



**NGO SUPPORT CENTRE and GRANTXPRT CONSULTING LTD
acting as the Fund Operator (FO) for the EEA & Norway Grants
programme “Active Citizens Fund in Cyprus” (ACF Cyprus),
announces an Open Call for Civil Society Organizations
(CSOs) applications for:**

Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives

AVAILABLE FUNDING: €12,000

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION:
14/05/2023

www.activecitizensfund.cy
EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

SUMMARY OF THE BILATERAL COOPERATION INITIATIVES CALL	
Focus of the Call	The Call for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives, aims at enhancing the relations between Civil Society Organisations that are established in the Republic of Cyprus and entities in the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) of the Active Citizens Fund Cyprus programme (EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021).
Call Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of cooperation and partnerships between CSOs in the Republic of Cyprus and entities from the Donor States. • Development and Implementation of Initiatives for cooperation, networking, and exchange between CSOs in the Republic of Cyprus and entities from the Donor States. • Enhancement of the capacity and sustainability of civil society (organisations and the sector) in the Republic of Cyprus and in the Donor States.
Total available funding of the Call	€ 12,000
Maximum Grant Amount per Initiative	€ 4,000
Initiative Duration	1-6 months
Co-financing	No co-financing is required. Up to 100% financing of the eligible expenditures may be provided.
Who can apply	CSOs legally registered in the Republic of Cyprus and Entities legally established in the Donor States (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein)
Partners	Entities legally established in the Donor States (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein) CSOs legally registered in the Republic of Cyprus
Consortium Requirements	All consortiums must include, at least , one (1) CSO legally registered in the Republic of Cyprus and one (1) entity legally established in the Donor States.
Application Deadline	14/05/2023 at 23:59 EEST (Cyprus local time)

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1. Active Citizens Fund Cyprus Programme

The Active Citizens Fund programme in Cyprus (ACF Cyprus) is supported through a €1.5m grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway under the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021, aiming to contribute to reducing economic and social disparities and strengthening bilateral relations and cooperation between the beneficiary states and the donor states. The ACF Cyprus programme is part of the contribution of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway (Donor States) to 15 EU countries in Central and Southern Europe and the Baltics (Beneficiary States).

ACF Cyprus recognises the fundamental role the civil society sector plays in ensuring democratic governance, human rights and social cohesion and focuses on the following objectives: strengthening civil society and active citizenship and empowering vulnerable groups in Cyprus.

The Fund Operator (FO) for the Active Citizens Fund in Cyprus is [NGO Support Centre](#) in consortium with [GrantXpert Consulting](#).

Moreover, the ACF programme also contributes to strengthening bilateral relations between CSOs in the Republic of Cyprus and the Donor States, with a view to promoting Initiative partnerships and joint activities, the exchange of knowledge and best practices. For more information, visit www.activecitizensfund.cy

2. Focus of the Call

The Call for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives is intended to support activities aiming at enhancing relations between CSOs in the Republic of Cyprus and entities in the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) and contribute to the overall objectives of the Active Citizens Fund: strengthening civil society and active citizenship and empowering vulnerable groups.

The scope of the Call is in line with Article 5.1 of the Programme Implementation Agreement ([PIA](#)) and **the aims of the Call** are the following:

- Establishment of cooperation and partnerships between CSOs in the Republic of Cyprus and entities from the Donor States.
- Development and implementation of initiatives for cooperation, networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best

practice between civil society organisations and other entities in the Beneficiary States and in the Donors States.

- Enhancement of the capacity and sustainability of civil society (organisations and the sector) in the Republic of Cyprus and in the Donor States.

Any proposed Initiatives for bilateral cooperation must address **one of the following outcomes of the Active Citizens Fund Cyprus Programme**:

- Outcome 1 - “Increased citizen participation in civic activities”.
 - *Suggested thematic areas: human rights defence, media freedom, activism, advocacy work.*
- Outcome 2 - “Vulnerable groups¹ empowered”.
 - *Suggested thematic areas: migrant inclusion and social cohesion, tackling gender-based violence, disability inclusion.*

The Active Citizens Fund programme is based on **results-based management**. Therefore, all Bilateral grant beneficiaries will be expected to contribute data towards all the indicators of the Bilateral Outcome set by the Fund Operator of the ACF Cyprus programme:

Bilateral Outcome	Indicators
Enhanced collaboration between Beneficiary and Donor State entities involved in the programme.	Level of trust between cooperating entities in Beneficiary States (Republic of Cyprus) and Donor States
	Level of satisfaction with the partnership
	Share of cooperating organisations that apply knowledge acquired from bilateral partnership
	Share of participants in bilateral initiatives funded by the ACF Bilateral Fund reporting improved knowledge/methods/approaches

¹ The expression 'vulnerable groups' refers to women, ethnic minorities, immigrants, and other disadvantaged groups, who in many countries have not been part of the traditional mainstream that has benefitted from economic growth. For this reason, these disenfranchised groups have tended not to participate in the political process, nor have they learned the advocacy or monitoring skills needed to represent or safeguard their own interests.

