examined by the Selection Committee.

Acceptance of an application does not imply an obligation to award it up to the amount requested by the applicant. The amount requested may be decreased by the Selection Committee based on the evaluators' findings on the adequacy of the financial plan. Based on the findings of the evaluators on the relevance of the activities for achieving the project objectives, the Selection Committee may reject financing of activities that do not contribute to the objectives.

Notification on selection results

Applicants will be notified on the selection of their project proposals via e-mail indicated in application form not later than three working days after the Fund Operator makes the final decision. The results of the selection shall also be announced at the Program's website.

5 PROVISIONS ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

After the final decision on the selection of a project for co-financing by the ACF, the Applicant will receive a Project contract based on the standard agreement template. Before the signature of the agreement, negotiation between the Applicant and Fund Operator to determine the final definition of project activities and costs are possible.

5.1 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT PROVISIONS

After notification on the co-financing decision, the Applicants will set the project start date. The Fund Operator will conclude Project Implementation Agreements with all the selected Applicants, who duly comply with the Selection Committee's and Fund Operator's comments related to the content and budget of the projects, and which aims at ensuring effective distribution of the Program's funds.

Project Implementation Agreement will cover the following aspects:

- Final grant amount – maximum grant amount and rate will be determined with the agreement based on the financial plan of the project representing planned amount of costs. However, this amount will become final only after the conclusion of the project and after submission of the final financial statement of the project account.
- Failure to meet project objectives – In case the beneficiary will not realize project in accordance with Project Implementation agreement's obligations and provisions, Fund Operator reserves the right to stop payments or terminate the agreement. The ACF contribution can be reduced, and Fund Operator can demand a total or partial refund of already paid contribution in case beneficiary does not comply with the contractual provisions.
- Changes to the project – In the event of significant changes to the project, an amendment to the agreement has to be prepared and signed, while smaller-scale changes can be authorized by the Project Supervisor. In case a delay in project implementation occurs due to objective reasons, the beneficiary can request for a prolongation of the project for a maximum of 3 months, even if the project duration was planned for the maximum period (i.e., 6 months). The request will be considered by the Fund Operator. Prolongation of the project does not impact the financial plan of the project.

- Changes to the financial plan – Original amounts of the categories in the financial plan may change under the following conditions:
 - when the change does not impact the original purpose of the project; and
 - transfers of budget between cost categories of up to 10 % of total project budget are possible without consent of the Project Supervisor on the side of the Fund Operator; for transfers of budget between cost categories higher than 10 % of total budget project promoter will have to get Fund Operator's written consent, and an amendment to the agreement will be signed.

5.2 REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

90 % of the project grant, indicated in the project contract, shall be paid to the project promoter in the form of advance payment. The remaining part of the grant shall be paid to the project promoter after the Fund Operator approves final narrative and financial reports. The submission of narrative and financial reports is a mandatory condition for the execution of the final payment. Reports have to be approved by the Fund Operator before payments are made. Fund Operator can request for additional information on implementation progress at any time.

Within 10 calendar days after the signature of project contract the project promoter shall submit an **advance payment claim**.

The final narrative and financial report supporting the final payment claim shall be submitted by the project promoter within 45 calendar days after the completion of the project.

Payments of the project grant shall take the form of advance payment and a final payment. The level of advance payment to projects shall be set out in the project contract. The maximum level of advance payment shall be linked to the project budget and duration as follows:

Grant size	Project implementation duration	Advance payment	Interim payment(s)	Final payment
Ad-hoc projects: from €1,000 to €5,000	up to 6 months	Up to 90%	n/a	Minimum 10% or the remaining balance

Advance payments are to be paid up to 15 working days after the date of last signature of the project contract.

Final/balance payments are to be paid up to 15 working days after the date of approval of the final financial report.

The approval of project final financial report shall take place within 30 calendar days from the submission of all required information.

In cases where projects have been assessed as posing a high risk for the Program⁵, the Fund Operator may make a justified decision to change the payments scheme (reducing pre-financing or exceptionally, applying a scheme without pre-financing under which the Fund Operator reimburses project promoters only the amount of grant expenses verified by the Fund Operator).

