

2

**Active Citizens Fund in Latvia
Open call for proposals**

Action project ongoing call

for urgent and actual advocacy with aim to
promote civic actions to promote democracy



**Democratic
culture**

→ **Projects can be submitted continuously**
until February 28, 2023 or funding is available

www.activecitizensfund.lv

„For a country to thrive, it must never be the project of a single person, a single party, or even a single ethnic group – everyone has to take part in it, each with their abilities and fields of competence”

/Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga/

If also you believe that the wellbeing of the Latvian state lies within each of us and you have a vision and real ideas that would be worth implementing by help of our support, we look forward to hearing from you!

The situation has unexpectedly changed, new circumstances that require **CURRENT** and **URGENT** action have arisen?

Do you need **SUPPORT** to **IMPLEMENT** interest advocacy and civic activities?

Submit your initiative and receive a funding of

up to **10 000 euros**

for a period of **2 - 12 months!**



**Initiatives can be submitted continuously
until 28 February 2023**

or while funding is available.

Receive support and take action!

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1. Active Citizens Fund (ACF)

WHAT IS ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND

“Active Citizens Fund” is a programme of the European Economic Area (EEA) and Norway Finance Mechanism. It will be implemented by 15 funds in European countries – Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. As of May 2020, 13 countries (except Cyprus and Hungary) has started implementation of the programme.

Funding for the Active Citizens Fund in all beneficiary countries is provided by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway (donor countries financing the EEA/Norway Financial Mechanisms). The decision on the total amount granted to every country is made individually.

In all countries, the Active Citizens Fund is operated by NGOs or NGO consortiums to ensure the independence of civil society activities from the influence of local, regional and national governments and corporate sector.

The objective of the Active Citizens Funds in all countries is **civil society and active citizenship strengthened and vulnerable groups empowered.**

Principles and values of ACF

Operations of Active Citizens Fund, its supported organizations and their implemented projects shall be based on the following principles and values:

- human dignity, freedom, human rights, minority rights, equality, democracy and the rule of law;
- principles of good governance – operations are transparent, effective and efficient, with zero-tolerance towards corruption, participatory, inclusive and responsive;
- principles of sustainable development – operations are consistent with long-term economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection;
- they shall follow a results and risk management approach.

The Active Citizens Funds shall also contribute to strengthening bilateral relations between civil society and other entities in Latvia and entities in the donor states as well as promoting regional exchange and networking, with a view of sharing knowledge and best practice across civil society.

ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN LATVIA

The allocation to the Active Citizens Fund in Latvia is **8,5 million euro** and will be made available to Latvian CSOs in the period 2020 to 2024. This amount was agreed during mutual negotiations between the Donor states and Latvia.

The Active Citizens Fund in Latvia is operated by **NGO Consortium** – six experienced civil society organizations: [Civic Alliance-Latvia](#), [Latvian Rural Forum](#), [Dienvidlatgale NGO Support Centre](#), [Kurzeme NGO Centre](#), [Valmiera Region Community Foundation](#) and [Zemgale NGO Centre](#). On December 27, 2019, the Consortium signed an agreement with the EEA/Norway Finance Mechanism Office on the implementation of the Active Citizens Fund in Latvia.

The content of the ACF program in Latvia was developed by NGO Consortium in close cooperation with the EEA/Norway Finance Mechanism Office, based on information gained in two face-to-face and online consultations with civil society organizations, relevant documents of policy planning, research papers, surveys, experience and knowledge of the NGO Consortium, and taking into account advice of other Active Citizens Fund operators.

As a result, the Active Citizens Fund will focus on the following **eight key challenges of Latvian civil society** determined by the NGO Consortium:

1. Low civic participation, disbelief in the ability to influence democratic process and lack of civic education.
2. Insufficient public (including, public administration) awareness about the role of the civil society and the importance of strengthening it for the democratic development of the country.
3. Absence of targeted policy of civil society's development.
4. Unstable and unfavourable legal and financial environment for civil society's development.
5. High level of intolerance to difference.
6. Ethnic segregation rather than integration – national minorities are not included in civic activities.
7. Civil society and civil society organization low capacity and insufficient expertise in long-term development.
8. Underdevelopment of regional civil society organizations.

To overcome the identified challenges, the Active Citizens Fund in Latvia **will support projects in three areas:**

- Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency;
- Human rights and equal treatment through combating any discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity;
- Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups.

The funding available to CSOs will be **allocated to 4 programmes:**

1. **„DEMOCRATIC CULTURE”** to strengthen democratic culture and civic awareness in Latvia. Total amount – 4 405 000 EUR.
2. **„HUMAN RIGHTS”** to increase awareness on human rights in Latvian society. Total amount – 630 000 EUR.
3. **„SUSTAINABILITY AND CAPACITY”** to enhance the capacity and sustainability of civil society in Latvia. Total amount – 2 020 000 EUR.
4. **„BILATERAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATION”** to enhance cross-border collaboration of civic society in Latvia with other EEA/Norway Financial Mechanism beneficiary states. Total amount – 345 000 EUR.