3. Indicative list of Activities

The proposed Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives may comprise, in general terms, of all activities aiming to **deepen the contact and enhance the collaboration** of Cypriot CSOs with entities from the Donor States i.e., Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. All activities must aim at **strengthening bilateral relations** between civil society organisations and **enhance the capacity and sustainability of civil society (organisations and the sector)** in the Republic of Cyprus and the Donors States.

The Initiatives may include one or many activities in both physical and/or digital form (e.g., webinars, distance learning etc).

Eligible activities **may include (the list is non-exhaustive)**:

Outcome 1 - “Increased citizen participation in civic activities”.

- a) networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience, and best practice for increasing citizen participation in civic activities in any of the Donor States and in the Republic of Cyprus.
- b) visits by CSO experts/ experts from any of the Donor States and/or the Republic of Cyprus for training/ coaching purposes on topics related to citizen participation and engagement (e.g., rule of law, right of association, democratic dialogue processes etc.).
- c) visits aiming at deepening partnerships through specific common activities such as advocacy work on increasing citizen participation and engagement (e.g., advocating for the role of citizens in public consultation procedures in any of the Donor States and/ or the Republic of Cyprus).
- d) attendance or organisation of conferences or workshops with a concrete impact on bilateral partnerships and relations and supporting the work being done to increase citizen participation in civic activities in any of the Donor States and in the Republic of Cyprus.

Outcome 2 - “Vulnerable groups empowered”.

- a) networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience, and best practice for service provision for specific vulnerable groups in any of the Donor States and/or the Republic of Cyprus.
- b) visits by CSO experts/ experts from any of the Donor States and/ or the Republic of Cyprus for training/ coaching purposes on topics related to the empowerment

of vulnerable groups (e.g., migrant inclusion and social cohesion, tackling gender-based violence, disability inclusion, etc).

- c) visits aiming at deepening partnerships through specific common activities such as advocacy work for the rights of specific vulnerable groups in any of the Donor States and/ or the Republic of Cyprus;
- d) attendance or organisation of conferences or workshops with a concrete impact on bilateral partnerships and relations and supporting efforts to empower vulnerable groups in society in any of the Donor States and in the Republic of Cyprus.

4. Location of Initiatives

The activities foreseen in the Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives may take place in the Republic of Cyprus and/or in the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway).

5. Eligible Applicants and Partners

The following entities are eligible to participate in this Call as Applicant or Partner:

- a) **CSOs legally registered in the Republic of Cyprus** that fall within the following definition: "A non-profit voluntary organisation established as a legal entity, having a non-commercial purpose, independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organisations".
- b) **Entities legally established in the Donor States**, that fall within the following definition: "Any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organisations".

All eligible entities, both the Applicant and the Partner(s) must abide by the principles of democratic values and human rights.

Political parties, religious institutions, social partners, or profit-distributing cooperatives are not eligible.

Each entity, either Applicant or Partner, **can only participate in one application under the Call for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives.**²

² Awarded grants obtained through the Bilateral Initiatives Fund are not taken into consideration for funding restrictions applied to other open calls of the Active Citizens Fund programme. Project Promoters and / or Project partners that have

Supporting Documents Required to Check Eligibility:

Supporting Documents for Applicant / Partner(s)
Copy of registration document proving that the Applicant is legally registered with the competent authority of the Republic of Cyprus, scanned in .pdf format or with the competent authority of the Donor State(s) (scanned in .pdf format and accompanied by an unofficial translation in English)
Copy of registration document proving that the Partner is legally registered with the competent authority of the Republic of Cyprus (scanned in .pdf format) or with the competent authority of the Donor State(s) (scanned in .pdf format and accompanied by an unofficial translation in English)
Applicant declaration, signed, stamped (if applicable) and scanned in .pdf format
Letter of intent providing the objectives of the bilateral cooperation initiative and the partnership, signed by the legal representative of the partner entity, stamped (where applicable) and scanned in .pdf format

Minimum Consortium Requirements:

Each Initiative Consortium must have **minimum two members (Applicant & Partner): one CSO legally registered in the Republic of Cyprus and one entity established in any of the three Donor States.**

Initiatives may have additional Partners either from the Republic of Cyprus or the Donor States. The same Eligibility Criteria will be applicable for any additional partners.

