



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

LOCAL INITIATIVES ON OPEN GOVERNMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS AT LOCAL LEVEL IN UKRAINE

Reference: Local Initiatives 2025_Congress_Ukraine

Project	Strengthening multilevel governance and local democracy to support Ukraine's recovery
Awarding entity	COUNCIL OF EUROPE Congress of Local and Regional Authorities Council of Europe Office in Ukraine
Funding	Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine “Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction” 2023-2026
Duration	Initiatives shall be implemented by 31 July 2026. Reporting requirements shall be completed by 31 August 2026.
Estimated starting date	01 November 2025
Issuance date	30 September 2025
Deadline for applications	20 October 2025

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HOW TO APPLY?

- Complete and sign the **Application Form** (See **Appendix I**)

The name of the file shall be: Local Authority_Application Form_Local Initiatives 2025

- Attach a provisional budget (using the template in **Appendix II**)

The name of the file shall be: Local Authority_Budget_Local Initiatives 2025

- Attach other supporting documents:

The name of the file (in a single document or a .zip file) shall be: Local Authority_OSD_Local Initiatives 2025

- Provide a Curriculum vitae in Europass format, for a person designated to ensure the project co-ordination / management; elaborate on the key local public officials who will be directly engaged in the project implementation and the expert(s) to be involved in the project implementation (where already identified) and reporting of the grant activities.

- Send these documents in electronic form (Word and/or PDF) to the following e-mail address: congress.ukraine@coe.int. Emails should contain the following reference in subject:

Local Initiatives 2025_Congress_Ukraine (*Name of applicant*).

*All documents shall be submitted in English **with signature and stamp**, failure to do so will result in the exclusion of the tender. A Ukrainian version may be attached for information. The English version will serve as the basis for evaluation.*

- Applications must be received **before 20 October 2025 (at 17:00 CET)**.

I. INTRODUCTION

This call for proposals is launched in the framework of the Council of Europe Project “Strengthening multilevel governance and local democracy to support Ukraine’s recovery” (2025–2026). The project is implemented as part of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine “Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction” for 2023–2026 by the Centre of Expertise for Multilevel Governance at the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

This call for proposals aims to support local initiatives developed by Ukrainian local authorities to advance democratic innovation through open government approaches and the protection of human rights at the local level.

Selected grantees will benefit from expert and financial support focused on enhancing local governance processes, tools and mechanisms necessary to achieve the objectives of their proposed initiatives. This support will be provided in a hybrid format, including on-site visits (where and if feasible), consultancy meetings, and online communication.

Local authorities are strongly encouraged to co-design and implement their initiatives in partnership with civil society organisations (CSOs). Partnering with CSOs may strengthen outreach, ensure inclusive participation of underrepresented groups, and improve the sustainability of results. In such cases, local authorities will serve as the lead applicants, while CSOs will act as implementing partners within the proposed initiative.

In 2024, with the direct support of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, 10 Ukrainian municipalities successfully implemented local initiatives to foster democratic innovations and open government, and to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights. These municipalities engaged with citizens – including youth, veterans, internally displaced persons – as well as civil society and the private sector, to reinforce good governance and local democracy. Their efforts not only responded to the immediate rights and needs of local residents, but also established best practices of good democratic governance, paving the way for Ukraine’s recovery and reconstruction. These initiatives were carried out within the framework of the Congress project “Strengthening multilevel governance, democracy and human rights at local level in Ukraine” (2023–2025).

Proposals submitted under this call should add value to the Congress’s ongoing efforts to promote integrity, and inclusive, transparent, accountable, and effective local self-government addressing the needs of all. They should align with the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and its Additional Protocol on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority, as well as with the [12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance](#) and relevant Council of Europe standards and thematic resolutions and recommendations of the Congress.

Furthermore, the proposed initiatives should contribute to the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and support Ukraine’s national commitments therein – with a particular focus on the Sustainable Development Goals 5 (Gender Equality), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROJECT

The project “Strengthening multilevel governance and local democracy to support Ukraine’s recovery” seeks to strengthen Ukraine’s multilevel governance and local democracy during the war and post-war period by improving legal frameworks, enhancing the quality of local and regional governance, and promoting democratic innovations based on human rights and open government principles.

Through enhanced co-operation with civil society, state and local authorities and their associations, as well as international partners, the project contributes to Ukraine’s recovery and EU accession process by promoting participatory democracy and building public trust in democratic institutions.

