



Crnogorski digitalni štit (MDS)



Support for civil society organizations (CSOs) projects in Montenegro within the framework of the programme

Safeguarding Rights and Promoting Digital Citizenship - Montenegro Digital Shield (MDS)

GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT PROPOSAL APPLICANTS

Application deadline: 3 November 2025, by 12:00



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1. INTRODUCTION

The programme ***Safeguarding Rights and Promoting Digital Citizenship - Montenegro Digital Shield (MDS)***, under which this Call for proposals for supporting civil society organization (CSO) projects is published, is implemented by the Centre for Civic Education (CCE) in partnership with the SHARE Foundation from Serbia, and in cooperation with the Agency for Audiovisual Media Services, with financial support from the European Union and co-financing from the Ministry for Regional-Investment Development and Cooperation with NGOs. The aim of this project is to address key shortcomings in awareness, protection, and public advocacy of digital rights, in line with the pace of digital transformation in Montenegro.

There are five target groups, the first of which includes at least seven CSOs that will receive financial support for projects aligned with the priorities of this call. The second target group consists of judiciary representatives, the third of institutions and decision-makers, while the fourth includes youth and educators. The final beneficiaries are citizens and the general public, who will be reached through this program and the supported projects. Improved digital rights will contribute to a safer and more responsible environment for all.

Special attention will be devoted to young people, through activities aimed at empowering them to develop digital citizenship skills within the education system and to be protected in the *online* environment. The programme also promotes principles of environmental sustainability, advocating for the responsible use of digital technologies with an approach based on rights, inclusion, and sustainability. By strengthening citizens' awareness, knowledge, and skills for the responsible use of digital technologies and active participation in the digital public sphere, this project will contribute to building a more informed, resilient, and engaged society in Montenegro.

The role of CSOs in the democratization and development of society is of essential importance, and this call aims to support their initiatives focused on raising awareness of digital rights, their protection, and public advocacy. The focus is on small CSOs that have concrete ideas and projects aimed at digital rights.

The Guidelines provide a detailed description of all steps and required documentation for submitting an application. It contains information about the priorities of the call, the financial framework, eligible activities, selection criteria, as well as key deadlines and procedures for submitting applications. It also includes guidance on effective project planning and management.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully read these Guidelines and ensure that their project proposals are fully aligned with the goals and priorities of this call.



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2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

The *overall objective* of this call is to contribute to the creation of a more informed and empowered society capable of navigating the process of digital transformation with full respect for fundamental rights and freedoms.

The *specific objective* is to contribute to the development of digital citizenship by increasing awareness, knowledge, and skills for the responsible use of digital technologies and active participation in the promotion and protection of human rights in the digital public space.

3. PRIORITIES, TOPICS, AND ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The priorities and proposed project topics under this call should aim to respond to the challenges of digital citizenship.

Therefore, project proposals should be thematically focused on the following **areas**:

- preventing human rights violations, with a focus on suppressing disinformation, interference in democratic processes and hate speech, but also preserving basic freedoms;
- development of media literacy and digital skills;
- promotion of an open, free and safe Internet equally accessible to all;
- raising the level of awareness about digital rights;
- improving knowledge and understanding about new media and communication technologies and their impact on human rights;
- empowering young people to understand the values and risks of an open Internet and to make informed decisions when using the Internet and digital technologies;
- recognition and suppression of abuses in the form of hate speech, fake news and cyber-harassment;
- development of digital citizenship skills.

Activities that can be supported by this CfP within the stated priorities, topics, and areas include:

- education and capacity building in the field of digital rights and digital security;
- prevention and reduction of risks to the protection of personal data, privacy and security;
- advocacy of responsible use of digital technologies;
- promotion of active and safe participation in the digital public space;
- encouraging young people's interest in digital rights and their protection;
- assessment of the level of knowledge and risks in the field of digital rights and security.

Also, the inclusion of bloggers, filmmakers, photographers, artists and other communication professionals on key topics is encouraged, with the aim of creating positive social changes and behaviour.

Note: the list of activities is not exhaustive but serves as a landmark for interested CSOs in the context of the set goals, priorities and themes of the competition, with a note that it is expected to take into account the gender dimension and inclusivity.



