



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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

Reference: Application_Local Initiatives_Ukraine (Name of applicant municipality)

Project	Strengthening multi-level governance, democracy and human rights at local level in Ukraine
Awarding entity	COUNCIL OF EUROPE Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
Funding	The Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine “Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction” 2023-2026
Duration	Grants shall be implemented by 30 August 2024. Reporting requirements shall be completed by 30 September 2024.
Estimated starting date	01 December 2023
Issuance date	06 October 2023
Deadline for applications	14 November 2023

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HOW TO APPLY?

TWO-STAGES APPLICATION PROCESS

In line with [Rule No. 1374 of 16 December 2015 on the grant award procedures of the Council of Europe](#) and in particular Article 10.4, applicants are asked to submit their proposals in two stages. In particular, applicants are asked to submit **ONLY** a concept note within the set deadline.

1st stage – Concept note:

- Complete and sign the **Concept note Form** (See **Appendix I**).

The applicants whose concept notes successfully pass the first-stage evaluation shall be asked to develop their respective concepts further and to submit a detailed proposal (narrative and budget) for the second-stage evaluation.

2nd stage – Full project proposal:

- Complete and sign the **Application Form** (See **Appendix II**).
 - Attach a provisional budget (using the template reproduced in **Appendix III**).
 - Attach the additional supporting documents:
 - Provide a Curriculum vitae in Europass format, for a person designated to ensure the project coordination / 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.
- All documents shall be submitted in English, 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.
- 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: Application_Local Initiatives_Ukraine (Name of applicant municipality).

All documents shall be submitted in English, failure to do so will result in the exclusion of the tender.

Deadline extended: Concept note must be received **before 24 October 2023 (at 17:00 CET)**.

Application Forms must be received **before 14 November (at 17:00 CET)**.

I. INTRODUCTION

This call for proposals is launched in the framework of the Council of Europe Project “[Strengthening multi-level governance, democracy and human rights at local level in Ukraine](#)”, It is implemented by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (hereinafter the Congress) in the framework of the [Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine “Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction” 2023-2026](#).

The call for proposals aims to support local initiatives developed by Ukrainian local authorities to introduce democratic innovations through open government approaches and protection of human rights at local level.

The selected municipalities will benefit from expert support focused on governance processes, tools and mechanisms to be introduced in order to achieve local initiatives’ objectives. This support will be provided in hybrid format and through on-site visits (where and if possible), consultancy meetings and online communication.

The proposals to be submitted in the framework of the call shall aim to deliver an added value to the efforts of the Congress in the establishment of a transparent, reliable and efficient local self-government, in line with the provisions of the [European Charter of Local Self-Government](#) and its [Additional Protocol](#) on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority, and relevant thematic resolutions and recommendations of the Congress.

Moreover, the local initiatives shall aim to contribute to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in particular to national commitments therein including but not limited to the Sustainable Development Goal 5 ([Gender equality](#)), 10 ([Reduced inequalities](#)), 11 ([Sustainable cities and communities](#)), 16 ([Peace, justice and strong institutions](#)) and 17 ([Partnership for the goals](#)).

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROJECT

The purpose of the project “Strengthening multi-level governance, democracy, and human rights at local level in Ukraine” is to strengthen the dialogue, partnership and consultation between different levels of government; enhance collaborative governance and citizen participation in line with the principles of local democracy and open government; promote and guarantee the right to equality and non-discrimination at local level, for the recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine.

The project contributes to strengthening local democracy and multi-level governance, accompanying new processes to meet the ambitions of Ukraine, and support the country on the path to European Union integration. The methodology encompasses peer-to-peer exchanges, including with members of the Congress, sharing of knowledge, know-how and practices across Europe, as well as expert and financial support. Through this call for local initiatives, local authorities are provided with direct support in the design and implementation of mechanisms/models of democratic innovations in order to bring meaningful change to local residents and communities.

III. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The indicative available budget under this call for proposals is 200 000 EUR (two-hundred thousand Euros). The Council of Europe intends to award 10 grants of a maximum amount of 20 000 EUR (twenty thousand Euros) each.

Subject to availability of funds and extension of the Project 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 objective of this call of proposals is to support local initiatives developed by Ukrainian municipalities to introduce or further develop open government and innovative practices of residents' engagement and to promote a human rights-based approach at local level.

