

OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Guideline for Applicants

Contracting Authority: Together for Life (TFL)
In partnership with: BIRN Albania, Qëndresa Qytetare and Destiny
Center for Excellence

**Title: Phase 1 - SPACE sub-grants to support local
grassroots CSOs operating in health and education sector**

Reference number of grant contract: IPA III/2022/441-234

“Support Participation, Accountability and Civil society Empowerment” (SPACE)

Dateline for submission of applications: 19 December 2023, at 17.00

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1. SPACE PROJECT SUB-GRANTING SCHEME

1.1. BACKGROUND

“Together for life” association, in cooperation with BIRN Albania, Qëndresa Qytetare and Destiny Center for Excellence, is implementing the project “Support Participation, Accountability and Civil Society Empowerment” (SPACE). This project is funded by the European Commission, reference EuropeAid/174080/DD/ACT/.

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the engagement of civil society organizations (CSOs) in public policy processes/ cycle through evidence - based advocacy and monitoring of reforms.

This will be achieved through: a) improving the capacities of civil society organizations for enabling them to engage as actor of governance; b) monitoring government functioning, voice concerns, and promote accountability in health and education sector; c) increasing the cooperation and collaboration between CSOs, media, youth, state/ non- state stakeholders on transparency and accountability in health and education sectors.

Through the actions undertaken as part of this project, is expected that grassroots civil society organizations will work better to demand increased accountability and budget transparency by public institutions in health and education sector; Public pressure on authorities to respond, change behavior and reduce corruption will be increased and CSOs, media, youth, state/non-state stakeholders will work together to improve the budget transparency and accountability, leading to the better quality of services for the Albanian citizens.

The sub-granting scheme, **divided into two phases**, constitutes a vital component of the SPACE project. This open call for proposals is part of the first round of SPACE project sub-granting scheme and it aims to award up to 6 grassroots civil society organizations from different regions of the country. *CSOs that emerge as winners in the first round of the sub-granting scheme, will remain eligible to reapply in the second round of the call for proposals.*

The selected CSOs are expected to implement actions that monitor, advocate and raise awareness for better governance in health and education sector. ***Priority will be given to small local grassroots organizations, aiming to empower them to fulfill their watchdog role, advocate for community interests and amplify the community’s voice.*** Organizations are encouraged to develop local advocacy plans to improve accountability and transparency of public institutions in the local level.

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE OPEN CALL

The specific objective of this Call for Proposals is to provide financial support for small local grassroots CSOs from different regions of Albania, enabling them to push for transparency and accountability of local public institutions in health and education sector, while working toward advocacy and change.

The expected results to be obtained under this call for proposals are: (a) Grassroot local CSOs capable to increase pressure on public authorities to reduce corruption in health and education sectors; (b) Albanian citizens experience an improved quality of services in education and health sectors, due to the improvement of transparency and accountability of public institutions in the local level.

1.3 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE SUB - GRANTING AUTHORITY

<i>Total indicative budget available for this call for proposals:</i>	45.000 EUR
<i>Min. amount contribution per project:</i>	6000 EUR
<i>Max. amount contribution per project:</i>	9000 EUR
<i>Coverage of costs:</i>	The sub-granting scheme will award 100% of eligible costs.
<i>Duration of the Action:</i>	Min. 6 months Max. 9 months
<i>Action must take place in:</i>	Albania

2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the practical guide, which is applicable to the present call (<https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/ePRAG>).

2.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.1.1 Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s))

In order to be eligible for a sub-grant, the lead applicant must:

- be a non-governmental organization, local civil society organization legally registered and operating in the territory of Albania;
- be non-profit making;
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) (if any), not acting as an intermediary;



Lead applicants must sign the Declaration by the Lead Applicant (*Annex 3*).

The lead applicant may act individually or with co-applicant(s). *The cooperation and collaboration between different local grassroots CSOs are encouraged in this call for proposals, giving priority to partnerships.*

Co-applicants (if any) must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant. Co-applicants should participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant. If awarded the grant contract, the co-applicant(s) (if any) will become beneficiary(ies) in the action. Co-applicants must sign the Mandate (*Annex 4*).

If awarded the sub-grant contract, the lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the coordinator in the Special Conditions (part of the Sub-Grant Contract). The coordinator is the sole interlocutor of the contracting authority. It represents and acts on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (if any) and coordinate the design and implementation of the action.

The applicant may not submit more than one application under this Call for Proposals. The applicant may not be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity in another application at the same time.

2.1.2 Eligible actions

The proposed actions for this call for proposals should focus on delivering results based on the objective set out in section 1 of this document.

Type of actions suggested – non exhaustive.

