

Open Lithuania foundation,  
OSFL projects and Geri norai LT on behalf of  
a consortium of the Active Citizens Fund  
announces an on-going call for

## **BILATERAL COOPERATION INITIATIVES**

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Last updated 12.05.2022

Submission of bilateral cooperation initiatives: on-going, but no later than 1st June 2023 (23:59 Lithuanian time)

Applicants can contact Fund Operator by phone +370 5 2685511 or e-mail [info@apf.lt](mailto:info@apf.lt)

## Bilateral outcome

# Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the Programme

Bilateral Cooperation Initiative (BCI) should be implemented in partnership between **at least one** NGO in Lithuania and **at least one** entity in the Donor States (where one is the Applicant and the other party involved is a Partner).

### Who can apply

- Lithuanian NGO established as the legal entity for at least 1 year and prior to the submission of the application registered in the Register of Legal Entities as NGO
- Organization (non-commercial, non-for-profit) established in the Donor State

### Partners

- Any public or private entity (commercial or non-commercial) or NGO in the Donor States
- Lithuanian NGO established as the legal entity
- Any public or private entity (commercial or non-commercial) in Lithuania (in case if there is also a Lithuanian NGO involved)
- International organization (in case if there is also a donor entity involved)

### Funds

€170,000

### Initiative duration

1 – 6 months

### Grant size

Up to € 6,000

### Outputs to be reached

- Partnerships with entities from donor countries have been established
- Joint projects have been developed with partners from donor countries
- Initiatives for cooperation and networking, exchange and share of knowledge, technologies, experience

### What can be done

- partner search and partnership development visits
- partner meetings aimed at project development
- learning and experience exchange, seminars, co-developed production (e.g. research, studies, videos, etc.)

## ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND

**The general objectives of the Active Citizens Fund (hereinafter ACF) is to strengthen civil society and active citizenship and empower vulnerable groups.**

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

The ACF 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 ACF in Lithuania is part of the financial contribution of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway to reduce economic and social disparities and strengthen bilateral relations with 15 EU member states.

### 1. FOCUS OF THE BILATERAL OUTCOME - ENHANCED COLLABORATION BETWEEN BENEFICIARY AND DONOR STATE ENTITIES

The aim of the bilateral cooperation is to foster partnerships of mutual benefit and high quality among Lithuanian NGO and entities in the donor states. This outcome is aiming to enhance the cooperation between Lithuanian NGOs and entities in the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).

The initiatives under this outcome should encourage common efforts of Lithuanian NGOs and Donor States 'entities in the following areas:

- a) search for partners prior to or during the preparation of a project application, the development of such partnerships and the preparation of an application;
- b) networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice between project promoters and entities in the Donor States.

A list of activities supported under the **Bilateral outcome**:

- partner search and partnership development visits
- partner meetings aimed at project development
- learning and experience exchange, seminars, co-developed production (e.g. research, studies, videos, etc.)

The activities foreseen in the Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives may take place in Lithuania and/or in the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).

The ACF Program is based on the principles of results-based management, therefore each project submitted for this call must contribute to the Bilateral Outcome, correspond to the pre-defined output and measure the achievement with the at least one chosen indicator:

Bilateral outcome	Indicator
Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the Programme	Level of satisfaction with the partnership
	Share of cooperating organisations that apply knowledge acquired from bilateral partnership
	Share of participants in bilateral initiatives funded by the ACF bilateral fund reporting improved knowledge/methods/approaches
Outputs	Indicators
Partnerships between beneficiary and donor state entities supported	Number of projects involving cooperation with a donor project partner
Cooperation between beneficiary and donor state entities facilitated through the ACF bilateral fund	Number of bilateral cooperation initiatives funded by the ACF bilateral fund
	Number of individuals participating in bilateral activities funded by the ACF bilateral fund

Further information about possibilities for bilateral cooperation and partners' database can be found on the ACF in Lithuania website in the Bilateral Cooperation section: <https://apf.lt/en/dvisalis-bendradarbiavimas/>.

## 2. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND PARTNERS

**Eligible applicants** are NGOs established as the legal entities in Lithuania for at least one year as well as entities from the Donor States that are non-commercial/non profit-making.

Lithuanian applicants must also fulfil the requirements set in the Law on Development of NGO<sup>1</sup> and prior to the submission of the application registered in the Register of Legal Entities as NGO.