The project focuses on areas where the Council of Europe has a clearly identifiable and widely recognised added value among other international players, as developer and guardian of the European Charter of Local Self-

Government – the first benchmark international treaty in this area, which is ratified by all member states – and a range of standards on good democratic governance and citizen participation.

III. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The indicative available budget under this call for proposals is UAH 4,350,000 (Four Million Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Ukrainian Hryvnias). The Council of Europe intends to award six (6) grants of a maximum amount of **UAH 725,000 (Seven Hundred and Twenty-Five Thousand Ukrainian Hryvnias)** each.

Subject to availability of funds and extension of the initiatives' initial duration, the Council of Europe reserves the right not to award all available funds, and/or to redistribute the available funds in a different manner depending on the proposals received and on the outcome of the call for proposals.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

1. General objective

The grants will fund initiatives designed to develop and implement open government practices, democratic innovations and inclusive approaches that promote and protect human rights at the local level.

2. Means of action

The objective of this call for proposals is to support local initiatives developed by Ukrainian local authorities in partnership with civil society organisations to introduce and strengthen open government practices, democratic innovations in citizen engagement, and to promote a human rights-based approach at the local level.

The selected initiatives should aim to strengthen transparency, accountability and citizen participation, while also fostering inclusive governance. Initiatives are expected to focus on amplifying the voices of underrepresented groups, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), youth and women, and on mainstreaming equality and human rights aspects in local decision making. The participatory approach of the proposed initiative should be evident at all stages: from design and implementation to monitoring and evaluation.

Each application should demonstrate:

- Feasibility: the initiative should address a concrete local issue where residents have the ability to influence decisions taken by the local authorities;
- Responsiveness: local authorities should describe how residents' input will be considered in decision-making processes;
- Inclusiveness: the process should engage a wide spectrum of local residents, with particular efforts to involve underrepresented groups (e.g. IDPs, youth, women);
- Gender mainstreaming: the initiative should ensure that women are recognised and engaged as stakeholders, not solely as beneficiaries;
- Result orientation: proposed initiatives should aim to deliver tangible and constructive outcomes;
- Sustainability and continuity: proposals should plan for long-lasting results and institutional follow-up beyond the initiative period.

Initiatives may include one or more of the following means of action (non-exhaustive list):

a. Democratic innovations and open government:

- Adoption of measures to introduce democratic innovations and inclusive open government policies and practices, thereby strengthening resilience and institutional trust at local level;

- Design and execution of awareness raising and capacity building activities on open government principles;
- Development or review of internal policies, codes of ethics and/or codes of conduct for elected representatives to ensure transparent and accountable governance.

b. Equality, inclusion and human rights:

- Measures to increase the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g. youth, IDPs, women) in local decision-making processes;
- Awareness raising on human rights and non-discrimination and promotion of local authority services relevant to these themes;
- Establishment of participatory mechanisms or dialogue platforms to ensure the continuous engagement of underrepresented groups in the development local policies and monitoring of their implementation.

3. Implementation period

The implementation period of the initiatives should start on **1 November 2025** (see indicative timetable under Section VIII below) and shall not go beyond **31 July 2026**.

Reporting requirements shall be completed by **31 August 2026** at the latest.

Initiatives completed prior to the date of submission of the applications will be automatically excluded. As regards initiatives started prior to the date of submission of the applications, or prior to the date of signature of the grant agreement, only those costs incurred after the date of submission of the grant application could be eligible (provided the agreement concerned so provides).

4. Target stakeholders

Initiatives should target in particular the following key stakeholders:

- local and regional authorities;
- residents, with particular attention to IDPs, youth, women, and minorities;
- civil society organisations.

The above list is not exhaustive and initiatives may propose to target other relevant stakeholders, while keeping in mind the general objective of the initiative.

5. Budgetary requirements

Initiative proposals shall be accompanied by a draft budget (See **Template Budget, in Appendix II**) amounting to a maximum of UAH 725,000 (Seven Hundred and Twenty-Five Thousand Ukrainian Hryvnias). The estimated budget must be consistent, accurate, clear, complete and cost-effective, in the light of the activities proposed.

Each Grantee shall also be required to contribute to the initiative either by way of its own resources or by contribution from third parties. Co-financing may take the form of financial or human resources, in-kind contributions or income generated by the action or initiative.