2. Action project call

The call for **Action projects** is organized for outcome „DEMOCRATIC CULTURE” and it focuses on the projects for urgent and actual advocacy with aim to promote civic actions to promote democracy and civic participation. Especially in crisis situations.

Total amount available for this call for proposals and projects is **210 000 EUR**. The remaining funding and the funds still available for the projects (the amount not yet distributed in the projects) can be seen in the section Programs – Democratic culture - Action Projects on www.activecitizensfund.lv.

The grant for one project is between **1 000 – 10 000 EUR**. The project grant rate is up to 100%.

The duration of project is between **2 and 12 months** between **15.07.2020. and 30.04.2024**. The implementation of the activities must start no later than 4 months after the date of conclusion of the agreement of funding.

Projects can be submitted at any time until 28 February 2023 via online system available at <https://projekti.activecitizensfund.lv>.

3. Support for project applicants

ACF regional coordinators will provide consultations about the call and project preparation:

- **KURZEME:** Elīna Immere, elina@kurzemesnvo.lv, phone: +371 27111252
[Kurzeme NGO Centre](#), Kuldīga, Liepājas iela 8
- **LATGALE:** Oskars Zuģickis, oskars@nvoc.lv , phone: +371 26565858
[Dienvidlatgale NGO Support Centre](#), Daugavpils, Parādes iela 1 – 314
- **RIGA and RIGA REGION:** Rasa Lazdiņa, rasa@nvo.lv, phone: +371 29208487
[Civic Alliance-Latvia](#), Rīga, Alberta iela 13
- **VIDZEME:** Gundega Siliņa, gundega.silina@vnf.lv, phone: +371 20258200
[Valmiera Region Community Foundation](#), Valmiera, Garā iela 10
- **ZEMGALE:** Uldis Dūmiņš, uldis@zemgalei.lv, phone: +371 26044412
[Zemgale NGO Centre](#), Jelgava, Lielā iela 15 – 2

4. Preparation and submission of project applications

Project applications shall be submitted via online system available at <https://projekti.activecitizensfund.lv>.

The project applicants must fill in the project application in Latvian language.

Projects can be submitted at any time until 28 February 2023 or funding is available. The remaining funding (the amount not yet distributed in the projects) can be seen in the section Programs – Democratic culture - Action Projects on www.activecitizensfund.lv.

Project application consists of the project description and all annexes, submitted via online system:

1. Project description (narrative).
2. Project budget.
3. Declaration of the project applicant. (*Scanned document or signed with secure Latvian e-signature*)
4. CV of the project staff - in the form of a document or by providing a link to the professional profile of the staff on linkedin.com;
5. Partnership declaration(s) (if applicable). To be submitted in English in case of foreign partners (*scanned document or signed with secure Latvian e-signature*).

5. Project applicants and partners

PROJECT APPLICANTS

Projects can be submitted and implemented by civil society organizations who meet **all** the requirements indicated in this section.

All applicants have to be the **civil society organizations (CSO) – associations or foundations** established in the Republic of Latvia:

1. that aim to increase the wellbeing of society, by addressing either the problems identified by the society (or its groups) or by contributing to the achievement of national objectives;
2. that are independent of public administration, political parties, religious organizations or commercial organizations and their influence (including, such organizations or their official representatives are in minority (proportionally or by level of influence) among members or managing bodies);
3. that cannot be regarded, by their nature/activities/character, as a political party, religious organization, trade union, employers' organization or cooperative;
4. that do not pursue professional, commercial or direct economic interests of its members or founders and whose members / founders have no any commercial interest in the outcome of the work of the organisation or of its activities.

IMPORTANT!

- Faith-based organizations (associations or foundations whose activities are related to the religious organization) can be considered eligible applicants only in case as long as activities, for which funding is requested, directly contribute to ACF results and do not, directly or indirectly, are not related to and do not promote a religious doctrine, mission or proselytism.

Restrictions on participation in call for proposals

Even if the project applicant meets all the above-mentioned requirements, it is not considered to be an eligible project applicant in this call/project promoter which signs the grant contract, if the respective CSO:

- would receive more than 138 000 EUR in total support from the ACF during the programme period until 2024 (excluding any support received under the Call for awareness-raising campaigns);
- has any outstanding obligations in the EEA/Norway Financial Mechanisms funds in 2009-2014 (operated by the Society Integration Foundation);
- has been found guilty by a final judgement of criminal offences related to the use of funds from the EEA and Norway Financial mechanisms or EU structural funds, or other public funds;
- is bankrupt or in the process of bankruptcy, or the process of reorganization or liquidation;
- has been found guilty of grave professional misconduct or has been convicted of an offence concerning its professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of 'res judicata';
- has committed fraud, corruption or any other illegal activity;
- has submitted any false information for the purpose of receiving grant.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Partnership is a contractual relationship between two or more entities, which is based on shared responsibility for project implementation.

The goal of partnerships is a narrow cooperation of various types of organizations each offering different experience and solutions to address the issues in the particular area (defined both regionally and thematically) within the project. Cooperation can't be based on providing services or have the supply – receive character.

