

Stronger Roots Program
Information Webinar on the Call for Proposals
Stronger Ties of Civil Society Networks in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and
Hungary

Questions & Answers

ELIGIBILITY AND PARTNERSHIP

Does the applying network need to be established at the time of submitting the concept note? And do we need to have partnership agreements/agreement contracts with cooperating organisations when submitting the concept note?

The network does not have to be legally established, it can be informal only. The applicant, however, must be a legal body, that means that a single legally registered organization can apply on behalf/for the whole network. If your network has it, you are asked to attach membership contracts or partnership agreement. If you do not have any of these documents, a list of member organizations, member networks and/or individual members in the concept note will do.

In which way is applicant supposed to prove the cooperation among the members of the network? E.g. previous agreements, statements of members etc.?

In the concept note, you are supposed to outline main activities of your network over the last 6-12 months, assess their impact and explain how your members participate in joint actions and decision-making. This description should prove that your network is active and involves participation of its members.

Can we apply if our network does not have its legal entity but runs as a project under our organisation?

Yes. The network does not need to have a legal registration. However, the applicant (the organization applying and running the project), has to be registered as legal body.

When our network plans to engage new members or partners, do these project partners have to come to any agreement on cooperation before the project is submitted? Do we need a letter of intent from potentially cooperating entities?

No, you are not expected to have an agreement with or letter of intent of your target group during submitting your concept note. However, there needs to be solid analysis and understanding of specific concerns or needs of your potential partners and you should set up goals of your cooperation that are achievable.

Is it necessary for the potential project partner/s (project target group) to be a network as well? Or can it be individuals?

Ideally, it should also be a structure that represents aggregated interest (see bellow) of the target group - organization(s), institution(s) or network(s), rather than just individuals - in order to ensure larger scale, and more sustainable cooperation. However, for smaller, informal networks (in particular outside the main urban areas), if you identify engaging individuals with divergent views as the most effective way to strengthen your network and get forward in your cause and you are able to explain the reasons, you may do so. In that case, you should explain the importance of such partner in the concept note.

Can Trade Unions be involved in the project?

Yes, trade unions are part of the civil society and they are eligible as a partner of the project or a member of a network. In regards to the eligibility of an applicant, all the eligible legal personalities are defined in the Call for Proposals.

How many organisations have to be included in the network? Is there any required minimum number?

At the time of submitting your concept note, your network have to represent at least 10 entities that work together at least for 6 months. If your network has less members, it is not eligible for this Call for Proposals.

And is there any minimum required for how many new members or partners shall we approach in the project?

There is no minimum or maximum limit for engaging new members or partners within your project. You are free to choose engaging one or more groups of prospective members or partners, the amount and diversity of these group/s' representatives, and the depth of their involvement. However, any lower quantity of those newly involved should be compensated by the greater quality (depth and sustainability) of their involvement.

How can we prove that we represent 10 entities in the network? And do all of 10 entities must cooperate for at least six months?

The network must represent at least 10 entities, in order to be eligible under this Call for Proposals. In the concept note, you must complete a list of members of the network and describe how they cooperated for the last 6 months as a network, not individually. The reason is that we aim to support networks that are already established and avoid supporting very new networks that will need some time to start their cooperation and prove their impact.

If we are a network with 6 members and plan to engage 4 more members during the project, are we eligible?

No, you are not eligible. The network must have at least 10 members at the moment when it is submitting its concept note.

As for the minimum of 10 entities, do they have to be all organizations or can it be a mixture of registered CSOs, informal groups, businesses etc.? Or only 10 of the same type? And can individuals be counted as network's members?

Applying network must represent at least 10 entities (or be an umbrella organization of at least 10 entities) where the entities could be CSOs, individual experts, businesses, institutions or other organizations. It can be a mixture of any entities that form your network and actively participate in it.

The members of the network can even be individual experts as we understand that this may be a situation of smaller innovative initiatives and they are welcome to apply. For most of the projects, however, we expect that the network will be consisting of organisations (or even networks) as it's members.

As a network, we have less than 10 members, but each member has many experts that cooperate actively with each other on different topics. Can these individuals be considered as part of the network? Thus are we considered as eligible applicant?

No, if these experts are not direct/immediate members of the network in the same way as the real members and do not work/participate directly in the network's activities as real members and the network itself has less than 10 members, than it is not eligible. Individuals collaborating on a rare basis or supporters of NGOs does not count as network members.

Can some of the members be new members with less than 6 months of common activity, provided that at least 10 other members form a "core" of the network?