6. Size & Duration of Grants

The total available funding under this call is **€12,000.**

For Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives there are no co-financing requirements, and the grant rate is 100% on the eligible costs, with a maximum grant of **€4,000 per initiative.**

received funding under the Open Call 2021 of the Active Citizens Fund Cyprus programme, can apply under the Call for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives provided they comply with the eligibility criteria specified in this Call.

The duration of each proposed initiative must be **between 1-6 months**.

7. Eligible Expenditures

General Principles:

Eligible expenditures of Initiatives are those actually incurred by the Initiative Coordinator³ or the Initiative Partner, which meet the following criteria:

- a) they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of an Initiative, as specified in the Initiative Contract.
- b) they relate to the subject of the Initiative Contract, and they are indicated in the detailed budget of the Initiative.
- c) they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the Initiative.
- d) they are used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective of the Initiative and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- e) they are identifiable and verifiable, through being recorded in the accounting records of the Initiative Coordinator and determined according to the applicable accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles.
- f) they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

The eligibility of expenditures incurred by any Initiative Partner is subject to the same limitations and principles, outlined in this article, as would apply if the expenditures were incurred by the Initiative Coordinator.

Expenditures are considered to have been incurred when the cost has been invoiced, paid and the subject matter delivered (in case of goods) or performed (in case of services and works).

Exceptionally, costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the final month of eligibility are also deemed to be incurred within the dates of eligibility if the costs are paid within 30 days of the final date of eligibility.

³ The Initiative Coordinator is the applicant organisation whose project application is approved for funding and who signs the Initiative Contract with the Fund Operator.

The Initiative Coordinator's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the expenditures and revenue declared in respect of the initiative with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

Call Specific Principles:

The following indicative list of expenses showcases the general type of expenses that are eligible for funding, under the call for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives, provided they satisfy the general principles for eligible expenditures (the list is non-exhaustive):

- a) Registration fees and travel costs for participation in conferences, seminars, courses, meetings, and workshops, as well as the acquisition of support materials needed for this purpose.
- b) Travel costs concerning study visits abroad, to facilitate collaboration and exchange of information between the Republic of Cyprus CSOs and entities in any of the Donor States.
- c) Travel costs and fees for expert exchanges.
- d) Costs of organising conferences, seminars, courses, meetings and workshops⁴.
- e) Publicity and communication activities.
- f) Staff costs⁵.
- g) Indirect costs⁶.

Note 1: The expenditures indicated in paragraph b) may include transportation costs and per diem to cover accommodation and subsistence costs for participating staff (and/or volunteers) of the Coordinator and Partner(s), provided they are in line with the usual practices and policies of each entity.

Note 2: The rates of foreign currencies to euro are determined in accordance with the Foreign Exchange Reference Rates on the day the expense was incurred, as provided by the European Central Bank⁷.

Excluded costs:

⁴ Costs here could include human resources that are not staff costs.

⁵ This cost refers to the cost of personnel assigned to the initiative, comprising actual remuneration including social security charges and other statutory costs as applicable, provided that this corresponds to the Initiative Coordinator's or the Partner(s)' usual policy on remuneration.

⁶ Indirect costs are all eligible costs that cannot be identified by the Initiative Coordinator and/or the Partner as being directly attributed to the initiative, but which can be identified and justified by its accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs attributed to the initiative. They may not include any eligible direct costs. Indirect costs of the initiative shall represent up to 15% of direct eligible staff costs.

⁷ https://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/policy_and_exchange_rates/euro_reference_exchange_rates/html/index.en.html

The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- a) interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges.
- b) charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to accounts and financial services imposed by the initiative contract.
- c) costs related to purchase of land or real estate.
- d) provisions for losses or potential future liabilities.
- e) exchange losses.
- f) recoverable VAT.
- g) costs that are covered by other sources.
- h) fines, penalties, and costs of litigation, except where litigation is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project; and
- i) excessive or reckless expenditure.

8. Specific Conditions

The Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives Coordinators and Partner(s) must consider the following country specific conditions and obligations:

- a) The Initiative Coordinator/partners shall refrain from any acts or omissions that:
 - i. Are incompatible with the property rights of natural or legal persons protected under the applicable laws of the Republic of Cyprus, the Convention for the Protection of Human Right and Fundamental Freedoms or the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.
 - ii. Imply acceptance of entry or exit points of the Republic of Cyprus beyond those that are compatible with international law.
- b) Payments to Initiative Coordinator and Partners shall only be made through legally operating banking institutions in the Republic of Cyprus.
- c) Any supporting evidence for expenditures provided for payments shall not be considered eligible if these are derived from a so-called "public authority" or any other so-called "official institution" in the areas of the Republic of Cyprus where the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control and authority.