Project partner can be:

- any legal person (university, state institution, local authority, enterprise etc.) either in Latvia, donor states, other ACF beneficiary state or a country outside the European Economic Area that has a common border with the Latvia (please refer to the table “LIST OF COUNTRIES of project partners”);
- any international organization or agency;
- any informal group (community members, ad hoc and self-help organization, including grassroots organizations) that is not registered as a legal entity in Latvia if it meets the following requirements:
 - the participants of the group are legal residents in Latvia;
 - it is voluntary and non-discriminatory in nature, independent of local, regional and national government and other public authorities, political parties, religious institutions and commercial organizations;
 - it acts for public good not for commercial or direct economic interests of its members,
 - it is represented by an adult who signs the project partnership agreement on behalf of the group and assumes responsibility for the implementation of commitments undertaken.

Restrictions on participation in call for proposals

An organization cannot be the project partner if it:

- would receive more than 138 000 EUR in total support from the ACF during the programme period until 2024 (excluding any support received under the Call for awareness-raising campaigns);
- has any outstanding obligations in the EEA/Norway Financial Mechanisms funds in 2009-2014 (operated by the Society Integration Foundation);
- has been found guilty by a final judgement of criminal offences related to the use of funds from the EEA and Norway Financial mechanisms or EU structural funds, or other public funds;
- is bankrupt or in the process of bankruptcy, or the process of reorganization or liquidation;
- has been found guilty of grave professional misconduct or has been convicted of an offence concerning its professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of ‘res judicata’;
- has committed fraud, corruption or any other illegal activity;
- has submitted any false information for the purpose of receiving grant.

Types of partnerships:

- **Partner with a financial contribution** – this type of partner receives part of the grant for the implementation of project activities through the project promoter based on conducted Partnership Agreement;
- **Partner without a financial contribution** – this type of partner participates in the implementation of the project activities, but is not granted with a financial contribution for participation in project implementation.

Eligible countries of project partners

Latvia	
Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway	EEA/ Norway Financial Mechanism donor countries
Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Croatia, Estonia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary	EEA/ Norway Financial Mechanism beneficiary countries
Belarus, Russia	Countries outside the European Economic Area having a common border with Latvia

6. Project activities

Action project call focuses on the projects for urgent and actual advocacy with aim to promote civic actions to promote democracy and civic participation. Especially in crisis situations.

Under this call, activities will be supported to allow active reaction and involvement of CSOs to tackle current and urgent issues that require immediate action (advocacy, civic activities that need to be implemented within a year) and that could not be known before.

The duration of project is between **2 and 12 months** within period between **15.07.2020. and 30.04.2024**. The implementation of the activities must start no later than 4 months after the date of conclusion of the agreement of funding.

Eligibility of activities

The planned project activities **must correspond to one of the three thematic areas of the AIF:**

- Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency;
- Human rights and equal treatment through combating any discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity;
- Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Specific conditions:

- Protection of the environment and climate change shall only be supported as part of measures to promote civic participation, advocacy, social innovation and active citizenship.
- Provision of welfare and basic services shall only be supported as part of wider actions addressing awareness-raising, advocacy, empowerment and reform initiatives.

The ACF **will not fund** any activities or projects focusing on:

- activities of a political, military or religious nature;
- amateur or professional sport or culture activities (except cases when these activities are used as a tool/method to reach the aim of the project).

Project activities shall be planned according to the aim, results and framework of the Outcome "[DEMOCRATIC CULTURE](#)".

Outcome „DEMOCRATIC CULTURE”

The objective of the outcome – strengthened democratic culture and civic awareness in Latvia.

Expected indicators of the outcome to be achieved by the granted program projects until 2024:

- 1) Number of people engaged in decision-making processes has raised.
- 2) Share of people involved in civic activities has increased.
- 3) Share of people believing they can influence decision-making processes has grown.
- 4) Supported participatory activities in the development of policy documents (number of laws and policies influenced has raised).

Outputs	Indicators	Unit of measurement
Output 1.1 Awareness-raising on democracy conducted	1.1.1. Informative awareness-raising campaigns on democracy	Number of campaigns
	1.1.2. Civic education initiatives (formal and informal)	Number of participants
Output 1.2 Participation in civic activities stimulated	1.2.1. Initiatives aimed at involving people in civic activities	Number of initiatives
	1.2.2. Initiatives aimed at involving young people (aged 13-30) in civic activities	Number of initiatives
	1.2.3. Initiatives aimed at involving vulnerable groups ¹ in civic activities	Number of initiatives
	1.2.4. Education activities on civic participation for vulnerable individuals	Number of participants
	1.2.5. Creation or upgrading of spaces for civic participation (physical or virtual)	Number of spaces
	1.2.6. Campaigns promoting the recognition/positive image of civil society and civil society organizations	Number of campaigns
Output 1.3 CSO watchdog and advocacy roles reinforced	1.3.1. CSOs involvement in decision-making processes	Number of CSOs
	1.3.2. Analyses on CSOs and the civil society sector conducted and published	Number of analyses
	1.3.3 Initiatives promoting access to information	Number of initiatives

Conditions for selection of activities

- The project can include one or several activities. Each of the activity included in project must **correspond to one, specific indicator from the given frame (table) and match relevant Output**. The activity may match to several indicators, but you must choose a primary match.
- In the project application you will have to indicate the results in relation to the deliverable according to the “Unit of Measure”.
- When choosing your activity, make sure that it helps to achieve at least the one of four indicators of the Outcome “Democratic culture”!