6. Further to the general objective, preference will be given to:

- Initiatives/actions proposed by local authorities in partnership with local civil society organisations in partnership with local authorities;
- Initiatives/actions targeting the engagement of underrepresented groups, in particular IDPs, youth, women, persons with disabilities and minorities;

- Initiatives/actions involving broad multistakeholder collaboration, including partnerships with local businesses, educational institutions and other relevant community actors.

7. The following types of action will not be considered:

- Initiatives/actions providing financial support to third parties (re-granting schemes);
- Initiatives/actions concerning only or mainly individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- Initiatives/actions supporting political parties.

8. Funding conditions:

The funds for each grant should in principle be distributed as follows:

- **70%** will be paid to the Grantee within 30 days of receipt of the Grant Agreement duly signed by all Parties;
- **20%** will be paid within 30 days following the Council of Europe's approval of the first narrative progress and financial reports;
- **The balance (10%)** will be paid within 30 days from the Council of Europe's approval of the final narrative and financial reports, together with all other documentation as specified in Article 2.4.3 (f) and (g) of the Grant Agreement.

All payments are subject to the satisfactory fulfilment of reporting requirements and compliance with the terms of the Grant Agreement.

9. Reporting requirements:

- **narrative reporting** requires a full narrative report on the use made of the grant and a copy of the register of the persons present during each of the activities, including names and signatures of participants;
- **financial reporting** requires in particular a statement in the currency in which the Grant Agreement will be concluded (Euros or local currency), in English, stating the payments made for the implementation of the activities, certified by the responsible financial officer of the Grantees, accompanied by "appropriate original supporting documents" (see below). The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask for summary translations of invoices into English. If for legal reasons the original documents must be retained by the Grantees, certified copies must be submitted with the financial statement.

"Appropriate original supporting documents" refers to signed contracts, invoices and acceptances of work (for all transactions). Payment authorisation for all transactions should also be provided in case the Grantees use such practice, and reliable evidence of payment (authorised payment order and bank statement).

As regards round tables / conferences, presenting "appropriate original supporting documents" requires presentation of a programme indicating the title, dates, venue, and agenda of the event; the names of persons facilitating the event, a signed list of participants, the contracts with the owner of the venue of the event (e.g. hotel) for the rent of premises, food and beverages of participants, invoices from the owner of the venue of the event for the above services, and a report on the results of the event (see narrative reporting above).

As regards consultancy services, presenting "appropriate original supporting documents" requires presentation of evidence of the outputs produced, contracts with experts and consultants containing a specific description of services to be carried out, invoices produced after the works have been performed and delivered (the specialities of the consultants shall correspond to the nature of activities for which they are contracted).

As regards travel fees / lodging of experts and participants, presenting "appropriate original supporting documents" requires presentation, where relevant, of contracts with a travel agency for travel fees and lodging, invoices of the travel agency indicating destinations, dates, ticket costs, and names of the travelling persons, a programme of the event indicating the names of the experts and signed lists of participants.

The above description is not comprehensive. Any doubt regarding the interpretation of the notion of “appropriate original supporting documents” should lead the Grantee or the Lead Grantee in case of a consortium to consult the Council of Europe.

V. HOW TO APPLY?

1. Documents to be submitted:

Each application shall contain:

- the completed and signed **Application Form** (See **Appendix I**)
The name of the file shall be: Local Authority_Application Form_Local Initiatives 2025
- a provisional budget (using the template from **Appendix II**)
The name of the file shall be: Local Authority_Budget_Local Initiatives 2025
- the other supporting documents:
 - a proposal containing a detailed profile of the applicant local authority , including relevant experience;
 - a curriculum vitae (in Europass format) for the person designated to coordinate and manage the project.

The name of the merged file shall be: Local Authority_OSD_Local Initiatives 2025

Applications that are incomplete will not be considered. The complete application **package must be submitted in English with signature and stamp**. **Multiple applications are not permitted** and will result in the disqualification of all related submissions.

2. Questions

General information can be found on the website of the Council of Europe: [Strengthening multilevel governance and local democracy to support Ukraine's recovery - Council of Europe Office in Ukraine](#)

Other questions regarding this specific call for proposals must be sent at the latest one week before the deadline for the submission of proposals, in English or Ukrainian, and shall be exclusively sent to the following address: congress.ukraine@coe.int, with the following reference in the subject: **Local Initiatives 2025_Congress_Ukraine (Name of applicant)**.