Yes, if the network has at least 10 members actively working for at least 6 months and several other members that have just joined, it is eligible.

Why did you choose the criteria of minimum 10 entities? Is it not discriminatory to the smaller networks?

Yes, we realize this condition excludes smaller networks. Given the high amount of networks operating in the targeted countries on the one hand, and our limited funds and efforts to bring systemic impacts on the other, we consciously decided to limit the scope of this Call for Proposals in this way.

Can there be more than 10 members for collaboration?

Yes. There is no maximum limit for network members or partners for collaboration.

If we are an association of film producers with more than 10 members and would like to initiate a cross-cooperation project which would involve further partners (across related and more general field), are we eligible? Or do we have to have created such network beforehand (min 6 months)?

If it is an association with more than 10 members, then it is eligible. In the concept note, you will be asked to outline your network activities for the past 6 months and prove by that that it is an association with active history which was not created just for the purpose of the call.

As an umbrella organization, we have more than 10 members (organizations). Do all these organizations have to be active in the project?

Yes, we are expecting that the network's member organizations will be actively involved in the activities of your proposed project (reaching out to new partners or members) and also that they will take part in the preparation of the project.

We are currently establishing a roof organisation. We have started with this process six months ago, now we would like to invite people with different opinions on the Czech psychiatric reform into it. Are we eligible when our roof organisation is not legally established yet?

The network does not have to be a legal entity as long as it has one of its members with a non-commercial registered entity eligible for the call who can apply on the network's behalf and as long as the network can document its activities for the past 6 months at least. Such a network is an eligible applicant. Furthermore, it is not expected that informal networks will turn formal during the project, they are welcome to stay informal.

Are the organizations who were granted support in the first Call for Proposals of the Stronger Roots program eligible to apply in the current Call as well?

Yes, they are eligible to apply.

ELIGIBLE COSTS AND BUDGET

What kind of costs are eligible? Are working hours of the employees of the applying CSO to organize the meetings and events, to find ways to cooperate with stakeholders and to improve relationships etc. among eligible costs?

Yes, generally all costs necessary to implement the project are eligible. In the concept note, you will only have to complete a total sum of your project, that you apply for (ranging from 10 000 to 40 000 Euros). Only if selected to the second round of the granting process, you will be asked to complete a full application with a detailed budget. If there are any unclear or disputable items included, you will be asked to explain these during personal or online interview and/or adjust your budget.

Is co-financing mandatory?

No, co-financing is not requested.

Do you have any guidance on the budget use? Are there any restriction in what it can and what cannot be financed? How much overhead can we include?

In the concept note, you are only expected to fill in a total sum you will be asking for the project. Generally all costs necessary to implement the project are eligible, if they are in accordance with the law and meet the

principle of cost-effectiveness. We are expecting common rate of overhead in the budget, we did not determine particular amount of that.

If we receive the grant, is the financing based on advance payments or refinancing?

After signing a contract, the grantees will receive the first payment. Another percentage of the grant will be transferred after an interim report and final amount will be delivered by the end of the project. The grantees will receive all the funding money during the project (there will be no money after final report).

Do you have any recommendation on planning of the budget?

The budget depends on each project. We understand there is a need of flexibility with building new project relationships and cooperation, so of course budget changes will be possible during the project implementation if they are necessary, helpful in achieving project results and reasonably explained.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Is it possible to find out how many organisations applied for the last call? How many organisations do you expect to apply?

This Call for Proposals is very different from the first Call for Proposals of the Stronger Roots Program so it is not possible to compare it. The previous call was targeted on a wide range of organizations and thus attracted a very high number of applicants - we received 144 applications from Czech Republic, 47 from Slovakia, 75 from Hungary. The current Call is exclusively aimed at networks and has a more specific topic, therefore we expect less applications.

Does this Call for Proposals intend to support networking only within one country or also across countries - (e.g. organisations operating in Hungary and Slovakia)? What about relevant organisations from other countries such as Austria or Germany, may they be involved in the network?

In this Call for Proposals, we will only support projects that happen within the Czech Republic, or Hungary or Slovakia (and not in any other country) and strengthen cooperation of civil society networks inside the country. However, you can invite experts or guests from any other country for example to participate on the round tables or meetings if you find it relevant and benefiting to your project - it will be considered as eligible cost.

What kind of organisations do you prefer to support? Do you intend to support networks of organisations doing research and policy analysis as well?

There is no preferred issue or type of civil society networks that we focus on as long as the network's cooperation adheres to the principles of democracy and human rights. The selection process assesses the quality of the project and the most important criterion will be to what extent the project strives for transversal cooperation with diverging worldviews or stakeholder perspectives. Networks doing research and policy analysis are perfectly eligible.

