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Strengthening Youth Networks
and Empowering Resilient Groups
and Youth in Montenegro

Support to civil society organizations (CSOs) projects in Montenegro within the programme
**SYNERGY Montenegro – Strengthening Youth Networks and Empowering
Resilient Groups and Youth in Montenegro**

GUIDELINES FOR GRANT APPLICANTS

Deadline for submission of full applications: **20 March 2026, until 12h00**

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1. BACKGROUND

The **SYNERGY Montenegro program – Strengthening Youth Networks and Empowering Resilient Groups and Youth in Montenegro**, under which this call for project support for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) has been announced, is implemented by the Centre for Civic Education (CCE), in partnership with the German Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and NGO Multimedial Montenegro, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Sports and Youth, with financial support from the European Union and co-financing by the Ministry of Regional Investment Development and Cooperation with NGOs. **Overall objective** is to contribute to improving the position of young people and creating more opportunities for them in Montenegro.

There are three target groups: the first consists of at least 20 CSOs that will receive financial support for projects aligned with the CfP priorities. The second includes 500 young people in Montenegro (at least 50% women, primarily from the north), and the third are local and national authorities and academic community (50). The ultimate beneficiaries are 30,000 citizens (especially women and youth) who will be addressed through this program and the supported projects.

The programme is based on the extensive experience of the partners in working with youth, promoting civic activism and youth employment. It is designed with reference to relevant literature and research, including reports on youth policy, the status of the NEET¹ population and the marginalization of youth in Montenegro. Planned activities also rely on strategic documents, such as the Youth Strategy 2023–2027, contributing to goals like strengthening motivation and competencies of youth for youth work, improving digital skills, and preventing peer violence through digital campaigns.

The programme supports democratic youth participation, community development, and values such as empathy, solidarity, and care for the common good. It aligns with the Government of Montenegro's Mid-Term Work Plan (Goal 4.3), the Montenegro EU Accession Programme (2023–2024), especially through strengthening non-formal education, and the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027, focusing on empowering youth to be active citizens and agents of change.

The role of CSOs in democratization and societal development is of fundamental importance, and this call intends to support their initiatives that will improve the position of youth, encourage youth participation in social processes, and enhance their educational and economic opportunities. The focus is on small CSOs that have concrete ideas and projects aimed at youth and their empowerment.

This guide outlines in detail all the steps and documentation required for submitting an application. It includes information about the priorities of the call, financial framework, eligible activities, selection criteria, key deadlines and submission procedures, as well as guidelines for effective project planning and management.

This programme has three CfPs, and this is the second one.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully read this Guide and ensure that their project proposals are fully aligned with the objectives and priorities of this CfP.

¹ NEET is an abbreviation of the English term "Not in Education, Employment or Training", which means young people who are not involved in education, employment or training.



2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The overall objective of the call is to strengthen the role of civil society in promoting transparent and participatory governance, democratic reforms, and respect for human rights, with a special focus on youth.

Specific objectives of this call are:

- Support for small CSOs in working with youth, strengthening the capacities of youth organizations;
- Improvement of youth employability and reduction of the NEET population;
- Increasing youth participation in decision-making processes.

3. PRIORITIES, THEMES AND ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The priorities and proposed project themes for this call should aim to address challenges in areas important for strengthening the capacities of youth organizations, encouraging youth activism, improving youth employability, and enhancing public policies related to youth.

Therefore, project proposals thematically should focus on the following areas:

- Improvement of youth policies and practices;
- Encouragement of volunteering and youth activism;
- Increasing youth employability through education and professional development;
Development of cultural and sports interests and activities among youth;
- Advocacy for a better framework for youth mental health and combating violence;
- Environmental protection and youth activism in that domain.