3. Deadline for submission

The application form, **completed and signed by all Grantees**, together with the supporting documents, must be submitted in electronic form (Word and/or PDF) to the following e-mail address: congress.ukraine@coe.int. Emails should contain the following reference in subject: **Local Initiatives 2025_Congress_Ukraine (Name of applicant)**.

Applications must be received **before 20 October 2025 (at 17:00 CET)**. Applications received after the above-mentioned date will not be considered.

4. Change, alteration and modification of the application file

Any change in the format, or any alteration or modification of the original application file, will cause the immediate rejection of the application concerned.

VI. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

The proposal submitted will be assessed by an Evaluation Committee composed of staff members of the Council of Europe and the Association of Ukrainian Cities.

The Evaluation Committee will take into account and aim to achieve a balanced representation of urban and rural communities, as well as territorial coverage, representing different regions of Ukraine.

The procedure shall be based on the underlying principles of grant award procedures, which are transparency, non-retroactivity, non-cumulative awards, not-for-profit, co-financing and non-discrimination, in accordance with [Rule 1374 of 16 December 2015 on the grant award procedures of the Council of Europe](#).

The applicants, and their initiatives, shall fulfil all of the following criteria:

1. Exclusion criteria:

Applicants shall be excluded from the grant award procedure where they or, in the case of legal persons, their owner(s) or executive officer(s):

- a) have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering, terrorist financing, terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, child labour or trafficking in human beings;
- b) are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any like situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or are subject to a procedure of the same kind;
- c) have received a judgement with res judicata force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or constitutes a serious professional misconduct;
- d) do not comply with their obligations as regards payment of social security contributions, taxes and dues, according to the statutory provisions of the country where they are established;
- e) are an entity created to circumvent tax, social or other legal obligations (empty shell company), have ever created or are in the process of creation of such an entity;
- f) have been involved in mismanagement of the Council of Europe funds or public funds;
- g) are included in the lists of persons or entities subject to restrictive measures applied by the United Nations Security Council or the European Union.

By signing the Application Form, applicants shall declare on their honour that they are not in any of the above-mentioned situations (See **Appendix I**).

The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask applicants at a later stage to supply the following supporting documents:

1. for the items set out in paragraphs a), b), c) and f), an extract from the record of convictions or failing that an equivalent document issued by the competent judicial or administrative authority of the country where the applicant is established, indicating that these requirements are met;
2. for the items set out in paragraph d), a certificate issued by the competent authority of the country of establishment;
3. for the items set out in paragraph e);
 1. for natural persons, a scanned copy of a valid photographic proof of identity (e.g. passport)
 2. for legal persons, an extract from the companies register or other official document proving ownership and control of the applicant.

2. Eligibility criteria:

In order to be eligible for a grant, an applicant must:

- be a local self-government body in Ukraine;
- have sufficient operational, human and professional resources, including gender-balanced staffing and the meaningful involvement of underrepresented population groups, to implement the proposed initiatives.

Multiple applications are not allowed and shall lead to the exclusion of all applications concerned. All documents shall be submitted in English failure to do so will result in the exclusion of the tender.

3. Award criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- the relevance and added value of the local initiative with regard to the objective of the call (30%);
- justification of the proposed activities in terms of their sustainability and replicability (25%);
- the experience and expertise in implementing of principles and practices relevant to the subject of the Call and its objective (25%);
- the quality, accuracy, clarity, completeness and cost-effectiveness of the application and the estimated budget (20%).

VII. NOTIFICATION OF THE DECISION AND SIGNATURE OF GRANT AGREEMENTS

On completion of the selection process, all applicants will be notified in writing of the final decision concerning their respective applications as well as on the next steps to be undertaken.

The selected Grantees will be invited to sign a Grant Agreement (See Appendix III, for information only), formalising their legal commitments. **Potential applicants are strongly advised to read the draft Grant Agreement, in particular its requirements in terms of payment and reporting.**

VIII. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

Phases	Indicative timing
Publication of the call	30 September 2025
Deadline for submitting applications	20 October 2025
Information to applicants on the results of the award procedure	27 October 2025
Signature of the grant agreements	1 November 2025
Implementation period	9 months

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