

Contracting authority:
Association for Democratic Prosperity – Zid

Guidelines for grant applicants

Open call for proposals for social companies and NGOs for *testing of innovative approaches and pilot solutions*

Deadline for submission: 27.05.2024 until 16:00 CET



**Funded by
the European Union**

1. BACKGROUND

The Association for Democratic Prosperity – Zid from Montenegro, along with CEDRA Split, Croatia; Deli - Space for Creative Activity, Niš, Serbia; ARNO, Skopje, North Macedonia, Lens, Priština, Kosovo and Green Building Council, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Hercegovina are running a project titled "EICEE – Western Balkan Eco Innovation and Circular Economy Ecosystem". This project, funded by the European Union, focuses on promoting green and digital transition in the region.

It aims to encourage sustainable economic development that aligns with environmental protection and improves the quality of life for present and future generations. Currently, the economic model in the region is unsustainable, causing resource depletion, environmental pollution, and climate damage. The EU is advocating for a shift towards a circular economy model, which promotes sustainable products and resource efficiency.

The project primarily involves middle-developed NGOs and social enterprises working in the circular and green economy sector. These organizations play a key role in promoting the project's goals. The beneficiaries include the NGOs, social economy enterprises, and community representatives interested in green technology and innovation.

The project consists of four main components: analysis and policy improvement, advocacy and policy dialogue, ecosystem development, and network extension.

This open call for proposals specifically focuses on testing innovative approaches and pilot solutions through social companies and NGOs. It aims to expand the network of social actors contributing to the ecosystem's development and increase public interest in the project.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The **overall objective** of this call for proposals is: contribution to the active engagement of the network of social economy actors which endorses the creation of a supportive ecosystem for green and circular economy development.

The **specific objective** of this call for proposals is: to contribute to the network development of middle development NGOs and social enterprises dealing in the sector of the circular and green economy.

3. THE PRIORITIES, THEMES AND ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:

The priorities of this grant application should be a response to the current challenges in Western Balkan area in the field of NGOs and social enterprises dealing in the circular and green economy sector.

Within this framework, project proposals should be thematically focused on the following areas:

- Sustainability and Continuity: Give preference to projects that demonstrate a plan for sustainability beyond the grant period, such as pilot income-generating activities or business sustainability strategies.
- Impact and Innovation: Prioritize initiatives that demonstrate innovative approaches, potential for scalability, and significant impact on the target communities or sectors, particularly in areas such as eco-innovation, green production, and 3R (reduce, reuse, repair) and upcycling practices
- Stimulating innovative cultural expressions.

Activities that can be supported by this call within the abovementioned priorities, themes and areas related to the prototype testing, education/advocacy/promotion are following:

- Citizen-centric approaches to delivering public services, development of community-based integrated services;¹
- Pilot income generating activities aimed at ensuring continuity of the action beyond the end of the contract;
- Testing of innovative approaches and pilots in the area of the circular and green economy sector;
- Development of green, social and sustainable entrepreneurship and setting up of start-ups - with the exclusion of capital investments;
- Testing and implementation of business plans and business sustainability strategies;
- Production and publication of User manuals.
- Advocacy for the revision of existing legislation and adoption of new legislation in accordance with EU standards and requirements;
- Education, public awareness and communication campaigns on the topic that affirms eco innovation, green and 3R production and upcycling;
- Production of news of the circular and green economy sector;
- Facilitation of contacts, consultations and discussions between different stakeholders;
- Networking and coalition building, and experience/knowledge sharing activities;
-
-

¹ Community-based integrated services aim to promote social inclusion, improve access to resources and support, and enhance the overall quality of life within the community. This approach often involves partnerships between government agencies, non-profit organizations, community groups, and other stakeholders to maximize impact and sustainability.

- Enabling NGOs' participation in the reform² and policy making process;
- Project promotion activities;
- Organization of conferences, roundtables, workshops and seminars (a limited and well justified number of days and events per proposed action);
- Other specific activities relevant to the call objectives.

Integrated and holistic approaches combining different types of activities are encouraged.

Activities that cannot be supported by this call:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- actions concerned only or mainly with “one-off” conferences, and similar events;
- actions concerned only or mainly with academic research and/or feasibility studies;
- actions concerned only or mainly with infrastructure investments and/or the procurement of equipment;
- actions linked to political parties or of political/partisan or religious nature;
- actions that fall within the general activities of competent state institutions or state administration services, including local government;
- actions in relation to: the tobacco industry (CAEN code 16), production of alcoholic distilled beverages (CAEN code 1591), arms and munitions (CAEN code 296);
- Capital investments.

² Reform includes measures to enhance transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the policymaking process, as well as providing NGOs with opportunities for advocacy, consultation, and collaboration with government and other stakeholders.