- d) No action or omission of Initiative Coordinators or any Partner is intended to imply recognition of any public authority in the Republic of Cyprus, other than the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

9. Application, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

Indicative Call Timeline:

February 2023	Pre-announcement of the Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives Call
March 2023	Announcement of the Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives Call
March 2023	Online workshop for potential applicants
14 May 2023 (23:59 EEST)	Deadline for submission of initiative applications
June 2023	The Fund Operator team will provide a response of approval/rejection of an application no later than thirty (30) working days after the deadline for submission of applications
June – July 2023	Signing of contracts of initiatives
September 2023 – February 2024	Implementation period of initiatives

Application Submission:

Applications must be submitted in English. The applicants must submit the application form, which can be downloaded from the programme website: <https://activecitizensfund.cy/en-us/Open-Calls/Bilateral-Cooperation-Initiatives> together with the supporting documentation (see Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives Application Form Section 6).

Submission of applications is made electronically, via email. Applicants must fill in the Application Form and submit it together with all supporting documents in one electronic file named "Bilateral Initiative_Application_[Lead Applicant Name]", to the following address:

Email: info@activecitizensfund.cy

Subject line: Submission of Bilateral Initiative Application

Ziped files ending in .zip will also be accepted.

Note: Only complete applications will be considered for evaluation and selection purposes. Please note that only the application form and the supporting documentation will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain all the relevant information. **No additional documents** should be submitted.

The deadline for applications is **14/05/2023 at 23:59 EEST (Cyprus local time)**.

Applicants will receive a confirmation via e-mail upon receipt of the application. Late delivery will lead to rejection of the application.

Administrative and Eligibility Check:

After the Bilateral Cooperation Initiative application is received, the Fund Operator will carry out an initial administrative and eligibility check based on the information submitted in the application form and the supporting documentation provided.

Administrative and Eligibility Criteria	Yes/No
→ In case of failure to comply with the following criteria, the application will be automatically rejected and will not proceed to further evaluation.	
The application has been submitted by the specified deadline: 14/05/2023 at 23:59 EEST (Cyprus local time).	
The application has been submitted in accordance with the permissible method of delivery (See 'Application submission' section above).	
The application form is duly signed on the last page, by the applicant's legal representative.	
All mandatory fields in the application form have been filled in and submitted in English, following the guidelines provided on the first page of the application form.	
The requested grant amount is within the permissible limits provided in the Call for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives (max. €4,000).	

The initiative duration is within the permissible limits provided in the Call for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives (1-6 months).	
The Applicant and Partner(s) comply with the Applicant and Partner Eligibility criteria as specified in the Call for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives.	
The consortium meets the minimum requirements as specified in the Call for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives.	
The Applicant and the Partner(s) have submitted only one application under the Call for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives of the Active Citizens Fund Cyprus programme.	

In cases where the application is missing supporting documentation needed to check compliance with the above criteria, the applicant will be given the opportunity to supplement any missing supporting documents. If the applicant fails to provide the missing documents within three (3) working days, the application will not proceed to the next step of the evaluation.

After the administrative and eligibility checks are completed, ineligible applicants will be notified of the rejection of their bilateral initiative application from further evaluation.

Evaluation of Initiatives:

Each application that meets the administrative and eligibility criteria shall be scored by two members of the Fund Operator team. The evaluators shall, separately and independently, score each initiative application according to the evaluation criteria below. For the purposes of ranking the initiative applications, the average of the scores awarded by the evaluators shall be used.

The maximum total score for an application is 100 points. The minimum of 60 points is set as a threshold score for an application to be recommended for funding. In the case where the difference between the scores given by the two evaluators is more than 30% of the higher score awarded, the application shall be evaluated independently by a third member of the Fund Operator team. In such cases, the average score of the two highest scores shall be used for the ranking of the application.