2. Means of action

The grants will fund local initiatives designed to develop and introduce open government practices, democratic innovations to enhance residents' engagement as well as promote a human rights-based approach to strengthen the voice of underrepresented groups in policy-making, including IDPs, youth and women. Project proposals should include a concept of participatory approach engaging civil society representatives at all stages of planning, implementation and monitoring of the local initiative. The applications should reflect the following points:

- Feasibility: the proposed concept should concern a local issue on which residents have room to influence decisions to be made by the municipality;
- Responsiveness: local authorities should indicate in which ways the inputs from residents will be taken into account;
- Inclusiveness: opportunities should be given to a wide range of residents, including under-represented groups (in particular internally displaced persons, women and youth), to engage them in local affairs and thus enhance resilience at local level;
- Gender mainstreaming: it should be embedded in all actions and decisions of the local initiative to ensure that women are included as stakeholders rather than only as beneficiaries;
- Result-oriented: the proposed local initiative should be constructive and outcome-oriented;
- Sustainability and continuity: long-lasting outcomes of local initiatives should be properly planned and ensured.

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

a. Adopting relevant measures to introduce democratic innovations, and implement inclusive open government policies and practices thereby improving local communities' resilience.

Develop, implement, and monitor strategies, action plans, measures (including methodologies and tools) and/or policies to:

- implement actions that bring institutional innovation to the public sector through transparency, accountability and residents' participation, preferably through co-creation with civil society;
- develop and implement awareness raising and capacity building activities on open government principles and practices and local level;
- design and implement a deliberative process based on a tailored methodology that includes but is not limited to: random selection of local residents, participatory selection of the topic, the setting up of the governance structure, ensuring a qualitative learning phase with diversified inputs, following up on residents' recommendations stemming from deliberative process ensuring means for transparent communication with citizens and organisation of technical services for the process.

b. Adopting relevant measures to increase the level of inclusion of underrepresented groups in decision-making processes, fostering equality and non-discriminatory practices at local level.

Develop, implement, and monitor strategies, action plans, measures (including methodologies and tools) and/or policies to:

- increase the participation of under-represented groups (e.g. youth, IDPs, etc) in local decision-making;

- raise residents’ awareness on human rights and non-discrimination as well as on local authorities’ relevant services;
- develop and/or review internal policies, codes of ethics, and/or codes of conduct of local elected representatives.

3. Implementation period

The implementation period of the projects should start on 1 December 2023 (see indicative timetable under VIII. below) and shall not extend beyond 30 August 2024.

Reporting requirements shall be completed on 30 September 2024 at the latest.

Projects and/or activities completed prior to the date of submission of the application will be automatically excluded. As regard projects and/or activities 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.

4. Target stakeholders

Projects should target in particular the following key stakeholders:

- local and regional authorities;
- residents (with a particular focus on IDPs, youth, women and minorities);
- civil society organisations.

The above list is not exhaustive and local initiatives may propose additional relevant stakeholders that would benefit from the grant outcome, while keeping in mind the general objective of the Project.

5. Budgetary requirements

As noted in the section “How to apply” (see page 3), only applicants whose concept notes successfully passed the first-stage evaluation shall be asked to submit a detailed application form and the additional supporting documents for the second-stage evaluation. Proposals submitted in the second stage shall be accompanied by a draft budget (See **Template Provisional Budget, in Appendix III, for information only**) amounting to a maximum of 20 000 EUR (twenty thousand Euros) to be granted by the Council of Europe.

The estimated budget must be consistent, accurate, clear, complete and cost-effective, in the light of the activities proposed. Municipal staff should not be included in the estimated budget and no more than 50% should be spent on technical services.

Each Grantee shall also be required to contribute to the project either by way of its own resources or by contribution from third parties (refer to template Grant Agreement (Article 17.4) for more details on third-party liabilities). Co-financing may take the form of financial or human resources, in-kind contributions or income generated by the action or project and it shall be clearly specified in the draft budget.

6. 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
- Refer to template Grant Agreement (Article 7) for details related to Ineligible costs.

