



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

IMPLEMENTING A PILOT PROJECT OFFERING PRIMARY LEGAL AID IN THREE LOCATIONS IN
LATVIA
BH4900/G/LV/2023/1

Project	Strengthening access to justice in Latvia through fostering mediation and legal aid services (Phase II)”
Awarding entity	COUNCIL OF EUROPE Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law Secretariat of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice
Funding	Co-funding by the Directorate General REFORM of the European Commission and the Council of Europe
Duration	Projects shall be implemented by 15 December 2023. Reporting requirements shall be completed by 31 January 2024.
Estimated starting date	15 June 2023
Issuance date	16 May 2023
Deadline for applications	05 June 2023

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APPENDICES:

- Appendix I - Application Form
- Appendix II - Provisional budget (Template)
- Appendix III - Template Grant Agreement (for information only)
- Appendix IV - Terms of Reference for the future pilot project on Legal Aid

HOW TO APPLY?

- Complete and sign the **Application Form** (See **Appendix I**)
- Attach a provisional budget (using the template reproduced in **Appendix II**)
- Attach the other supporting documents:
 - Registration certificate as a non-governmental organisation or a similar proof of registration for lawyer's offices;
 - Statute of the organisation(s), or equivalent if appropriate;
 - Authorisation of the legal representative to act on behalf of the applicant;
 - Bank statement confirming the existence of the bank account in the name of the applicant;
 - Any additional information regarding implemented projects relevant to the call.
 - Send these documents in electronic form (Word .and/or PDF) to the following e-mail address: CEPEJ@coe.int. Emails should contain the following reference in subject: Legal Aid pilot project.
 - Applications must be received **before 05 June 2023 (at 17h CET)**.

I. INTRODUCTION

This call for proposals is launched in the framework of cooperation project co-funded by the Directorate General REFORM of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, and implemented by the Council of Europe, more specifically the European Commission for the efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), “Strengthening access to justice in Latvia through fostering mediation and legal aid services (Phase II)”. It aims to co-fund a local project aimed at supporting three types of providers (legal clinics, social workers, and NGOs), in piloting the provision of primary legal aid in Latvia as well as accompanying training and quality assurance methods and an accompanying visibility campaign to raise awareness of the legal aid being offered.

The local project proposal shall aim to produce an added value to the Council of Europe efforts in supporting the Ministry of Justice of Latvia, and Legal Aid Administration, in developing a sustainable model providing state-ensured primary legal aid.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROJECT

The purpose of the CEPEJ cooperation project, which builds upon the previous 2019-2021 cooperation project where a legal aid model featuring practicing lawyers was piloted, is threefold: the introduction of quality assurance and standards in state-ensured legal aid, the development of training for providers of primary legal aid who are not practicing lawyers, and the piloting of primary legal aid model using said providers.

In the context of this CEPEJ cooperation project, two important areas are viewed as bearing a serious potential to ensuring a more effective access to justice: (1) widen the scope of state ensured legal aid (including primary legal aid and mediation services); (2) improved availability of state ensured legal aid. The second component i.e. improved availability of state ensured legal aid focuses specifically on improving the Legal Aid scheme in Latvia. Among other activities, it also includes the designing, setting up, monitoring and evaluating a pilot project on legal aid.

In particular, it aims to pilot the possibility of providing primary legal aid by professionals who are not lawyers, but who are in direct contact with people in need due to their daily tasks – NGOs, legal clinics of universities and social service workers, and provide necessary data and analysis for making a decision regarding primary legal aid system to be implemented in Latvia.

CEPEJ cooperation project partners include the Ministry of Justice of Latvia and Legal Aid Administration.

III. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The indicative available budget under this call for proposals is 25.000 EUR (twenty-five thousand euros). The Council of Europe intends to award one grant of a maximum amount of 25.000 EUR (twenty-five thousand euros).

Subject to availability of funds and extension of the CEPEJ cooperation project’s 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 project proposals received and on the outcome of the call for proposals.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

1. General objective

The overall objective of the local project is to improve access to justice in Latvia through developing a primary legal aid service.

The grant will fund a local project designed to support the implementation of a new model of primary legal aid using new providers of primary legal aid, organising their training and showing them quality assurance techniques as well as an accompanying visibility campaign to raise awareness of the legal aid on offer.

Specific objectives of the activities expected of the grantee:

1. To identify the providers that are able to offer primary legal services
2. To build capacity of the professionals who are in a daily contact with people in need for legal help
3. To define quality standards, consistent form of record keeping and a quality assurance mechanism (including peer review) for assessing and maintaining the quality of advice delivered by the primary legal aid scheme
4. To implement the pilot project offering primary legal aid

The grantee will also support the evaluation of the pilot which will aim to identify gaps in services and drivers/obstacles in respect of implementation, assess the initial impact of the new scheme, analyse quantitative and qualitative results of the pilot project, lessons learned and recommendations for the future primary legal aid scheme.