Activities that may be supported by this call within the specified priorities, themes, and areas include:

- Activities that encourage youth engagement in extracurricular activities;
- Activities related to formal and non-formal education of youth;
- Activities that improve youth access to psychosocial, medical, legal, and similar support services;
- Activities that stimulate interest or engagement of youth in culture and the arts, particularly those that contribute to combating discrimination or promoting tolerance and inclusion. These may include, for example, organizing innovative cultural events, performances, exhibitions, competitions, etc.;
- Activities that promote youth participation in sports;
- Monitoring and analysis of the implementation of laws, policies, strategies, action plans, and government indicators;
- Strengthening the capacities of CSOs and other actors to monitor public policies;
- Networking and building partnerships or strengthening existing platforms, networks, or coalitions of civil society, campaigns, and cooperation on the themes covered by this call;

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- Organizing discussion forums or other forms of structured dialogue to enhance dialogue and networking between CSOs and decision-makers/political actors on issues and priorities of this call;
- Exchange of information, knowledge, and experiences;
- Campaigns and actions to mobilize citizens on the target themes;
- Professional training, including digital skills;
- Advocacy, lobbying, and strategy development by CSOs to encourage legislative reforms and influence policy creation;
- Support in collecting relevant information, including statistical and research data, to enable governments to formulate and implement policies.

Note: The list of activities is not exhaustive and may serve as a guide for interested CSOs within the set objectives, priorities, and themes of the call, with an expectation to incorporate a gender perspective.

Activities not eligible under this call:

- Actions that concern solely or mainly individual sponsorships to attend workshops, seminars, conferences, etc.;
- Actions related solely or primarily to individual scholarships for studies or training;
- Actions primarily involving study visits or participation in international forums;
- Infrastructure projects or projects mainly focused on equipment procurement;
- Purchase and/or renovation of buildings or offices;
- Activities undertaken before signing the contract;
- Profit-oriented actions;
- Actions related to charitable donations;
- Actions that discriminate or incite hatred against individuals or groups based on gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or the absence thereof, or ethnic origin;
- Actions supporting individual political parties;
- Actions already funded through other EU programmes or by other donors.

4. FINANCIAL ASPECT OF THE CALL

The total amount of funds available for this call is **EUR 170,000**.

The amount that may be awarded for individual projects ranges from a minimum of EUR 10,000 to a maximum of EUR 15,000.

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

The maximum amount allocated for salaries/fees of staff, office costs, and possible equipment purchase must not exceed 50% of the total project costs, with the maximum for staff salaries/fees being 45%.

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

For partnership projects, only one organization – the lead applicant – will be directly responsible for financial management on behalf of all project partners.

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This call encourages cooperation with local institutions and with other CSOs, including those less developed, to facilitate their access to support.²

5. RULES OF THE CALL

5.1. Who can apply?

CSOs eligible to apply must cumulatively meet the following criteria:

- Have legal entity status;
- Be non-profit;
- Be a civil society organization;
- Be registered in Montenegro³ at least 12 months before the application deadline and headquartered in Montenegro;
- Be directly responsible for project preparation and management.

Also, organizations whose authorized representatives are currently or have been public officials in the past year are not eligible under this call.

5.2. Partnerships / Partners

Partnerships are not mandatory, but they are allowed and encouraged.

Partners participate in the creation and implementation of the project proposal **and use funds under the same conditions as the lead applicant**. Thus, partners must:

- Have legal entity status;
- Be non-profit;
- Be a civil society organization;
- Be registered in Montenegro⁴ at least 12 months prior to the application deadline;
- Not have public officials as authorized representatives currently or within the past year;
- Have a headquarter in Montenegro.

Partner information must be presented in the “Partners” document, part of the application package.

5.3. Associates

Other organizations besides the lead applicant and partners may be involved in project implementation as associates. Associates can participate in project activities but may not receive funds from the project budget, except for per diems and travel costs, where applicable. They do not need to meet the eligibility criteria for applicants and partners. Associates may include **public**

² The project applicant and partners are beneficiaries of the contract and must meet the same conditions to be able to apply with projects (for example, municipalities cannot be partners, but can be associates, see more under 5.3.)

³ Registered in accordance with one of the following laws: the Law on Non-Governmental Organisations, the Labour Law, the Law on Trade Union Representativeness, the Law on the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro, or the Law on the Red Cross.

⁴ Registered in accordance with one of the following laws: the Law on Non-Governmental Organisations, the Labour Law, the Law on Trade Union Representativeness, the Law on the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro, or the Law on the Red Cross.

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institutions, local government bodies, business representatives, etc. Information about associates should be included in the "Associates" section of the application form.