Rights and obligations of the object promoter and the Fund Operator regarding the monitoring and control of the use of the grant funds are detailed in the project Implementation agreement.

5.3 PUBLICITY

Project promoters are obliged to inform the public on receiving a grant from the ACF. In all written publications, communications and products, at publication of project products, public events, such as conferences, seminars, fairs or exhibitions, related to project activities, project promoters are obliged to make explicit and visible the support of the donor countries.

Guidelines for informing and communicating will be published before the beginning of project implementation period on the website of the ACF in Lithuania <https://apf.lt/>. Project promoter will also have a wide pallet of communication support activities at their disposal.

5.4 INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA SUBMITTED BY THE APPLICANTS TO THE ACF IN LITHUANIA

With personal data submitted (included) in application to open calls of the ACF in Lithuania and reporting documentation by the applicants, OLF as a leading partner of Fund Operator's Consortium and OSFL Projects and Geri Norai LT as partners of Consortium will be acquainted. Hence, Fund Operator enter the role of common personal data controllers. Submitted personal data will be used for the purposes of implementation of open calls (application assessment, informing of applicants) and in applications rewarded with grants also for preparation of grant agreements, for monitoring, control of co-financing and for related informing of beneficiaries or for other related business communication (request for additional information, informing on financial means) as well as for the purpose of proving of eligibility for funding.

Co-financing of a project selected means establishing a contractual relation between the OLF and the Applicant in which OLF assumes the liability of co-financing party and has therefore, together with its partners, the right to monitor and control the implementation of the project. Such contractual relationship as well as submission of application to an open call (as a request for such contractual relationship) represent legal basis for all personal data processing by OLF, OSFL Projects and Geri norai LT as noted in this information.

With whole application, including personal data submitted with it, also third persons can get acquainted, and that is Financial Mechanism Office (Financial Mechanism Office, Rue Joseph II 12-16, 1000 Brussels, Belgium), donor states and their authorized persons.

⁵ This shall be based on a risk assessment prepared and documented by the FO, taking into account, inter alia, the project promoter's previous experience and/or its administrative and financial capacity.

In accordance with GDPR and respective national legislation, individuals whose personal data is included in application to open call have the right to be acquainted with all of their personal data, to correction, in the case of conditions as laid down by applicable regulations also the right to deletion, restriction of processing and to their portability. Individuals concerned can address their requests or questions regarding their personal data processing to the OLF.

6 COMPLAINTS' COMMITTEE

In accordance with the requirements for the ACF in Lithuania, the Fund Operator has established a Complaints Committee to review complaints regarding a supposed occurrence of mismanagement. All complaints are first assessed by the Fund Operator. A complainant, who is not satisfied with the conclusion made by the FO, has the right to take the case to the Complaints Committee, which includes one member who is external to the Fund Operator and its Executive Board and does not include Program's staff responsible for assessing project applications. Complaints regarding the ACF Program should be addressed to pranesejai@apf.lt.

7 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR THE APPLICANTS

Applicants will be offered a wide range of support activities and services at their disposal:

- **5 information workshops** for potential applicants will be organized in December 2021 in 5 cities of Lithuania (Alytus, Tauragė, Utena, Telšiai, Marijampolė);
- **Counseling via phone or e-mail** will be provided during the office hours (9:00 – 17:00 Monday – Friday).
- Answers to the applicants' questions will be published weekly on the ACF in Lithuania website <https://apf.lt> (F.A.Q. section).

Information about the support events planned, registration details shall be announced on the ACF in Lithuania website <https://apf.lt> and FB public group „NVO džionglės“.

Information provided by the Fund Operator in the section of F.A.Q. of the ACF in Lithuania website is an integral part of these Guidelines for Applicants.

In case of discrepancies between the English and Lithuanian versions of the Guidelines for Applicants, the Lithuanian version of the Guidelines for Applicants should be followed.

With brief questions, applicants can contact Fund Operator by tel. +370 5 2685511 or e-mail info@apf.lt.