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 minorities<sup>2</sup>.

Political parties, religious institutions, social partners<sup>3</sup> or profit-distributing cooperatives are not considered as NGOs and therefore are not eligible applicants.

Faith-based organizations are eligible only 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.

<sup>1</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/981e2c43682e11eaa02cacf2a861120c?jfwid=zaydj67xa>

<sup>2</sup> Article 1.2 of Protocol 38c on the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms (2014-2021)

<sup>3</sup> Social partners are defined as trade unions and employers' organizations, as defined by the EU.

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

- private and public entities, commercial, non-commercial and non-governmental organizations that are legal entities established in Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein;
- private and public entities, commercial, non-commercial that are legal entities established in Lithuania (in case if there is also a Lithuanian NGO involved in the partnership);
- Lithuanian NGO established as the legal entity;
- international organizations or bodies or agencies thereof (in case if there is also a donor entity involved in the partnership).

An initiative should be implemented in the form of partnership between at least one NGO in Lithuania and at least one entity in the Donor States (where one is the Applicant and the other party involved is considered Partner of the Bilateral Initiative). All Partners must share a common goal and actively contribute towards achieving the aim(s) of the initiative, as defined in the application.

Only one (1) Bilateral Cooperation Initiative application may be submitted for evaluation by the same Applicant organization. If the application has been approved, another application for Bilateral Cooperation Initiative may be submitted only after the previous one is finalized (final report is approved by the Fund Operator).

For further information regarding Eligible Applicants and Partners, please consult the **Guidelines for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives**.

### 3. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

The maximum amount of the grant for Bilateral Cooperation Initiative is €6,000. Grant rate may constitute up to 100% of eligible expenses. The duration of the bilateral cooperation initiative is from 1 to 6 months. The starting date of the initiative is normally the date of signature of Bilateral Cooperation Initiative Contract.

#### Eligible expenditure

All the budget items must be linked to project activities and comply with eligibility criteria, they have to be necessary and paid within the project period specified in the project contract. All expenditures have to be controllable and proportionate. The eligible expenditures include staff costs, travel costs, costs of services and equipment necessary for project implementation.

The following expenditures are eligible:

- expert related costs (expert fees and their travel, accommodation, catering expenses);
- participants' related costs (transport expenses (flight, train, bus tickets, etc.), accommodation, participation fee, per-diems or daily allowances);
- other expenses (e.g., events and meeting costs, promotion and information activities, interpretation or translation, etc.);
- personnel costs (up to 10 % of the eligible costs of the initiative)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup>Personnel costs must be reasonable, specified and proportionate to the scope of the initiative's activities.

Exceptionally, with reference to expenditures incurred by initiative partners whose primary location is in one of the donor states or project partners that are international organizations or bodies or agencies thereof, the proof of expenditure may take a form of a report by an independent auditor, qualified to carry out statutory audits of accounting documents, certifying that the reported costs are incurred in accordance with the guidelines, bilateral cooperation initiative contract, the relevant law and national accounting practices.

Detailed list of eligible expenditures and conditions for their eligibility, as well as non-eligible costs are specified in the **Guidelines for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives**.

#### Payments to the initiatives

The submission of narrative and financial reports is a mandatory condition for the execution of the payments. Reports have to be approved by the Fund Operator before payments are made. Payments of the project grant shall take the form of advance payments and a final payment.

For further information regarding Financial provisions, please consult the **Guidelines for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives**.

## 4. APPLICATION, EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

#### Indicative timeline

<b>Announcement of the call</b>	20th Dec 2019
<b>Deadline for submission of initiative application</b>	Ongoing, but no later than 1st June 2023, 23:59 Lithuanian time or until the total amount of Bilateral Cooperation Fund is used up whichever moment comes first.
<b>Final selection results announced</b>	Ongoing, no later than three weeks after submission of the application.

#### Submission of the initiative application

- An electronically signed or a scan of originally signed completed initiative application form (pdf), followed by the word version of the application form;
- An electronically signed or a scan of originally signed and stamped (where applicable) Applicant declaration;
- An electronically signed or a scan of originally signed Letter of Intent from the partner organization either in Lithuania or in the Donor States, clearly outlining the objective(s) of the partnership.

