



# Active Citizens Fund – National

**Call for proposals  
for sectoral monitoring and advocacy  
projects**

18 January 2021

The Stefan Batory Foundation, in a consortium with the Stocznia Foundation and the Academy of Civic Organizations Foundation, invites to submit calls for proposals for sectoral monitoring and advocacy projects within the framework of the Active Citizens Fund – National programme, financed by the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014-2021. The following activities are eligible for financial support:

- monitoring the development and application of laws and public policies which affect the functioning of social organizations and civic movements,
- and
- advocacy of rights and interests aimed at improving conditions for the activities of social organizations and civic movements.

Sectoral monitoring and advocacy projects must contribute to the achievement of the Outcome 4 of the Program "Enhanced capacity and sustainability of civil society organisations and the sector". The planned results of the Program are listed on the website <https://aktywniobywatele.org.pl/rezultaty/>.

The funds allocated to grants in the call for sectoral monitoring and advocacy projects amount to EUR 700,000.00. They may be increased by funds not used in the first call for sectoral projects held from 6 May 2020 till 5 January 2021.

Grants can be applied for under the following conditions:

- minimum grant amount: EUR 25 000,
- maximum grant amount: EUR 125 000,
- implementation period: from 12 to 30 months,
- optional co-financing.

Applications must be submitted via the Online Application System available at the following address: <https://wnioski.aktywniobywatele.org.pl>.

### **Deadlines for submitting the applications**

Grant applications can be submitted from 18 January 2021, 12:00 noon, until 15 March 2021, 12:00 noon.

## **ABOUT THE ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND – NATIONAL PROGRAM**

The Active Citizens Fund - National programme is one of 11 programs run in Poland thanks to the funds of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism (so-called Norway Grants and EEA Grants) 2014-2021, and one of the two programs designated to support activities of social organizations<sup>1</sup>. The aim of the Fund is to strengthen the civic society and active citizenship, as well as to empower vulnerable groups.

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<sup>1</sup> The second one, namely the Active Citizens Fund - Regional Program, is run by a consortium made up of the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (FSLD), the Information Society Development Foundation (ISDF), and the Education for Democracy Foundation (EDF). More information can be found on the website at the following address: [www.aktywniobywatele-regionalny.org.pl](http://www.aktywniobywatele-regionalny.org.pl).

Support in all calls for proposals will be made for activities conducted by Polish social organizations independently or in partnership with other entities from Poland, Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway), Beneficiary States that use EEA Grants (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia), from Hungary, as well as from countries neighboring Poland which are not members of the European Economic Area (Belarus, Ukraine, Russia). In the case of projects run in partnership with entities from the Donor States, it is possible to apply for an additional amount of grant to cover costs of the partnership.

The Active Citizens Fund - National programme supports activities undertaken by organizations from all over Poland. However, it pays particular attention to supporting activities carried out by less experienced organizations located outside of large agglomerations and in the areas with limited access to aid programs and infrastructure support, as well as by organizations addressing their activities towards vulnerable and underserved groups. In all program activities, young people are an important target group.

The Program is guided by universal values enshrined in the European Treaty: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, as well as respect for human rights, including rights of persons belonging to minorities.

## **TYPES OF ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED IN THE CALL FOR MONITORING AND ADVOCACY SECTORAL PROJECTS**

Grants will be awarded for sectoral monitoring and advocacy projects which support development of the social organizations and civic movements at the national level, in particular regions or subsectors. The benefits and results of the implemented projects should be available to the broadest possible community of the civic sector.

Monitoring and advocacy projects aimed at improving the situation of recipients of the Applicant's activities other than civic organizations or movements (for instance elderly persons, teachers, youth, people at risk of exclusion) are not eligible for support.

### **Types of supported activities:**

- a) **Monitoring of the development and practice of applying laws and public policies** established at the central, regional and local, as well as the European levels, which may affect the functioning of social organizations and civic movements (regarding, for instance, taxation, personal data protection, the right to assembly, accounting, philanthropy etc.). The monitoring may also cover policies, legislative processes and the practice of applying laws in relation to specific sectors or areas of the organizations' activities. Activities should not be limited to the gathering of information, data or to the expert knowledge. They must also include sharing the results of monitoring with decision-makers, opinion leaders, other interested institutions or social groups, as well indicate activities aimed at implementation of the developed conclusions and recommendations.
- b) **Advocacy for rights and interests conducted** at the central, regional, local and European levels in the form of campaigns, actions (including interventions in response to unpredictable, adverse events), or continuous activity that improves legal, political, economic and social conditions for the functioning of social organizations and civic movements (the entire sector or its industries). The activities may include, inter alia, development and consultations on the proposed position

statements, exposing problems which have to be solved, presenting proposals for necessary amendments to the law or changes in the policies, legislative activities at various levels.