4. FINANCIAL ASPECT OF THE GRANT

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is 210.000,00 EUR. The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

The minimum amount of the grant will be **17,500.00 EUR**, and the maximum amount will be **30,000.00 EUR**

The maximum amount of funds provided for staff salaries, office expenses and possible costs of purchasing equipment must not exceed 70% of the total costs of the entire project, whereas the maximum amount for staff salaries is 40%. Financial reports of the subgrants will be subject of an external audit. In the case of submission of partnership projects, only one organization - the project lead applicant - will be directly responsible for managing the financial resources of all partner organizations in the project. This call encourages cooperation with local institutions, but also with other NGOs so that even those organizations that are less developed could get a possibility to be supported through this call.

Total costs imply total value of the project and cannot be co-financed.

Applicants may not propose financial support to third parties.

5. RULES OF THE CALL

5.1. WHO CAN APPLY?

In order to be eligible for participation in this call, the applicant must meet all criteria as follows:

- be a legal person **and**
- be non-profit-organization,
- be a social enterprise³, depending on the legislation of the country in which they are registered, prove their status and non-profit activity
- be established in⁴ Bosna and Hercegovina or Serbia or North Macedonia or Kosovo or Montenegro at least 12 months before the deadline for submission of project proposal with an annual turnover of at least 20,000.00 euros, with a statute and implemented projects proving the field of work.

5.2. PARTNERSHIP/PARTNERS

Partnerships are not mandatory, but they are allowed and advisable. Partners participate in creating project proposals and its implementation. They use financial resources under the same conditions that apply to the project applicant. Therefore, partners must meet the following criteria:

- be a legal person **and**
- be non-profit-organization
- be a social enterprise, depending on the legislation of the country in which they are registered, prove their status and non-profit activity with a decision on registration or a statute as a founding document
- be established in same country as applicant at least 12 months before the deadline for submission of project proposal.

Information about the project partners should be included in the document 'Partners', which is part of the Application Form. The maximum number of partnerships is one.

5.3. ASSOCIATES

Other organizations, besides the project applicant and the partner, can also be involved in the project implementation. They have the status of "associates". Associates play a role in the project

³ A social enterprise is an operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders. It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. It is managed in an open and responsible manner and, in particular, involves employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its commercial activities.

⁴ To be determined on the basis of the organisation's statutes, which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned and that its head office is located in an eligible country. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation, even if the statutes are registered locally or a 'Memorandum of Understanding' has been concluded.

implementation, but they may not receive funding from the grant, except for per diem and travel costs, when applicable. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria that apply to project applicants and partners, i.e. associates can be public institutions, local governments, representatives of the business community, etc. Information about the associates should be included in the document 'Associates', which is part of the Application Form.

5.4. CONTRACTORS

The beneficiaries and their affiliated entities are permitted to award contracts. Associates or affiliated entity(ies) cannot be also contractors in the project. Contractors are subject to the procurement rules set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

5.5. LOCATION OF THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Actions must take place in Bosna and Hercegovina or Serbia or North Macedonia or Kosovo or Montenegro.

5.6. NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS PER PROJECT APPLICANT

Each applicant can participate in this call only once, i.e., either as a project applicant or as a partner.

5.7. DURATION OF THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Funds will be allocated for projects implemented within a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 months.

5.8. HOW TO APPLY?

Project proposals should be written in **English** language.

Applicants are required to submit a filled application package, which consists of:

1. Application form
2. Budget proposal

Supporting documentation

In addition to the application package, project applicants should submit the following supporting documentation (in additional file):

1. Registration of the applicant in the local language and translated into English (scan);
2. Statute of the applicant or Founding act (scan)
3. The document that proves the organization is a social enterprise
4. Financial report for 2023.
5. Financial Identification Form ⁵
6. Legal Entity Form ⁶
7. Partnership statement if applicable.

⁵Form can be found on https://commission.europa.eu/publications/financial-identification_en

⁶Forms can be found on https://commission.europa.eu/publications/legal-entities_en

Additional information for supporting document no. 3:

Applicable documents of the applicant that will be accepted as the social enterprise proof:

1. A copy of the organization's legal documents or registration that highlights its social enterprise status, if applicable OR
2. Signed statement of the responsible person about the organization's mission, business model, and impact metrics that demonstrate its commitment to social and environmental objectives (in free form), OR
3. Certifications or accreditations of memberships in recognized social enterprise network or association.

Accurate and complete supporting documentation is a prerequisite for successful pass of the administrative check of the received documentation that are in line with the eligibility criteria.

In the case of a partnership project, it is necessary to submit the same supporting documentation for both; the partners and the lead project applicant. For all partners, it is necessary to submit a "Partnership Statement" (which is part VI of the Application Form), stamped and signed by an authorized person of the organization with the status of a partner in the project.

Applications must be submitted in electronic version in pdf form, at the email address below:

Email address: eicee@cedrasplit.hr with **Subject:** EICEE project proposal

Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax, by post/courier express, etc) or delivered to land addresses will be rejected.