Evaluation Criteria		Max. score
1	Relevance	40

1.1	The proposed initiative demonstrates coherence with the aims of the Call for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives	15
1.2	The activities proposed contribute to the achievement of one of the Outcomes of the Active Citizens Fund Cyprus Programme	10
1.3	The activities proposed are feasible, practical, and consistent with the Initiative aims and expected outcomes.	15
2	Impact & Sustainability of Bilateral Cooperation	40
2.1	The choice of partner(s) is justified and there is a clear division of responsibilities	15
2.2	The initiative description demonstrates sufficiently that its implementation will contribute to the continuation of the established bilateral cooperation	15
2.3	The results of the initiative have a long-term benefit for the organisations involved	10
3	Economic Efficiency	15
3.1	The budget is realistic and economically reasonable	10
3.2	The proposed costs are necessary and aligned with the proposed activities	5
4	Communication & Visibility	5
4.1	The communication activities for publicity and visibility of the initiative are adequate and clearly defined	5
	Total score	100

Selection Procedure and Communication of Results:

Applications that are awarded an overall average score equal to or greater than 60 points shall be considered for funding.

Shortlisted applications will be ranked based on the evaluation scoring and then will be submitted to the Executive Board of the Active Citizens Fund Cyprus programme. The Executive Board will make the final decision based on the rankings and the availability of funding i.e., applications with the highest score are selected for funding until the total available funding for the Call is exhausted. The decision of the Executive Board is final.

The decisions on the applications will be communicated via email individually to the respective applicants, using the email provided in their application form, **no later than thirty (30) working days after the deadline for submission of application**. Information on approved initiatives will also be published in the relevant section of the Programme website: <https://activecitizensfund.cy/>

10. Reporting Procedures and Payments

Final Report (Narrative and Financial):

The Fund Operator will monitor Bilateral Initiatives during their implementation. The Initiative Coordinators will submit to the Fund Operator a final report on the Bilateral Initiative's results as well as evidence of the implementation of activities and all eligible expenditures (invitations, participation lists, schedules and agendas, support training materials, photos and videos, promotional material, invoices, receipts etc.) following the completion of the Bilateral Initiative, using a template that the FO will provide. The Initiative Coordinator shall submit this report up to thirty (30) days after the Initiative is completed. The final report will include both a narrative and a financial section.

Payments to Initiatives:

Payments related to the Bilateral Initiatives shall be made in one single transfer, as reimbursement of expenses actually incurred, up to fifteen (15) working days upon submission and acceptance of the final report.

The Bilateral Initiative Coordinators can apply for advance payment of up to 50% of the total grant requested. In this case, the amount of the final payment will be equal to the difference between the final expenses incurred, as approved by the Fund Operator, and the advance payment settled.

To ensure the understanding of the documents related to the expenses of Donor States' entities, eligible costs incurred and paid by these entities shall be justified by expenditure documents accompanied by unofficial English translations.

11. Bilateral Initiatives Support

The following Donor Contact Points have been set up to assist with the identification of potential partners from donor states (Norway and Iceland) for both the Open Call and the Bilateral Fund Open Call:

The **Norwegian Helsinki Committee**: www.ngonorway.org

A partnership database (<https://ngonorway.org/partners>) has been established by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee in order to facilitate the search for potential partners. Potential applicants can register and add information about their organization, to facilitate the search for potential partners in Norway.

The **Icelandic Centre for Human Rights**: <https://www.humanrights.is/en>

Additionally, as part of the support provided by the FO in establishing cooperations under the Bilateral Initiatives Call, the FO has created a form where interested parties can submit information on the profile of their organisation, the idea for an initiative under this call and the desirable profile of the organisation/entities they would like to partner with.

You can find the Survey Form at <https://activecitizensfund.cy/en-us/Open-Calls/Bilateral-Cooperation-Initiatives> .

Interested parties from Cyprus and Donor states can find information provided by potential partners at <https://activecitizensfund.cy/en-us/Bilateral-Relations> .

12. Complaints Procedure

Any complaint specifically relating to the selection process or, more broadly to the Active Citizens Fund Cyprus programme, should be submitted via e-mail to info@activecitizensfund.cy, with subject-title "ACF CY 2014-2021 Complaint".

All complaints shall first be assessed by the Fund Operator. A complainant who is not satisfied with the conclusion made by the Fund Operator has the right to take the case to the Complaints Committee, which shall again assess the complaint and conclude on the case.

The Complaints Committee will include two members of the Executive Board of the Fund Operator, the senior manager of the Fund Operator and one member who is external to the Fund Operator and its Board.

12. Questions and Answers

Any clarifying questions regarding this Call may be sent via e-mail to info@activecitizensfund.cy. Individual replies will be provided by the FO via email to any submitted questions.

The deadline for submitting questions is **24 April 2023**, twenty (20) working days prior to the deadline for the submission of applications.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) will be published **fifteen (15) working days** prior to the deadline for the submission of applications on the programme's website: <https://activecitizensfund.cy/en-us/Open-Calls/Bilateral-Cooperation-Initiatives> .