2. Means of action

The local project proposal should include specifically tailored set of activities aiming at supporting the implementation of the general objective. In accordance with the “Terms of Reference for the future pilot project on legal aid” (Annex IV), though the document’s timeline can be modified in agreement with the CEPEJ Secretariat and beneficiary. Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Organising meetings with stakeholders to cooperate on the set-up of the pilot project (level of participation, logistical requirements, finding legal aid providers who can participate in the pilot project)
- Participate in the development of, and run training modules for providers of primary legal aid
- Co-develop with international experts and subsequently implement the training modules for primary legal aid providers
- Production and subsequent implementation of a communication plan including brochures, leaflets, and other awareness raising activities such as press releases, or face to face public outreach

3. Implementation period

The implementation period of the projects should start on 15 June 2023 (see indicative timetable under VIII. below) and shall not extend beyond 15 December 2023.

Reporting requirements shall be completed on **31 January 2024 at the latest**.

Pilot projects completed prior to the date of submission of the applications will be automatically excluded. As regard projects 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

Projects should target in particular the following key stakeholders:

- Ministry of Justice of Latvia, Legal Aid Administration, municipal social centres, the Municipal Training Centre, NGOs providing legal aid, and university legal clinics.
- Any member of the public requiring basic, primary legal aid

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

5. Budgetary requirements

Project proposals shall be accompanied by a draft budget (See **Template Budget, in Appendix II**) amounting to a maximum of 25.000 EUR (twenty-five thousand euros). The estimated budget must be consistent, accurate, clear, complete and cost-effective, in the light of the activities proposed.

The Grantee shall also be required to contribute to the project 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 project.

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

- Projects/actions targeting any member of the public requiring basic, primary legal aid, as well as members of the public who think they may currently be in need of legal aid who do not qualify for state assistance, but cannot afford a lawyer.
- Projects/actions involving municipal social centres, NGOs providing legal aid, and university legal clinics.

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

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

8. Funding conditions:

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

- 60 % will be paid to the Grantee when the Grant Agreement between the Parties is signed;
- A second payment of 20% will be paid to the Grantee three months after the Grant Agreement is signed;
- the balance will be paid to the Grantee based on actual expenditures incurred, and after the presentation and acceptance by the Council of Europe of the final narrative and financial reports for the Grant implementation.

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 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**);
- a provisional budget (using the template reproduced in **Appendix II**);
- the other supporting documents:
 - Registration certificate as a non-governmental organisation or a similar proof of registration;
 - Statute of the organisation(s), or equivalent if available;
 - Authorisation of the legal representative to act on behalf of the applicant;
 - Bank statement confirming the existence of the bank account in the name of the applicant;
 - Any additional information regarding implemented projects relevant to the call.

Applications that are incomplete will not be considered.

2. Questions

General information can be found on the website of the Council of Europe:

[https://www.coe.int/en/web/cepej/strengthening-access-to-justice-in-latvia-through-fostering-mediation-and-legal-aid-services-phase-ii-](https://www.coe.int/en/web/cepej/strengthening-access-to-justice-in-latvia-through-fostering-mediation-and-legal-aid-services-phase-ii)

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, and shall be exclusively sent to the following address: CEPEJ@coe.int, with the following reference in subject: Question - Legal Aid Grant.

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: CEPEJ@coe.int. Emails should contain the following reference in subject: Legal Aid Grant.

Applications must be received **before 05 June 2023 (at 17h 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 projects presented will be assessed by an Evaluation Committee composed of at least three members including a representative of the action beneficiary institution and staff members of the Council of Europe.

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 projects, 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;
1. are included in the lists of persons or entities subject to restrictive measures applied by the European Union (available at www.sanctionsmap.eu).

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, Item 12**).

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

- 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;
- for the items set out in paragraph d), a certificate issued by the competent authority of the country of establishment;

1. 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 legally constituted as a non-governmental organisation, or lawyer’s office in Latvia;
- be entitled to carry out activities described in its project proposal;
- have been active for at least two years in the field of legal aid;
- have sufficient financial capacity (stable and sufficient sources of funding) to maintain its activity throughout the period for which the grant is awarded and to participate by way of its own resources (including human resources or in-kind contributions);
- have sufficient operational and professional capacity, including staff, to carry out activities described in its project proposal (may be demonstrated in staff numbers, CVs of staff, training certificates, etc.);
- have a bank account.

Multiple applications are not allowed and shall lead to the exclusion of all applications concerned.

3. Award criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- the extent to which the action meets the requirements of the call (35%);
- the quality, accuracy, clarity, completeness and cost-effectiveness of the application and the estimated budget (35%);
- the relevance of the experience of the applying organisation(s) and staff (30%).

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 contract, in particular its requirements in terms of payment and reporting.**

VIII. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

Phases	Indicative timing
Publication of the call	16 May 2023

Deadline for submitting applications	05 June 2023
Information to applicants on the results of the award procedure	08 June 2023
Signature of the grant agreements	9 June 2023
Implementation period	15 June – 15 December 2023

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