¹ Within the framework of ACF projects, vulnerable persons are Latvian residents who are (potentially may be) subject to social and/or economic exclusion or who have limited political or civil participation opportunities due to their nationality, language, sex, social origin, state of health, age or place of residence.

Supported Activities

Some activity examples are given below. The list is non-exhaustive.

- The municipality has announced a public consultation. The City Development Association involves lawyers to prepare an opinion, organizes the mobilization of the citizens and the survey of the population to ensure a quality dialogue with the local government.
- The association mobilizes the voluntary movement in the city in response to the protracted emergency.
- It is planned to cut down trees in the square near the county culture house to create a parking lot. The building permit has already been approved, but there has been no discussion. The association wants to organize a campaign, picket and go to court against the municipality. This must be done urgently until construction work has begun.
- Pre-planned road construction and reconstruction in the city is canceled. The road section is very important for both residents and entrepreneurs, therefore, in order to change the decision, residents organize protests, prepare letters to government representatives, involve the municipality.
- Due to personal conflicts, the association is slandered and its activities in the region are suspended. The association needs to attract a lawyer to prove that it is a slander and to ensure that the current activities take place.
- The municipality intervenes in the work of the association, trying to replace the executive with people close to it. The provision of services to risk groups provided for in the delegation agreement of the association is endangered. The association needs the services of a mediator and a lawyer to resolve the situation.
- The government has supplemented the law “On measures to prevent and manage the state threat and its consequences due to the spread of Covid-a9” with an article that gives municipalities the right to pay funding to associations and foundations with which a project financing agreement has been concluded for service provision, even if due to emergency it has not been possible to provide them. However, the municipality decides not to do so and the association's staff, who also do not receive the downtime allowance, remain without support. It is necessary to organize constructive talks with the municipality, involving a moderator, a lawyer.

7. Funding rules

Total amount available for projects in this call is 210 000 EUR.

The grant for one project is between **1 000 – 10 000 EUR**. The project grant rate is up to 100%.

IMPORTANT!

- In order to support Latvian civil society during the crisis caused by Covid-19 virus, co-financing of projects is not mandatory, but is allowed. Contributions can be made in cash or in the form of voluntary work.
- Any economic benefit (e.g., income from activities, increased profit resulting from receiving a financial contribution) shall be used in a manner which support the long-term objectives of the project.

If applicant intends to include co-funding, then following conditions apply:

1. Project promoter shall comply all the conditions of the ACF, including conditions for the publicity, expenditure eligibility and reporting, equally for all activities of the whole project, including those that are covered by another source of funding (also if co-funding source is another project).
2. In case of co-financing in the form of voluntary work, project beneficiary (and partner) shall sign agreements with volunteers.
3. Hourly rate of voluntary work (gross) should be planned in the project budget and it should be in the range between the minimum hourly rate in Latvia and the average hourly rate of the respective profession (based on the latest available statistics published on the website of State Revenue Service²).

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

Costs in the project budget must be planned in euros. Only **eligible expenditures** can be included in the project budget.

Project costs may be **eligible from the date of the Board of the Consortium decision to approve the project** (but the contract has not yet been concluded).

Eligible expenditures of project are those actually incurred by the project promoter or the project partner, which meet the following criteria:

1. they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract. Exception is costs that are incurred in the final project month and are paid within 30 days after project;
2. they are connected with the subject of the project contract and they are indicated in the detailed budget of the project;
3. they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
4. they are used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective of the project and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;

² <https://www.vid.gov.lv/lv/statistika/profesiju-atalgojums>

5. they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the project promoter/partner and determined according to the applicable accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles;
6. they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

IMPORTANT!

- Inclusion of a cost item in the budget does not automatically mean they are approved as eligible expenditure if the grant is awarded.
- Any cost must still meet all requirements indicated in this section! In case of non-compliance, the costs will have to be deleted from the budget or, in case of approved projects, returned!

Eligible expenditures are divided into **direct and indirect costs**.

Direct costs

Direct costs that are necessary and identifiable with the implementation of the project and specific activities are as follows:

- cost of personnel assigned to the project;
- travel and subsistence allowances:
 - for project personnel and volunteers
 - for participants of activities
 - for external experts, lecturers
- depreciation or purchase of equipment;
- costs of consumables and supplies;
- costs of other contracts related to the implementation of the project;
- costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract.

Direct expenditures items and their examples are described in more detail in Annex 1 "[Direct eligible expenditures](#)".