Is there any plan to repeat this type (or the previous type) of call?

Not in the near future. However, if the program proves to be effective and needed, we would like to do it again.

What is the total allocation for this call for proposal?

It is € 50.000 for each country (Hungary, Slovakia and Czech Republic) so € 150.000 in total .

What will happen if we are going to prepare the project for 40 000 EUR and all the other applicants do the same. Are you going to lower support for two projects or prefer only one project? Do you have prepared these criteria?

This decision will be upon the selection committee and it will depend on the quality of proposed projects (the criteria will be the same for both “cheaper” and “more expensive” projects). Various scenarios are possible - the selection committee may decide to choose one project for 40 000 Euro only, two projects where one will apply for higher amount and the other for a lesser one, or several projects with lesser budgets. The quality of the project is decisive.

Within some networks, language skills are quite problematic. Is the language of the project English?

The language of the project activities (writing analysis, organizing events etc.) can of course be local, but language of the Stronger Roots program is English indeed - you will have to submit the application in English (otherwise it is non-eligible), write interim reports in English, receive English-speaking consultations etc. Although we realize it may be more difficult for some of the organizations, it is a mandatory condition of the program given its three country target. The Stronger Roots program counts with an extensive evaluation of its functioning and impact and English language will ensure all partner organizations can share and reflect on all project materials and results.

Do you have any good advice for us based on the experiences from the previous call?

Although both focus on strengthening constituency of civil society entities, the previous Call for Proposals was very different from the current one and it is not possible to compare. Generally, however, we expect that the applying networks will realize how benefiting the transversal cooperation can be for them and will thoughtfully plan the target groups to reach out to and the most effective activities to build such relationships and cooperate with them. Through this, they will become more embedded, effective, sustainable, i.e. resilient in working on their respective cause. To get a better idea of what is crucial when evaluating the concept notes, please see the selection criteria. Division of points is a indicator of what we consider important for concept notes to be successful.

TRANSVERSAL COOPERATION

What do the aggregate interests mean exactly?

It means that it is not a particular interest of a few people or one non-profit organization. It is a common denominator of numerous and various particular interests espoused by the (more than 10) members of the given collaborative structure (network). Such common interest can include a shared ambition to resolve/respond to a certain challenge by changing legislation, conducting a constructive dialogue, raising awareness about a topic, exchanging experience, training certain skills among the members or ensuring resources for their particular work. Hence, the network can be defined by a common issue, CSO field (such as environment, social justice, education, human rights and other), value (more progressive or more conservative), profession (campaigners, communication or advocacy officers, fundraisers, researchers etc.) or location (nation-wide, region of the country or a village).

Can lobbying be a part of the project?

Yes, it could be. It depends on how effectively and sustainably the network's activities reach out towards the new members of diverging worldviews or new partners with diverging stakeholder perspectives.

Do the outputs from the project have to be measurable?

Yes, we are definitely looking to document the impact of the projects. However, the few expected indicators of projects success may not be all measurable so both qualitative and quantitative indicators are fine.

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

Where can we find the concept note form and see how it looks like?

You need to submit the concept note together with the supporting documents electronically [here](#). If you would like to see first how the application looks like, you can have a look at the PDF file [here](#), but please remember this is just a preview.

Is annual report required from the network even if it is not a legal entity or from the applicant who is going to represent the whole network?

The applicant has to be a legal entity. The applicant could be the network itself (if it is a legal entity) or single civil society organization representing the whole network. Whoever is the applicant provides the annual report.

Must annual report and other supporting documents be in English?

Supporting documents (financial and annual report and network membership or partnership agreement) can be submitted in local language.

What is the timeline of the selection process? Could you specify the deadline for the 2. round of selection?

The deadline for submitting the concept notes electronically is on June 9, 2020 at 13:00 - please try to be responsible and do not leave the submitting on the very last moment. We are prepared to solve any technical issues that may come up, but we will not be able to help you after the deadline.

We expect to announce the selected concept notes that pass to the second round of the selection process in mid-July the latest (depending on the number of submitted concept notes). After that, the selected applicants will have three weeks to complete the full application. Final results will be announced by the end of August. The projects are expected to start from September 1, 2020.

Can we have a look at the application form for the 2. round of selection?

No, it is not possible yet, we are still working on it. But it will have the usual structure - you will be asked to depict your target groups, goals, activities, outputs, outcomes and budget in greater detail.