5.4. Location of the project implementation

Projects must be implemented in Montenegro.
CSOs are encouraged to include activities targeting less developed areas.

5.5. Number of applications per project applicant

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

5.6. Project Duration

Grants will be awarded for projects lasting a **minimum of 4 months** and a **maximum of 10 months**.

5.7. How to Apply?

Project proposals must be written in Montenegrin.

Applicants must submit a complete **application package**, which includes:

1. Application form
2. Budget proposal
3. Logical framework matrix

The package must be submitted in **one** print copies, signed and stamped (one original and one copy), along with an electronic version, identical in content to the print version.

Supporting documents (in one printed copy) include:

1. Copy of the organization's registration certificate
2. Copy of the organization's statute
3. Copy of the financial report for 2025 submitted to the Tax Administration

If the project is a partnership, the same documents must be submitted for each partner. Each partner must also submit a "Partnership Statement" (part of Section VI of the application form), signed and stamped by the authorized representative.

Project proposals and other required documents specified in the Call must be sent in hard copy exclusively by post, in a sealed envelope, to the following address:

Centre for Civic Education (CCE)
Svetlane Kane Radević 1/1
81 000 Podgorica

With the indication: "II Call for Support to CSO Projects – SYNERGY Montenegro"

The electronic version must be sent exclusively to: konkursi@cgo-cce.org

Incomplete project proposals, project proposals submitted in a manner other than specified in this Call, as well as proposals submitted using incorrect forms, will not be considered.

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5.8. Application Deadline

The deadline for submitting project proposals (both electronic and printed versions) is **20 March 2026, by 12:00**.

Late applications will not be considered.

The postal stamp and email timestamp will serve as proof of submission time.

All applicants will receive a confirmation email from the CCE acknowledging receipt.

5.9. Additional information about submission of applications

In case of any doubts or questions, additional information can be obtained by sending an inquiry to konkursi@cgo-cce.org no later than **5 March 2025**. The subject line of the email must be: **"II Call for CSO Project Support – SYNERGY Montenegro – Questions"**. Answers to individual questions will be provided exclusively via email.

Note: The CCE cannot give opinions on project goals, expected results, activities, or other elements of project application, in order to ensure equal treatment of all applicants.

Questions that may be relevant for other project applicants, together with the answers and important notes for applicants, will be published on the CCE website www.cgo-cce.org after the deadline for submitting questions has passed, and no later than seven days before the closing of the Call.

6. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

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

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

Projects that pass the administrative check will proceed to the second phase. The second phase involves the evaluation of applications by the Project Evaluation Committee, in accordance with the evaluation table presented in the Guidelines for Applicants.

Evaluation table

Section	Maximum points
1. Relevance of the action	10
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the priorities and objectives defined by the call?	5
1.2 How clearly are the target groups and final beneficiaries defined? To what extent is the project in line with the needs of the target groups?	5
2. Objectives and results	5

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2.1 Are the objectives and results of the project clearly defined and aligned with the objectives of the call?	5
3. The feasibility of the project	20
3.1 Are the proposed activities adequate, feasible and in line with the objectives and estimated outputs of the project?	6
3.2 Is the action plan clear and realistic/feasible?	5
3.3 Are the roles of the project partners clearly defined in terms of responsibility for implementation of activities?	3
3.4 Does the project proposal include measurable result indicators?	6
4. Sustainability of the project	5
4.1 Does the project have financial, institutional and political sustainability?	5
5. Budget	10
5.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5
5.2 Is the ratio between estimated costs and estimated results satisfactory?	5
Total points	50

Once all the proposals have been assessed, a list will be drawn up with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached.

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

7. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE OF ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE CALL

	Date	Time
1. Information sessions	27 February	12h00
2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications about the call	5 March	-
3. Deadline for publication of clarifications	6 March	-
4. Deadline for submission of project proposals	20 March	12h00
5. Information to organizations that have passed the administrative check	23 March	-
6. Information to organizations whose projects have been selected for funding	9 April	-
7. Contract signature	22 April	-

Note: This is a provisional timetable of activities, except for the dates indicated in items 2, 3 and 4.

CCE reserves the right to modify the timetable, and the modified timetable will be published on the official website www.cgo-cce.org.