Special conditions:

1. Costs shall comply with the promoter (or partner) internal rules (if any) or usual practices.
2. In case of purchase of goods and services project promoter shall respect the rules of applicable public procurement law (if applicable) or the following principles: economic practices, responsibility and fair competition. If the beneficiary is not obliged to follow stricter national laws, in cases of purchases exceeding 5000.00 EUR the project promoter shall invite at least three suppliers/service providers to submit offers.
3. If the full purchase price of equipment is included in the project costs (not the depreciation of equipment; see Annex 1 for more information), project promoter must:
 - a. keep the equipment in its ownership for a period of at least five years following the completion of the project and continues to use the equipment for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period;
 - b. keep the equipment properly insured against losses such as fire, theft or other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least five years following the completion of the project; and
 - c. provide appropriate resources for the maintenance of the equipment for at least five years following the completion of the project.

If any of the above-mentioned requirements are not meaningful or rational, it should be duly justified in the project application. Decision on the derogation from this rule can be agreed in case the project receives grant.

4. Reconstruction, renovation, or refurbishment of a real estate shall be eligible only in cases where the achievement of the objective of the project is not possible without such costs and shall not exceed 50% of the eligible direct costs of the project.

WHAT IS “USUAL PRACTICE” OR “INTERNAL RULES”?

- This may be the organization's accounting policy, collective agreement, internal rules or other internal documents. These may include the processes and usual arrangements implemented until project implementation for the organization to operate, the acquisition of fixed assets, the organization of accounting, the planning of expenditures, the selection of service providers and the determination of salaries.
- **Example:** If usual practice of the organization is to provide sandwich and coffee during coffee breaks, then it cannot be planned to provide caviar and cognac within implementation of this project. If usual practice has been to travel from the place of residence to various meetings on foot, by bicycle or by public transport, then it cannot be planned to have expenses for fuel and parking tickets within the framework of this project.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are those eligible costs that are necessary for the implementation of the project and they can be identified and justified by accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs, but they are hard to separate and attribute towards specific project activities. They may not include any eligible direct costs.

Indirect costs may be, for example, overhead expenses, such as rent of office space, communication expenses, office and household goods expenses, etc.

Project promoters and project partners may apply **a flat rate of up to 15%** of direct eligible personnel costs to cover these costs. The calculation of indirect costs does not have to be indicated in the budget, but the need for indirect costs must be explained in the application form.

IMPORTANT!

- The project beneficiary shall not submit any proof of expenditure for indirect costs.
- If the actual eligible direct personnel costs will be lower than planned in the project budget, the amount of indirect costs will be decreased proportionally.
- Project personnel costs should not be covered by indirect costs – they can be planned in the direct personnel costs as they are directly linked/incurred due to the project implementation.

INELIGIBLE COST

The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

1. interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges;
2. charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to accounts and financial services imposed by the project contract;
3. costs related to purchase of land or real estate;
4. provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
5. exchange losses;
6. recoverable VAT;
7. costs that are covered by other sources;

8. fines, penalties and costs of litigation, except where litigation is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project; and
9. excessive or reckless expenditure.

PAYMENTS TO THE PROJECT PROMOTERS

Project promoters will be able to receive **up to 90%** of the amount allocated to the ACF **in advance**.

The final payment will be transferred within 10 working days after the approval of the final report.

In cases where projects have been assessed as posing a high risk for the programme, the FO may make a justified decision to change the payments scheme (reducing pre-financing or exceptionally, applying a scheme without pre-financing under which the FO reimburses project promoters only the amount of grant expenses verified by the FO). The project applicant should be informed about such circumstances together with the results of the call.

8. Selection of the projects

The process of selection of projects consists of **three phases**:

- Administrative and eligibility screening.
- Quality assessment of applications.
 - Assessment and scoring by project assessors
 - Recommendations of the Selection Committee
- Approval by the Board of the Consortium.

Quality assessment of applications takes place **at least once every four months**. In exceptional situations, the decision to start process may be taken as a matter of urgency by the Board of the Consortium:

- if at least one of the submitted project applicants has classified the project as *extreme urgent* (preferably starting within 2-3 weeks) or as *very urgent* (preferably starting within 4-6 weeks);
- if more than 10 projects have been submitted;
- due to other administrative or external circumstances.

IMPORTANT!

- Use Annex 2 to make sure you have prepared everything you need to submit your project and pass the compliance and administrative assessment!

ELIGIBILITY SCREENING

During eligibility screening the project applicant are assessed against the criteria set by the ACF, which are described in the section "[5. Project applicants and partners](#)". If project applicant does not meet all the requirements, project application is rejected without being further evaluated.

ADMINISTRATIVE SCREENING

During the administrative screening of the project, it is checked whether the project applicant has fulfilled all the formal conditions specified in these regulations for the preparation of the project and submitted all the necessary information. In case of unclarities regarding eligibility or missing documents, project applicant will be required to submit additional information via online system once during the screening, giving a deadline of 2 working days. Should the applicant fail to respond, the application is evaluated with existing documents or may be rejected.

Criteria of administrative screening:

No.	Criteria	Assessment
1	Project application has been submitted before the submission deadline	Yes/No
2	The duration of the project is between 2 and 12 months	Yes/No
3	The project activities take place between 01.07.2020. and 30.04.2024.	Yes/No
4	Grant amount to be funded by ACF is between 1 000 euro and 10 000 euro	Yes/No

5	Project costs are eligible	Yes/No
6	Project applicant declaration has been annexed to the project application	Yes/No
7	CV of the project staff has been annexed to the project application	Yes/No
8	Project partner meets eligibility criteria	Yes/No
9	Partner mandate has been annexed to the project application (if applicable)	Yes/No

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Maximum score of the quality assessment is 77 points. The overall assessment score consists of the score of two types of quality criteria:

- general quality criteria (maximum 60 points);
- specific quality criteria (maximum 17 points).