It is possible to combine monitoring and advocacy activities within the framework of a single project. Projects must focus on the implementation of direct monitoring and/or advocacy activities, not on building the capacity of social organizations in this area or on other forms of preparing civil organizations and movements to carry out monitoring and advocacy activities. Such projects could be supported within the framework of the first sectoral call (type I activities: *Provision of services and organizing other activities that support capacity building of social organizations and civic movements*).

## CAPACITY BUILDING

Each Applicant requesting a grant for a sectoral monitoring or advocacy project may apply for an additional grant amount intended to support capacity building, i.e. strengthening and development of an organisation, building stable foundations for further operation, forward-looking plans for activity and financing, and raising working standards and organisation management standards. These activities should contribute to increasing the number of organizations with the enhanced organizational capacity in at least one of the following areas: management standards and procedures, communication, fundraising, transparency and accountability, monitoring and evaluation.

Activities concerning capacity building should be planned on the basis of needs diagnosis and focus on selected solutions and specific problems that are a major obstacle limiting an organisation's capacity for development. They can also provide support for the process of launching new activities/services, and expanding them to cover new recipients /clients /participants or a new geographical area. Justifying the choice of activities aimed to help in organisation's capacity building, an Applicant should demonstrate how they will help to increase the organisation's capacity for successful and effective implementation of its mission. Capacity building activities can be employed individually by an Applicant or with a help from external specialists.

A catalog of exemplary institution-building activities can be found in chapter 8 of the Applicant and Project Promoter Manual.

## APPLICANTS

Grants are available for the following entities registered in Poland: associations (including so called ordinary associations), foundations, associations of associations, social cooperatives, non-profit companies, rural housewives' clubs, as well as church legal persons, which meet the following conditions:

- they have been registered for at least 12 months at the time of submitting the application,
- they have prepared financial statements for 2019 or, if they are not required to prepare financial statements in accordance with the Act on accounting, a summary statement of revenues and expenditures for 2019, and in the case of entities that will receive grants - also a financial report or statement of revenues and expenditures for 2020,
- they are independent of local, regional, and central authorities, as well as public entities, political parties and commercial entities,

- they do not operate for profit,
- they work for the public good, not only for their members,
- they act in public interest and are guided by universal values enshrined in the European Treaty: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and protection of human rights, including rights of persons belonging to minorities.
- no bankruptcy petition has been filed against them, they are not in liquidation, they are not subject to receivership, they have not suspended their activity nor are they subject to proceedings of a similar nature,
- they are not in arrears with the payment of public-law liabilities towards the tax office or the Social Insurance Institution,
- no member of the organization's governing body has been convicted of an intentional offense under public prosecution or of a tax offense.

The activities described in the application must comply with the statute, by-laws or other document defining the mission, goals and methods of operation of the Applicant. They may not include religious practices and worshipping (including the preaching and faith spreading), political parties' activity or election campaigns. Furthermore, the grant may not be used for running a business or paid public benefit activities.

For more information on entities eligible to apply for a grant and the conditions they must meet, see sub-chapters 4.1 and 4.2 of the *Applicant and Project Promoter Manual*.

## PARTNERS

Projects may be run independently by the Applicant or in cooperation with Partners. Partners should be guided by the values of the program and share the goals of the project being implemented, actively participate in the preparation and implementation of the project, contribute their knowledge and experience; their participation should help in more effective achievement of the intended results.

Partners can be:

- non-government organizations, public and private as well as commercial and non-commercial entities from Poland and other Beneficiary States (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia), from Hungary, from Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway), or from countries neighboring Poland which are not members of the European Economic Area (Belarus, Russia, Ukraine),
- international organizations, their bodies or agencies,
- informal groups from Poland acting for the public good, which are voluntary and non-discriminatory, independent of local, regional and national as well as other public authorities, independent of political parties, religious institutions and commercial entities.

More information on entities which may act as Partners and requirements to be met by partnerships can be found in sub-chapters 4.3 and 4.4 of the *Applicant and Project Promoter Manual*.

## GRANT RATE AND CO-FINANCING

Under the Active Citizens Fund - National programme, which this call relates to, it is possible to apply for grants for implementation of sectoral monitoring and advocacy projects, as well as for additional support for capacity building and cooperation with entities from the Donor States.

### Grant amount

Under the call, grants are available of between EUR 25 000 and EUR 125 000 to finance the project implementation expenses, plus:

- in the case of projects implemented in partnership with an entity or entities from the Donor States, additionally up to EUR 12 500 for costs related to the partnership cooperation,
- additionally up to EUR 12 500 for capacity building costs, however no more than 20% of the total costs of the sectoral project (calculated along with the costs of partnership with entities from the Donor State, if applicable). Total costs of the sectoral project are costs covered by the grant and co-financing.