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The following types of activities are not eligible:

- activities related exclusively or mainly to individual sponsorships of participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, etc.;
- activities related exclusively or mainly to study visits or participation in international forums;
- infrastructure projects or projects that are predominantly focused on the purchase of equipment;
- purchase and/or renovation of buildings or offices;
- activities carried out before signing the contract;
- activities aimed at making a profit;
- activities related to charitable donations;
- activities that are already financed from other programs of the European Union;
- activities that discriminate against individuals or groups based on gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or their absence, or ethnic origin;
- activities supported by individual political parties;
- activities aimed at supporting party activities or political parties.

4. FINANCIAL ASPECT OF THE CALL

The total amount of funds to be distributed according to this call is EUR 105,000. The amount of funds that can be allocated for an individual project within this competition will range from 10,000 to 17,500 EUR.

The requested amount of funds within this call must cover 100% of the eligible project costs. Co-financing is not required, as the entire project budget is financed from the funds requested through this call.

The maximum amount allocated for staff salaries/fees, office expenses, and any equipment purchase costs must not exceed 50% of the total project costs, with a maximum of 40% allowed specifically for staff salaries/fees.

Financial reports of supported projects will be subject to external audit.

In the case of submitting partnership projects, only one organization - the lead applicant - will be directly responsible for managing the financial resources of all partner organizations involved in the project.



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5. RULES OF THE CALL

5.1. Who can apply?

The following CSOs are eligible to apply under this CfP, provided they meet all of the following cumulative criteria:

- are legal entities;
- are non-profit in nature;
- are civil society organizations;
- have been registered in Montenegro¹ for at least 24 months prior to the project proposal submission deadline;
- are based in Montenegro;
- are directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project.

Additionally, organizations that have authorized persons who are public officials at the time of application submission, or who have been public officials in the past year, cannot be supported through this CfP.

5.2. Partnerships / Partners

Partnerships are not mandatory but are allowed and encouraged.

Partners participate in the development of the project proposal and its implementation **and use financial resources under the same conditions that apply to the project applicant.**

Therefore, partners must meet **the following criteria:**

- are legal entities;
- are non-profit in nature;
- are civil society organizations;
- have been registered in Montenegro² for at least 24 months prior to the project proposal submission deadline;
- are based in Montenegro;
- are directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project.

Information about the partners on the project must be provided in the document titled "Partners," which is part of the Application Form.

5.3. Associates

Other organizations, besides the lead applicant and partners, can also be involved in the project implementation. They have the status of "associates." Associates play a role in the project implementation but must not receive funds from the project budget, except for reimbursement of per diems and travel expenses, where applicable. Associates do not have to meet the criteria that apply to project applicants and partners; **that is, associates can be public institutions, local government bodies, representatives of the business community, etc.** Information about the collaborators on the project must be provided in the document titled "Associates," which is part of the application form.

¹ Registered in accordance with one of the following laws: the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations, the Labor Law, the Law on Trade Union Representativeness, the Law on the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro, or the Law on the Red Cross.

² Registered in accordance with one of the following laws: the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations, the Labor Law, the Law on Trade Union Representativeness, the Law on the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro, or the Law on the Red Cross.



5.4. Project Implementation Location

The project implementation location must be Montenegro.

5.5. Number of Applications per Project Applicant

Each CSO can participate in this call only once, either as a lead applicant or as a partner.

5.6. Project Implementation Duration

Funds will be allocated for projects that last at least five (5) months, and at most twelve (12) months.

The day after the signing of the project implementation contract is considered to be the start of the project implementation.

5.7. How to Apply?

Project proposals must be written in the Montenegrin language.

Applicants are required to submit a completed **application package in electronic format**, which consists of:

1. Application form
2. Proposed budget
3. Logical framework matrix

in a scanned (PDF) copy that is signed and stamped, along with an unlocked copy (Word and Excel). Scanned and unlocked documents must be identical in content.

Along with the application package, project proposal submitters should submit the following **technical documentation** (also in electronic form)::

1. A copy of the organization's registration decision;
2. A copy of the organization's statute;
3. A copy of the financial report for 2024, which was submitted to the Tax Administration.
4. A signed and certified statement by the representative that there are no government officials in management positions in the organization.