To be considered for funding, proposals in quality assessment must score at least 60% in total and pass the minimum threshold in exclusionary criteria 1., 2., 3., 4., 6., 7. (please refer to the table “General quality criteria”).

Each proposal is assessed by two independent and objective assessors that are selected in an open call. Total score of the project is an average score of both assessors. If the difference between the any of exclusionary criteria given by the two assessors is more than 30%, project application is assessed by the third assessor. In such cases the arithmetic average score of the two closest scores is used for the final ranking. The third assessor is not involved if their score would not, in any way, result in the support of the project as project does not pass minimum thresholds.

General quality criteria:

No	Criteria	Maximum number of points	Minimal threshold
1	Overall relevance of the project to the achievement of the indicators Outcome (in the context of ACF aim)	5	4
2	Relevance of the project activities to the indicators of the Outcome and Outputs	10	8
3	Compliance of the project with the focus of the ongoing call (focuses on the projects for urgent and actual advocacy with aim to promote civic actions to promote democracy and civic participation. Especially in crisis situations.)	10	8
4	Activities are appropriate to achieve the project objectives, they are significant and relevant to the on-going processes within the field of civic society	10	6
5	Professional competences (qualification, skills and experience) of applicant's and partner's (if applicable) staff to implement the project (proportionately to the scale and specific nature of the project, tasks of the staff)	5	
6	Project costs are linked to the project activities, calculation of costs is detailed and clear and costs are in line with average market prices	10	6
7	Project cost-efficiency in relation the planned activities and results	10	6
	TOTAL:	60	

Specific quality criteria

No.	Criteria	Maximum number of points
1	The project is implemented only in the territory of Latvia	10/0
2	The actual daily activities of the project applicant so far are happened outside Riga	5/0
3	Project activities will mainly implement in and impact of them will be for the territories outside Riga and Pieriga ³	2/0

³ **Ādažu novads, Babītes novads, Baldones novads, Carnikavas novads, Garkalnes novads, Jūrmalas pilsēta, Ķekavas novads, Mārupes novads, Olaines novads, Ropažu novads, Salaspils novads, Stopiņu novads.**

9. Decision making and grant contracting

The Board of the Consortium will take the final decision on applications to be supported. The Board of the Consortium shall verify that:

- the selection process has been conducted in accordance with the Programme Implementation Agreement between FMO and the Consortium;
- the selection process has been conducted in a fair, unbiased and transparent manner;
- the recommendations from the Selection Committee comply with the rules and objectives of the Programme.

The Board of the Consortium can make changes to the recommendations of the Selection Committee only in very exceptional and justified cases, for example, if implementation of the project would not comply with:

- Programme Implementation Agreement between FMO and the Consortium;
- values, principles and objectives of the EEA/Norway Financial Mechanisms and the ACF;
- other conditions outlined in these rules and guidelines.

THE SELECTION COMMITTEE

The project assessment obtained as a result of the work of the project assessors is ranked in descending order and submitted to the Selection Committee. It reviews the strategic compliance of the proposed projects (individually and as a whole) with the objective of the ACF and the overall results of the selected Outcome, the Outputs and their indicators, as well as other conditions set out in these Regulations.

The Selection Committee also may modify the ranking of the project applications to be supported, in justified cases based on transparent criteria, such as impact on the main objectives of the Programme, impact on framework results and compliance with the general EEA / Norwegian and Latvian conditions for the functioning of the ACF, common values and the like. The Selection Committee may decide to approve a project application with conditions. These conditions could relate to reducing the budget and activities, obtaining clarification on some elements of the application etc.

The Selection Committee also establish a reserve list, including project applications that are recommended for support, but due to lack of funding cannot be supported at the time of the decision.

The Selection Committee consists of 3 voting members and observers.

NOTIFICATION OF DECISIONS AND COMPLAINT MECHANISM

If the project applicant is found to be ineligible for eligibility or administrative criteria and excluded from further tendering, the project applicant will be notified of the rejection in the online system within two weeks from the date of submission of project. The project applicant may contest this decision, stating the reasons, within 5 working days from the date of receipt of the notification in accordance with the procedure specified in the notification.

The results of the call will be announced within 6 weeks from the start of assessment of the projects individually to each project applicant in the online system, as well as published on the website www.activecitizensfund.lv. The project applicant may contest this decision in writing (signed letter by post or electronically signed letter by email) to the Programme Director, stating the reasons, within five

working days from the date of receipt of the notification in accordance with the procedure specified in the notification.

GRANT CONTRACTING

The Project financing agreement procedure will start immediately after the decision of the Board of the Consortium and it should be concluded no later than 60 calendar days from the date of notification of the approval of the project. The financing agreement will be agreed with the project promoter and it will be possible to sign it both in person and by e-signature. Before or during the conclusion of the agreement, the project promoter must ensure the participation of the project administrative staff in the training organized by the AIF on the conditions for the implementation of the project.