**Co-financing is not mandatory.** Payment of the own contribution is required solely when the planned total costs of the project exceed the amount of the grant applied for. The co-financing may be financial or non-financial (in the form of work of volunteers).

Grants will be paid in tranches, whose amounts will be determined based on the assessment of the Applicant's financial situation and organizational potential. The last tranche in the amount of at least 10% of the project costs will be paid after the Operator accepts the final report on the project implementation.

Grants within the framework of the Active Citizens Fund - National programme will be awarded and accounted for in euros.

The grant may cover:

- direct costs related to the project implementation and capacity building,
- indirect costs in the amount of up to 15% of the salary costs of the staff assigned to the project implementation and institution building activities.

The rules governing cost eligibility, including categories of eligible and non-eligible costs, as well as the method of calculating indirect costs, are described in chapter 13 of the *Applicants and Project Promoter Handbook*.

## IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD OF MONITORING AND ADVOCACY PROJECTS

The implementation of projects may take from 12 to 30 months. The earliest project start date is 1 July 2021; the latest project completion date falls to 29 February 2024.

## LIMIT OF THE NUMBER OF SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS

Each entity eligible to submit applications for grants or to act as a partner in the projects of other applicants under the Active Citizens Fund - National programme may, within the frameworks of all calls (thematic and sectoral ones):

- apply once as an applicant for a sectoral project and once as a partner in a thematic or sectoral project,

or

- apply once as an applicant for a thematic project and once as a partner in a thematic or sectoral project,

or

- apply once as an applicant for a thematic project and once as an applicant for a sectoral project,

or

- act twice as a partner in any project (thematic or sectoral); this restriction does not apply to entities from the Donor States.

The above limits apply to cases of successful application for grants, understood as obtained funding. If a given entity acted as an applicant or a partner in a project which did not receive funding, it has the right to submit an application or to act as a partner in accordance with the rules presented above.

More information about the limits on the number of applications that may be submitted and the number of grants that may be obtained under the Program can be found in sub-chapter 4.5 of the *Applicant and Project Promoter Manual*.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The procedure for the evaluation and selection of the applications is a one-step process; applicants submit a single application that is subject to the evaluation.

Grant applications may **only** be submitted **via the Online Application System** available at the following address: <https://wnioski.aktywniobywatele.org.pl>.

**Important!** Applications sent by traditional post or e-mail will not be considered.

Grant application form along with instructions on how to fill it are available on the Program website at <https://aktywniobywatele.org.pl/konkurs-na-projekty-sektorowe/>.

## DEADLINES FOR SUBMITTING THE APPLICATIONS

- Grant applications may be submitted starting from 18 January 2021, 12:00 noon, until 15 March 2021, 12:00 noon.
- The decision on the grant award will be taken by 25 May 2021.

## PROCEDURE FOR THE EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

The evaluation of the grant applications comprises a formal (administrative and eligibility) assessment made by the Operator and a content-related assessment made by independent experts.

In order for the application to be submitted for the content-related assessment, it has to pass the formal one.

### Formal assessment of applications

At the stage of the formal (administrative and eligibility) assessment it is verified whether:

- the Applicant is eligible to apply for a grant under the Active Citizens Fund - National programme,
- the Applicant has correctly filled in all fields of the application form,
- the Applicant has not submitted more applications or is not a partner in more projects than allowed in the Program,
- the Project Partner/Partners have not declared participation in more projects than allowed in the Program,
- the Applicant has submitted declarations of each Partner specifying their roles and tasks in the implementation of the project (if the project is implemented in partnership),
- the Applicant has submitted the Communication Plan,
- the grant for the project implementation does not exceed the established limit,
- the amount of the grant intended to cover indirect costs does not exceed 15% of direct eligible personnel costs of the staff assigned to the project,
- the requested amount of the grant allocated to capacity building does not exceed 20% of total project costs, including costs covered by co-financing,
- the grant for capacity building is not used to cover project activities costs,
- distribution of the grant between the Applicants and the Partner/Partners (if applicable) does not mean that any of the Partners will receive a higher amount of the grant funds than the Applicant.

An Applicant's eligibility will be verified on the basis of the declarations made in the application.

The template sheet of the formal assessment of the grant application is available on the Program website at <https://aktywniobywatele.org.pl/konkurs-na-projekty-sektorowe/>.

If a minor error of an unintended technical nature occurs during completion of the form, the applicants may correct it within 3 working days from the date the Operator has sent a notification about the error by e-mail. Failure to correct the error by this deadline results in the rejection of the application for formal reasons.

### Procedure for complaints regarding administrative and eligibility assessment



Applicants whose applications have been rejected for formal reasons may appeal against the decision within 5 working days from the date the Operator sends by e-mails information about rejection of the application (by sending an e-mail to the following address [skargi@aktywniobywatele.org.pl](mailto:skargi@aktywniobywatele.org.pl)). Complaints received after this deadline will not be considered. The complaints will be considered by the Operator within 10 working days from the date of their receipt.