Applications must not be compressed (zip, winrar or similar tools) and must not be larger than 20 MB.

Please note that incomplete applications may be rejected. Applicants are advised to verify that their application is complete using the checklist

5.9. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

The deadline for submitting applications (electronic and two print copies) is

27.05.2024 until 16:00 CET.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered. All applicants will receive a confirmation on the receipt of the email with a project proposal.

5.10. FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

If needed, further information can be obtained by sending questions to eicee@cedrasplit.hr, no later than **17.05. 2024**, with email subject reference: "Open Call for proposals for social companies and NGOs for testing of innovative approaches and pilot solutions- question"

Answers to individual questions will be sent exclusively by e-mail.

Note: To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give an opinion on the objectives, expected results and activities of the proposed projects, as well as on other elements of the application.

Questions that may be relevant to other project applicants, together with answers and important notes for project applicants, will be published on the www.zid.org.me, www.deli.rs, www.arno.org.mk, www.ngolens.org and www.green-council.org.

6. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the contracting authority with the possible assistance of external assessors. All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

The first phase will include an administrative check of the received documentation and the eligibility criteria. Projects that pass administration phase will go to the second phase. The second phase involves the evaluation of the applications by the Evaluation Committee, according to the Evaluation Grid presented in the Guidelines for grant applicants.

Accurate and complete supporting documentation is a prerequisite for successful pass of the administrative check of the received documentation that are in line with the eligibility criteria

The proposals that pass this administrative check will be evaluated according to the Evaluation Grid presented below.

Evaluation grid

Criteria / Description	Value
1. Relevant experience and capacity of applicant	Max 10
1.1. References in previously implemented projects within one or more thematic areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - green and circular economy, - social and sustainable enterprise development, - education, public awareness and campaigning on the topics: circular economy, green and circular economy, social and sustainable enterprise development - networking and coalition building processes - testing and piloting innovative approaches 	<i>Max 5</i>
1.2. Admin and financial capacity is sufficient to successfully implement proposed activities and reach outputs and results	<i>Max 5</i>
2. Relevance of action and expected results	Max 40
2.1. How relevant is the proposal to the priorities and objectives defined by the call?	Max 10

2.2. Expected outputs and results are contributing to specific goal of this call supporting creation of ecosystem for green and circular economy	Max 20
2.3. How clearly are the target groups and final beneficiaries defined? To what extent is the project in line with the needs of the target groups?	Max 10
3. Outreach and Visibility	Max 10
3.1. Proposed activities are involving key stakeholders from all sectors contributing to - number and relevance of stakeholders - quality of involvement and contribution to project results	Max 5
3.2. Visibility of project activities and results - use of different/targeted communication channels - number of target groups reached	Max 5
4. Innovative approach	Max 20
Activities and methods proposed are innovative and are contributing to new solutions - developing supportive services that will lead to creation of ecosystem for green and circular economy - strengthening NGOs role in digital transition and socioeconomic development	
5. Sustainability	Max 10
- Project is designed to support socioeconomic development and leading to sustained growth - Project activities and results are sustainable after project ends	
6. Budget	Max 10
6.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	
6.2 Is the ratio between estimated costs and estimated results satisfactory?	
TOTAL:	100

Once all the proposals have been assessed, a list will be drawn up with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached.

The list of supported projects will be published on the website, on the websites of partner organizations and emails will be sent out to all applicants.

7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR SELECTED GRANTEES

As part of our grant scheme, it will be obligatory for selected grantees to participate in two different types of training to enhance their capabilities and project outcomes.

1. Co-Creative Methodology Camp – the cost will be covered by the Contracting authority

This training program takes the form of an immersive camp aimed at mastering the principles of the co-creative methodology. Participants will delve into the intricacies of their project development, gaining insights into critical and creative thinking. Additionally, they will gain a deeper understanding of contemporary social entrepreneurship and the significance of forging partnerships.

2. In-House Capacity Development – hybrid program (online and on the spot)

Selected participants will undergo intensive in-house training focusing on various aspects such as project cycle management, public awareness and advocacy, green budgeting, and the creation of products with neutral environmental impacts. Furthermore, emphasis will be placed on eco-innovation index implementation.

8. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

	DATE	TIME and PLACE
1. Grant schema online announcement	28.03.2024.	Online
2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority	17.05.2024.	16:00
3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority	20.05.2024.	-
4. Deadline for submission of applications	27.05.2024.	16:00
5. Information to applicants on opening, administrative checks (Step 1)	30.06.2024.	-
6. Information to applicants on the evaluation of the full applications (Step 2)	16.09.2024.	-
7. Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)	20.09.2024.	-
8. Contract signature	1.10.2024.	-

Note: This is a **provisional timetable of activities**, **except for** the dates indicated in **items 2, 3 and 4**. The Contracting authority reserves the right to modify the timetable, and the modified timetable will be published on the official websites.