Direct eligible expenditures

1. Cost of personnel assigned to the project

This budget position should cover costs of those employees who will work in the project. In standard situations, personnel costs are:

- salary,
- State social insurance mandatory contributions (by the employer),
- State fee of the business risk,
- assessment of voluntary work in terms of money.

In addition to the salary, payments specified in regulatory enactments and in the internal procedures of the organization (for example, collective agreement or normal staff practice) may be planned here in proportion to the time worked in the project, such as vacation pay, health insurance, etc.

If an employee also serves other duties in organization, that are not part of the project, the budget for this project should be limited to the part of the working time devoted to that project.

IMPORTANT!

- In ACF projects, personnel are subject to employment contracts (or additional arrangements to existing employment contracts) and voluntary work agreements.
- As the terms of the program allow employees to pay for, for example, vacation and sick leave, we urge our employees to provide statutory social guarantees and do not look for alternative forms of contract.

In terms of personnel costs, there should be planned all employees who will ensure project management and accounting, as well as employees who will coordinate and organize activities, participate in the implementation of activities. They can be both permanent and short-term employees for certain tasks.

Do not plan royalties for creative work or remuneration for services that will be provided under a company / service contract – include such costs in Heading 5 “Costs of other contracts related to the implementation of the project”.

IMPORTANT!

- It is up to the project applicant to decide whether a particular person should be involved in the project as an employee (employment contract and salary should be included under “personnel costs”) or as an external service provider (royalty or company contract and remuneration should be included under “Service costs”).
- If the same person is planned in the project for several duties (for example, project manager and lecturer), you can indicate each duty in a separate budget line. This is especially important in cases where the amount of remuneration differs. At the same time, we urge for budget lines to be simplified as much as possible and not fragmented unnecessarily.

ABOUT WORKING TIME RECORDS AND TIMESHEETS

- ACF project promoters will not be required to submit detailed timesheets for each working hour, but will be required to comply with the working time requirement set out in Article 137 of the Labor Law. In some cases, a summary description of the work served will be required.
- It is especially important to record working time in cases where the same person serves different duties in the organization within one or more projects - a table or other working time accounting solution is the documentary justification for cost allocation and verification.

2. Travel and subsistence allowances

Travel and subsistence costs should be planned in accordance with the norms and principles specified in Regulation No 969 of the Cabinet of Ministers on the Procedures for Reimbursement of Expenditure Related to Business Trips. The costs of foreign persons (for example, project partners' trips to Latvia) should be planned in compliance with the relevant regulatory enactments of their home country.

Under this heading, the typical costs for project employees and volunteers will be:

- fuel purchase,
- purchase of tickets for public transport,
- flight ticket purchase for international trips,
- accommodation costs,
- participation fees in events,
- daily allowance on mission,
- other mission costs.

Activity participants, external experts and lecturers may only bear the costs of travel and accommodation.

The budget form must specify the groups of persons to whom the specific expenditure is allocated:

- project staff (employees and volunteers),
- participants of activities,
- external experts, lecturers.

When planning travel and travel costs, the following principles must be observed:

- The trips must be directly linked and necessary for the implementation of the project.
- The costs to be covered by daily money cannot be budgeted separately (e.g. catering).
- The choice of transport and accommodation areas should be economic and reasonable, for example, without the choice of luxury hotels, the choice of cheaper class airlines, the most efficient solution for local travel (e.g. use of public transport if the car is significantly more expensive), etc.

3. Depreciation or purchase of equipment

This budget position should cover costs of new or second hand equipment:

- portion of the depreciation corresponding to the duration of the project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the project may be considered eligible,
- exceptional cases – the entire purchase price of the equipment can be considered as eligible, only if corresponding to additional requirements that are described in the rules and guidelines chapter No 7 “[Special conditions](#)” of this Call.

Fixed assets in associations and foundations are items for long-term use (more than one year) and their value should be more than 430 euros at the purchase time. In projects supported by ACF this provision

applies to all associations and foundations – both those that have single-entry and double-entry accounting systems.

Depreciation costs are applicable to both fixed assets purchased during ACF project implementation and those purchased before project implementation, if depreciation continues during ACT project implementation period.

IMPORTANT!

- The duration of use of fixed assets in the project must be applied in accordance with the usual practice of organization. For organizations that keep accounts in a double-entry book system, this is usually set out in the organization's accounting policy. Organizations that use single entry accounting system and do not have internal policy, may specify duration of usage, e.g. in decision, order or other internal document of the organization.

4. Costs of consumables and supplies

This heading shall plan the costs of purchasing any goods and inventory necessary for the implementation of the project, with the exception of fixed assets. Typical costs of purchasing goods could be:

- office supplies,
- household goods,
- food products for events,
- purchase of other tangible items for the project

Due to transparency, it is desirable to group costs by activity of affiliation or by type of cost, including their use (e.g. activity/purpose).

Project applicants must make sure that budget is detailed enough without losing its intelligibility.