Application shall be submitted only in electronic form to the following e-mail address [projektai@apf.lt](mailto:projektai@apf.lt). In case of questions regarding the call, the ACF Program, etc., organizations may contact Fund Operator at [info@apf.lt](mailto:info@apf.lt) or check the F.A.Q. section at <https://apf.lt>.

Applications for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives are accepted on continuous basis **until June 01, 2023, 23:59 Lithuanian time**, or until the total amount of BC Fund is used up whichever moment comes first.

### Initiative 's administrative and eligibility check

After the Bilateral Cooperation Initiative application is received, the Fund Operator will carry out an initial administrative check of its eligibility based on the information submitted in the application form and Applicant declaration.

Administrative and eligibility criteria	Yes/No
<b>The following criteria are elimination criteria, meaning an automatic elimination of the application from further evaluation if it does not comply with at least one of these criteria</b>	
Application is submitted as instructed (submitted at the designated email, submitted electronically signed or originally signed stamped (where applicable) and scanned copy).	
Application is submitted until 1 <sup>st</sup> June, 2023	
Prior to the submission of the application, the applicant is registered in the Register of Legal Entities as an NGO (if the applicant is from Lithuania)	
A letter of intent is signed by representative of the partner organization.	
The 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	
Initiative duration is between 1 and 6 months.	
Grant amount corresponds to determined limit of € 6,000 for the initiative.	
The Applicant has no other initiatives being implemented or not finalised.	
Applicant complies with the Applicant eligibility criteria as specified in the Guidelines for Bilateral Cooperation initiatives	
Partner(s) is a legal entity.	
An initiative should be implemented in the form of a partnership between at least one NGO in Lithuania and at least one entity in the Donor states (where one is the Applicant and the other party involved is considered Partner of the Bilateral Initiative).	
<b>If needed, the Applicant will be asked to provide missing information for the following criteria</b>	
All required annexes are submitted with the application form in the formats indicated by the FO	
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.	

In case the application is lacking certain documents or information that can be supplemented according to the above criteria, applicants shall be asked to provide respective missing parts within three (3) working days. If the application does not meet one of the criteria, it will be rejected as ineligible.

After the administrative and eligibility checks are completed, ineligible applicants will be notified of the rejection of their bilateral initiative application from further evaluation. Applicants of ineligible project proposals will have five (5) working days available for appeal against the eligibility decision. Appeals will be considered by the Appeals Committee. The decision of the Committee is final. Appeals can be submitted at [info@apf.lt](mailto:info@apf.lt).

### Evaluation of the bilateral initiatives

All eligible and administratively compliant initiative applications will be reviewed by two impartial in-house evaluators in accordance with application quality criteria set below:

No.	Criteria	Score
<b>1.</b>	<b>Relevance, implementation of the BC Initiative and benefit to the organization</b>	
1.1	Coherence between the initiative and the Program results and their indicators	10
1.2	The adequacy of the planned activities to achieve the objective and the results of the initiative	15
1.3	Adaptation of knowledge, methods and approaches acquired during the initiative period to further activities of the organization	10
<b>2.</b>	<b>Strengthening bilateral relations between the organizations participating in the BC Initiative</b>	
2.1	Adequacy of initiative partner selection and clarity of shared responsibilities	10
2.2	Consistency of the initiative with the BC objective 'To promote mutually beneficial partnerships' and (or) 'To strengthen quality of cooperation between Lithuanian and donor organizations'	15
<b>3.</b>	<b>Continuity of BC Initiative</b>	
3.1	Contribution of the initiative to the continuation of the bilateral cooperation	10
3.2	Benefits of the results of the initiative in relation to the development of organization and (or) planned or ongoing development of the Project	10
<b>4.</b>	<b>Budget and cost-efficiency</b>	
4.1	The budget is realistic and economically reasonable	8
4.2	Costs are aligned with the activities foreseen	7
<b>5.</b>	<b>Sufficiency and adequacy of communication of BC Initiative results</b>	5
	Total	<b>100</b>

### Notification on selection results

Applicants will be notified on the selection via e-mail indicated in the application form, not later than five (5) working days after the final decision is made by the Fund Operator. The results of the selection shall also be announced at the Program's website <https://apf.lt/>.

## 5. SUPPORT FOR THE APPLICANTS

Applicants will be offered of support services at their disposal:

- **Counselling 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 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 džiunglės“.

**Applicants are invited to contact the Fund Operator by email [info@apf.lt](mailto:info@apf.lt).**