If the project is of a partnership nature, it is necessary to submit the same supporting documentation for the partners as for the submitters of project proposals. All partners must also submit a "Declaration of Partnership" (*which is part of the Application Form*), stamped and signed by an authorized person of the organization with the status of a partner in the project.

Important note: the documentation is sent as an email attachment or on a link where it can be downloaded for a long period of time, and which is not locked (e.g. through the platform <https://www.swisstransfer.com/>).



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All documentation is sent **exclusively to the e-mail** info@cgo-cce.org with the subject - Call for support of CSO projects - MDS.

Incomplete project proposals, project proposals submitted in some other way that is not prescribed by this competition, will not be considered, as well as proposals submitted on inappropriate forms or sent with locked or expired links.

5.8. Deadline for Submission of Project Proposals

The deadline for submitting project proposals is 3 November 2025 by 12:00.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered. The time of receipt of the e-mail will be used to confirm the time of submission of project proposals.

All applicants will receive a confirmation from CCE of receiving an e-mail with the project proposal and supporting documentation.

5.9. Additional Information on Submitting Project Proposals

In case of doubt, you can get additional information by sending a question to info@cgo-cce.org, no later than **26 October 2025**, and the email must be titled **"Call for Project Support - MDS - question"**.

Answers to individual questions will be given exclusively by e-mail.

Note: CCE cannot give an opinion on the goals, expected results and activities of the proposed projects, as well as on other elements of project proposals, all with the aim of ensuring an equal position for all project proposal submitters.

Questions that may be relevant to other project applicants, along with answers and important notes for project applicants, will be published on the CCE website www.cgo-cce.org after the deadline for their posting, and no later than seven days before the competition closes.



6. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF PROJECTS

Evaluation of project proposals will take place in **two phases**.

The first phase will include an administrative check of the received documentation and technical criteria.

Projects that pass the administrative check enter *the second phase*, which includes the evaluation of applications by the Project Evaluation Commission, in accordance with the evaluation table presented in the Guide for project applicants.

Evaluation Table

Section	Maximum number of points
1. Relevance of the action	12
1.1 Is the project relevant in relation to the priorities and objectives defined by the call?	5
1.2 How clearly are the target groups and final beneficiaries defined? How well does the project align with the needs of the target groups?	5
1.3 Is the project based on a good assessment and analysis of the problem it addresses?	2
2. Objectives and results	4
2.1 Are the project's objectives and results clearly defined and aligned with the objectives of the call?	4
3. Feasibility of the project and inclusion of partners	14
3.1 Are the proposed activities adequate, feasible, and aligned with the objectives and expected results of the project?	6
3.2 Is the action plan clear and realistic/feasible?	4
3.3 Does the project proposal include measurable indicators of results?	2
3.4 Are the roles of the partners in the project clearly defined regarding responsibility for the implementation of activities?	2
4. Technical and operational capacities of organisations	4
4.1. Does the organization have the capacity for technical and financial management of the project?	2
3.5 Does the organization have relevant prior experience in the field addressed by the proposed project?	2
4. Project sustainability	5
4.1 Does the project have financial, institutional, and political sustainability?	5
5. Budget	11
5.1 Are the activities properly reflected in the budget?	4
5.2. Are the explanations of budget items clear?	3
5.3 Is the ratio between the anticipated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	4
Total number of points	50



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Once all project proposals have been evaluated, a list of proposed actions ranked according to their overall rating will be created. Applications with the highest number of points will be preliminarily selected until the available budget for this competition is reached.

The list of finally supported projects will be published on the website www.cgo-cce.org.

7. INDICATIVE SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE CALL

	Date	Time
1. Info session	22 October 2025, Podgorica, Conference Room of the CCE	13h30- 14h30
2. Final deadline for submitting additional questions about the call	26 October 2025	-
3. Deadline for clarifications	27 October 2025	
4. Final deadline for submitting project proposals	3 November 2025	12h00
5. Notification of organizations that have passed the administrative review	4 November 2025	-
6. Notification of organizations whose projects have been selected for funding	19 November 2025	-
7. Signing of contracts	24 November 2025	-
8. Mandatory capacity building programme for supported organizations	26 and 27 November 2025	

Note: This is a tentative schedule of activities, except for the dates listed under 1, 2, 3 and 4. CCE reserves the right to change the schedule, and the changed schedule will be published on the official website www.cgo-cce.org.