5. Costs of other contracts related to the implementation of the project

This budget position should cover costs of other contracts for the purposes of carrying out the project. Typical costs are:

- printing and design services,
- rental of premises and equipment,
- catering services,
- transport services,
- communication services,
- services of experts, lecturers, consultants and other specialists,
- royalties,
- other services for project purposes.

Due to transparency, it is desirable to group costs by activity of affiliation or by type of cost, including their use (e.g. activity/purpose).

6. Costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract

This budget position should cover costs that are arising directly from requirements imposed by the ACF project contract for each project, if there are any.

If there is a project partner from Donor States, their actual eligible costs should be approved by report from independent certified auditor and costs may be planned in this budget heading.

CHECKLIST FOR PROJECT APPLICANT

Before submitting your application form to the ACF, please make sure that:

- The applicant meets the requirements of a civil society organization (see the section “Project applicants and partners”)
- The amount of the request ACF grant shall not exceed 10 000 EUR
- Duration of the project is between 2 and 12 months
- Project activities take place between 15.07.2020. and 30.04.2024.
- Signed declaration of the project applicant has been submitted
- CVs of the project staff has been submitted - in the form of a document or with a link to the staff's professional profile on linkedin.com
- Signed declaration of project partner(-s) has been submitted (if applicable)

Project applicant declaration

I, _____ (name, surname), as a legal representative of _____ (name of the applicant organization), hereinafter referred to as “project applicant”, confirm that:

- 1) project applicant is familiar with conditions set in the Call for proposals for Strategic projects and undertakes to follow them during the implementation of project;
- 2) project applicant and partner(-s), if applicable, comply with all conditions set in Call for proposals for Strategic projects required to apply for and receive the funds of Active Citizens Fund;
- 3) project applicant will adhere to the principles of the “Code of Conduct of Associations and Foundations” during the implementation of the project - <https://nvo.lv/uploads/201908261033245269.pdf>;
- 4) project applicant will not receive double funding for the implementation of one and the same project or any of its activities;
- 5) project applicant has provided accurate and true information in project application and its annexes;
- 6) project applicant has provided the document copies which correspond to the originals;
- 7) project applicant has not influenced or attempted to influence work and decisions of the Active Citizens Fund, intentionally or unintentionally, to gain improper economical, emotional, political, financial or any other advantage for his/her organization, for himself/herself or for others as well as commits not to exert any influence on the further work and decisions of the Active Citizens Fund regarding this project application and decisions relating thereto;
- 8) agree that personal data provided in the project application may be used for the processing and evaluation of the project application.

I agree that the Active Citizens Fund or the EEA/ Norway Financial Mechanism Office reserves the right to request documents by the project applicant or any third-party certifying compliance with the above requirements.

I acknowledge that administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on project applicant and it will not be eligible to receive grant for project implementation if it has, intentionally or unintentionally, provided false information.

Name and surname of the legal representative:

Signature:

Date:

Partnership declaration

I, the undersigned _____ (*name and surname of the legal representative of the partner organization*) representing _____ (*full official name of the partner organization*), hereinafter referred to as „the partner organization” or „my organization”, hereby:

- 1) agree to be a partner in the project _____ (*title of the project*), hereinafter referred to as „project”, of _____ (*full official name of the applicant organization*), hereinafter referred to as „the applicant organization”, which is submitted to the Call for proposals for Action projects of Active Citizens Fund in Latvia funded by the EEZ/Norway Financial Mechanisms;
- 2) confirm that information provided on the partner organization in the project application and annexes is correct;
- 3) confirm that I am familiar with the project application and I am aware of my role in the project implementation;
- 4) declare that my organization has the operational capacity to complete activities set out in the project application;
- 5) mandate the applicant organization to act on all matters related to the project implementation, including submitting of project application, receiving of the funds, reporting and ensuring publicity activities;
- 6) confirm that my organization will sign a partnership agreement with the applicant organization in case this project application will be granted, undertake to keep all documentation related to the project implementation until the end of year 2028 as well as consent to controls of the Active Citizens Fund or EEA/Norway Financial Mechanism Office during the project implementation and after the project implementation until the end of year 2028;
- 7) confirm that my organization does not have any outstanding obligations and a final court decision in connection with the EEA/Norway financial mechanisms funds in 2009-2014;
- 8) confirm that my organization has not found guilty by a final judgement of criminal offences related to the use of funds from EEA/Norway Financial mechanisms or EU structural funds, or other public funds;
- 9) confirm that my organization is not bankrupt or in the process of bankruptcy, or the process of reorganization or liquidation;
- 10) confirm that my organization has not committed fraud, corruption or any other illegal activity;
- 11) confirm that my organization has not submitted any false information for the purpose of receiving grant;
- 12) confirm that my organization has not been guilty of grave professional misconduct or has not been convicted of an offence concerning its professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of ‘res judicata’;
- 13) agree that personal data provided in the project application may be used for the processing and evaluation of the project application.

Name and surname of legal representative:

Signature:

Date:

**The Active Citizens Fund reserves the right to ask to provide documents certifying partner organization’s compliance with the above requirements.*