7. Funding conditions

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

- 70 % within 30 days of receipt of Grant Agreement duly signed;
- the balance within 30 days of receipt and approval of the interim reports.
- Unspent funds will be determined on the basis of final financial report and grantees will have a legal obligation to refund any unspent funds to the Council of Europe following the acceptance of the report.

8. Reporting requirements

- **Interim reporting** when the expenditure under the Action reaches at least 85% of funds received in the first instalment:
 - An interim financial report on the payments made for the Action, certified by a responsible financial officer of the Grantee. It should be accompanied by appropriate original supporting documents;
 - An interim narrative report on the use made of the grant, on the results achieved and challenges met, as well as a plan of activities that remain to be implemented until the end of the implementation period.
- **Narrative reporting** requires a full narrative report in English 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 (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” refer 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).

With regard to round tables or 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-mentioned 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 (publications, reports, surveys, etc.), contracts with experts and consultants containing a specific description of services to be carried out, invoices and Work Acceptance certificates produced after the works have been performed and delivered (the specialities of the consultants shall correspond to the nature of the 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

First stage:

Each application shall contain:

- the completed and signed **Concept Note Form** (See **Appendix I**)

Second stage:

Applicants whose concept notes successfully passed the first-stage evaluation shall be asked to submit a detailed application which shall contain:

- the completed and signed **Application Form** (See **Appendix II**);
- a provisional budget (using the template reproduced in **Appendix III**);
- the additional supporting documents:
 - Proposal containing a detailed description (profile) of the local authority and their partner NGOs, explaining the experience in the provision of the services in question;
 - 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 project implementation (where already identified) and reporting of the grant activities.

The application package should be submitted in English. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Multiple applications are not allowed and shall lead to the exclusion of all applications concerned.

2. Questions

General information can be found on the website of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/kyiv/strengthening-multi-level-governance-democracy-and-human-rights-at-local-level-in-ukraine>

All interested applicants to this Call for proposals will find relevant information to guide them through the development of their proposal in Appendix VIII – Guidelines.

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: congress.ukraine@coe.int, with the following reference in subject: Application_Local Initiatives_Ukraine (Name of applicant municipality).

3. Deadline for submission

The concept note and application forms, **completed and signed by the Grantee**, together with the supporting document, 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: Application_Local Initiatives_Ukraine (Name of applicant municipality).

Concept notes must be received **before 24 October 2023 (at 17:00 CET)** and Application form following the first stage evaluation must be received **before 14 November 2023 (at 17:00 CET)**.

Concept notes and Application form received after the above-mentioned dates 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

All concept notes will be assessed by an Evaluation Committee composed of staff members of the Council of Europe and the Association of Ukrainian Cities.

Evaluation of concept notes, as part of the first stage of evaluation, will include the review of concepts against criteria set for stage one of the process. 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.

Applicants whose concept notes are positively evaluated, and meet the overall objective of the Call, shall be invited to a second stage. Their full applications and narratives will be evaluated by an Evaluation Committee composed of staff members of the Council of Europe and the Association of Ukrainian Cities against criteria set for stage two.

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.

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

The Council of Europe reserves the right to request applicants to submit at a later stage 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.

2. Eligibility criteria

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

- be a local self-government body in Ukraine;
- should a local authority partner with a NGO, the latter must be legally eligible to carry out the activities indicated in the proposed local initiative;
- have sufficient operational, human resources and professional capacities, including gender-balanced staff and the involvement of under-represented groups of population, to carry out the activities described in the proposed project;
- declare that the activity is not part of another project and that it is not financed nor supported by any other organisation (see Appendix II – Application form, section 7. Declaration).

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

First stage:

Concept notes will be assessed against the following criteria:

- the relevance and added value of the local initiative with regard to the objective of the call (70%)
- the sustainability of the project intervention (30%).

Second stage:

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 (see Section IV. Requirements, 1. General 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 IV, 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 TIMEFRAME

Stages	Indicative timeframe
Publication of the call	6 October 2023
Deadline for submitting concept note	24 October 2023
Information to applicants on the results of the 1st stage application process	25 October 2023
Deadline for submitting application forms	14 November 2023
Information to applicants on the results of the award procedure	23 November 2023
Signature of the grant agreements	1 December 2023
Implementation period	9 months

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