- Monitoring, analyzing the local plans on health or education sectors.
- Monitor the quality of services toward the local community in health or education sectors.
- Advocacy initiatives that encourage changes in local government policy's/ legislations.
- Prepare advocacy plans to improve the quality of service toward the local community in health or education sectors.
- Awareness-raising activities on community rights in health or education sector including right to information and data protection.
- Activities that encourage public consultations.
- Increase pressure on public authorities for more transparency and accountability.

During the implementation of the project the sub-granting authority (TFL) will provide for the awarded sub-grantees:

- Capacity building trainings on project implementation and advocacy/ awareness raisings.
- Technical support/ mentoring during the project implementation

The following types of activities are non- eligible for financial support:

- Actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
- Actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- Projects which consist entirely, or in most part, of preparatory works or studies;
- Projects supporting political parties or illegal activities, and religious activities;
- Deficit funding and capital endowments;
- Activities undertaken before signature of the grant contract;
- Actions aimed at profit making activities;
- Actions related to charitable donations;
- Financial subventions to other organizations;
- Purchase of land, building and offices/ Renovation of buildings or offices;
- Retroactive financing for projects that are already in implementation or completed;
- Actions taking place outside Albania;

Visibility

The applicants must take all necessary steps to publicize the fact that the European Union is financing the action through “**Support Participation, Accountability and Civil society Empowerment**” (SPACE), a project implemented by a consortium led by Together for Life. The proposals that are wholly or partially funded by the European Union must ensure the visibility of EU financing by displaying the EU emblem in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Operational guidelines for recipients of EU funding, published by the European Commission. If applicable, communication activities may be undertaken to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the reasons for the action and the EU support for the action in the country or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.

All measures and activities relating to visibility and, if applicable, communication, must comply with the latest Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU-funded external action, laid down and published by the European Commission ([Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU External Actions | International Partnerships \(europa.eu\)](#)).

2.1.3 Eligibility of costs

Only “eligible costs” can be covered by a sub-grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for “eligible costs”.

At the contracting phase, the Contracting Authority decides whether to accept the proposed amounts on the basis of the provisional budget submitted by the applicants, by analyzing factual data of grants carried out by the applicants or of similar actions.



Recommendations to award a sub-grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the sub-grant contract do not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs and ineligible costs. The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the contracting authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. It is not possible to increase the grant or the percentage of financing as a result of these corrections.

Eligible direct costs are actual costs incurred by the Applicants which meet all the following criteria:

- they are incurred during the implementation of the action;
- costs relating to services and works shall relate to activities performed during the implementation period.
- costs incurred should be paid before the project closing date;
- they are indicated in the estimated overall budget for the Action;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the Action;
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the Beneficiary(ies) and determined according to the accounting standards and the usual cost accounting practices applicable to the Beneficiary(ies);
- cash payment will be allowed only up to a ceiling of 200 EUR maximum;
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- they are reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest);
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- interest owed (loss from banking account);
- costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving a European Union (including through EDF) grant;
- purchases of land or buildings;
- currency exchange losses;
- fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation;
- in kind contributions;
- bonuses included in costs of staff;
- negative interest charged by banks or other financial institutions;
- credit to third parties (not involved in the target group R/E community);
- salary costs of the personnel of national administrations;
- Value Added Tax (VAT), excise duties and other special consumption taxes or any other similar tax, duties or charges having equivalent effect;

2.2 HOW TO APPLY AND PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

2.2.1 Submitting the application

The application package must be submitted in accordance with the instructions provided in this call for proposals. Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions in the grant application form, annexed to these Guidelines (Annex 1).

Applicants must prepare and submit their application in **Albanian language**. Hand-written application will not be accepted.

The project proposal should be prepared following closely the application guidelines and the published formats (the application form, budget). It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain all the relevant information concerning the proposed action.

2.2.2 Supporting documents:

The applicants (lead applicant and co-applicant, if any) should submit the following documents in accordance with the applicable Albanian law:

- a) Court Registration Act;
- b) Statute of the organization;
- c) Fiscal registration Certification (NIUS);
- d) Document stating the organization has no pending financial obligations (Document issued by e-Albania);
- e) CV of the organization;
- f) The legal representative of the Lead Applicant must sign and stamp: Declaration by the Lead Applicant (*Annex 3*); the legal representative of the Co-applicant(s) must sign and stamp: Mandate (*Annex 4*);

2.2.3 Where and how to send the applications

Applications must be submitted in one bound printed original in A4 size.

All documents presented for application must be provided as well in electronic format (USB or CD). The electronic file must contain exactly the same application as the paper version enclosed.

Last page of the application form must bear the signature of the legal representative of the lead applicant and the stamp of the organization.

The outer envelope must bear:

- the reference number of the call for proposal (**IPA III/2022/441-234**)
- the title of the call for proposal (**Phase 1- SPACE sub-grants to support grassroots CSOs operating in health and education sector**)
- the name of the lead applicant
- address of the lead applicant
- the words: “*Të mos hapet para datës së hapjes zyrtare*”.