The decision on approval or rejection of the complaint regarding the formal assessment is made by the Program Director.

The list of all applications (both those submitted for content-related assessment and those rejected for formal reasons) will be available on the Program website at the following address: [www.aktywniobywatele.org.pl](http://www.aktywniobywatele.org.pl).

### **Content-related assessment of applications**

The content-related assessment process includes:

- assessment of each application by independent experts and discussions at the meeting of experts assessing the applications,
- discussion in the Selection Committee on the ranking list prepared on the basis of the assessments made by independent experts, and preparation of the list of recommended grants for the Program Committee,
- discussion on the recommendations of the Selection Committee and approval of the list of grants by the Program Committee.

The experts evaluate applications, give reasons for the scores they give, and record their scores and reasons in the Online Application System. An Applicant will be able to review the scores and reasons for the score given to their application once the rankings have been published.

All applications will be assessed by two independent experts. In the process of compiling the ranking list, the average score given by the experts will be taken into account. If the difference between the scores given by two experts exceeds 30% of the higher score (without points awarded for the capacity building activities), the application is subject to a third assessment made by a person designated from the Operator's team. In such a case, the final score equals the average of the two closest assessments. If the differences between extreme scores and the middle score are equal, the average of the two higher scores is taken as the final score.

At the stage of evaluation of the complete applications, **the Selection Committee** reviews the ranking list prepared on the basis of expert assessments and decides on the applications recommended and not recommended for the awarding of the grants.

**The Program Committee** verifies the process of application evaluation and selection in terms of compliance with the applicable Program rules, goals and procedures. The Committee takes the final decision on awarding the grant. The Committee takes its decision on the basis of the list of applications recommended by the Selection Committee for awarding grants.

The template sheet of the content-related assessment of the grant application is available on the Program website under the tab Applicants/competition for sectoral projects.

### **Notes:**

- Grants may be awarded solely to those projects whose average expert assessment is not lower than 50% of the total score attainable.
- The truthfulness of the Applicant's declarations will be assessed after the grant is awarded, on the basis of the required documents. The list of documents required prior to the signing of the grant agreement is available in sub-chapter 11.1 of the *Applicant and Project Promoter Manual*.

Applicants will be notified about the results of the call by e-mail. Additionally, the ranking list and the list of applications that have been awarded grants and those whom grants have not been awarded to will be published on the Program website at the following address: [www.aktywniobywatele.org.pl](http://www.aktywniobywatele.org.pl).

In the event of a violation of the application assessment procedure, the Applicant has the right to file a complaint with the Operator or the Financial Mechanism Office in Brussels. The procedure for filing complaints and reporting irregularities during the Program and implementation of the projects financed under the Program is available on the website at the following address: [aktywniobywatele.org.pl/o-funduszu/procedura-skargowa](http://aktywniobywatele.org.pl/o-funduszu/procedura-skargowa).

## SUPPORT FOR APPLICANTS

The Operator provides additional support for Applicants:

- introductory webinar about the competition,
- a training (online or offline) on advocacy and monitoring activities,
- a training (online or offline) "How to fill in the grant application?",
- individual distance consultations on the compliance of the planned projects with the Program goals and the call assumptions, held within a fixed period of 2 weeks prior to the date of submission of the applications,
- educational materials available on the Program website and in a special zone of the Kursodrom e-learning platform ([www.kursodrom.pl](http://www.kursodrom.pl)).

Support by telephone and e-mail provided by the Programme team will also be available for Applicants. This support will concern procedural and technical issues relating to submitting applications. In addition, there will be a regularly updated 'frequently asked questions' page on the Programme website at <https://aktywniobywatele.org.pl/dla-wnioskodawcow/faq>.

The *Active Citizens Fund – National Applicant and Project Promoter Manual. Call for Sectoral Projects* and other documents that will be useful when submitting applications: the Online Application System user manual, application forms, and document instructions and templates, can be found at [www.aktywniobywatele.org.pl](http://www.aktywniobywatele.org.pl).

## CONTACT

Should you have any questions or doubts related to the applying for a grant, please contact the Program Operator's team.

If the question or doubt concerns:

- sectoral monitoring and advocacy projects - please contact the Academy of Civic Organizations Foundation team by e-mail ([aktywniobywatele@faoo.pl](mailto:aktywniobywatele@faoo.pl)) or by phone (507 200 210),
- partnerships with entities from the Donor States - please contact the Stefan Batory Foundation team by e-mail ([aktywniobywatele@batory.org.pl](mailto:aktywniobywatele@batory.org.pl)) or by phone (22 536 02 41 or 791 413 200).