Applications must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand delivery (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer in case of hand delivery) at the address below:

Postal address:

Together for Life
Rr. Brigada VIII, Pallati Jeshil Tekno-Projekt, Hyrja 2, Ap.14,
Tiranë/ Shqipëri

Applications sent by any other means (e.g by email) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected.

2.2.4 Dateline for the submission of the application

The deadline for the submission of the applicants is 19 December 2023, as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is at **17.00 hrs local time** as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

2.2.5 Further information about the applications

Questions may be sent by email no later than 10 days before the dateline for the submission of applications to the below email address, clearly indicating the title of the call for proposals.

Email address: grants@togetherforlife.org.al

Together for Life (TFL), as the sub-granting authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date. To ensure equal treatment of applicants, TFL cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, an action or specific activities.

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on TFL website: www.togetherforlife.org.al. To stay informed about the questions and answers published, it is advisable to regularly visit TFL website.

2.3 EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by an evaluation committee, composed by external assessors. All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

Step 1: Administrative Check

During the opening and administrative check, the evaluation committee will assess of the submission deadline has been met and if the application form satisfies all the criteria specified in

the administrated checklist.

Administrative Criteria	Yes	No	Comments
1. The proposal is submitted within the dateline.			
2. The application forms published in the guidelines for the call for proposals have been used (<i>typed, in Albanian language</i>).			
3. One printed original of the documents is included.			
4. An electronic version of the proposal is enclosed (USB or CD)			
5. All supporting documents are submitted in the required form.			
6. The applicant is a CSO/NGO registered and acting in the territory of Albania.			
7. The grant requested complies with the set threshold (up to EUR 9000).			
8. The duration of the action is: not lower than 6 months nor exceed 9 months.			

After the Evaluation Committee completes the evaluation of this step, all lead applicants will be notified via e-mail, on the results of **Step 1**.

Step 2: Evaluation of the applicants

The quality of the applications, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants, will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below.

The evaluation grid is divided into sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follow: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Section	Maximum Score
1. Operational capacity	5
1.1 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their co-applicants have sufficient experience of project management?	5
2. Relevance	30
2.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals and to the specific themes/sectors/areas or any other specific requirement stated in the guidelines for applicants? Are the expected results	5x2*



of the action aligned with the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants?	
2.2 How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the health and education sectors?	5x2*
2.3 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs (as rights holders and/or duty bearers) and constraints been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5
2.4 Does the proposal contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices)?	5
3. Design of the action	25
3.1 How coherent is the design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action?	5
3.2 Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved?	5
3.3 Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the envisaged results? Is the timeline realistic?	5
4. Sustainability of the action	10
5.1 Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5
5.2 Is the action likely to have multiplier effects, including scope for replication, extension, capitalisation on experience and knowledge sharing?	5
5. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	10
6.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5
6.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the results satisfactory?	5
Maximum total score	80

* These scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

Step 3: Final evaluation and decision

The Evaluation Committee will take the final decision and the results of the evaluation process will be communicated officially to the applicants.

The Sub Granting Authority, prior to signing the contract, reserves the right to negotiate with the applicants in order to ensure cost efficiency of the action, ensure a fair balance between operational and non- operational costs, reflect real market costs, and reflect costs in accordance with proposed activities.



After reaching an agreement, the sub - grant contract will be signed between the relevant applicant and the contracting authority - Together for Life.

Step 4: Notification of the sub -granting authority’s decision

The lead applicants will be informed via e-mail of the contracting authority’s decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision. Please note that the lead applicant is the intermediary for all communications between applicants and the contracting authority during the procedure.

Appeals

Without prejudice, where an applicant believes he has been adversely affected by an error or irregularity allegedly committed as part of the selection procedure, or that the procedure was vitiated by any maladministration, may file a complaint within *5 (five) working days* from the day when the rejection email has been received.

The Evaluation Committee shall answer to the be submitted complaint no later than *5 (five) working days* from the receipt of the complaint. The reply to the appeal represents the final decision regarding the application.

3. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE OF THE PROCESS

INDICATIVE TIMETABLE	
	DATE
1. Official public launch of the Call for Proposals	20 November 2023
2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority	9 December 2023
3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority.	11 December 2023
4. Deadline for submission of applications	19 December 2023, at 17.00
5. Information to lead applicants on the administrative and eligibility checks.	28 December 2023
6. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the full applications.	17 January 2023
7. Notification of award.	19 January 2023

8. Contract signature	30 January 2023
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LIST OF ANNEXES

- Annex 1:** Application Form (Word format)
- Annex 2:** Budget Template (Excel format)
- Annex 3:** Declaration by the Lead Applicant
- Annex 4:** Mandate by the Co-Applicant