

CALL FOR ORGANISATIONAL GRANTS

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Operator of the Active Citizens Fund – Regional Programme, i.e. the consortium made up of the Foundation in Support for Local Democracy (leader), Education for Democracy Foundation, and the Information Society Development Foundation, launches the call for proposals for organisational grants. The Active Citizens Fund – Regional Programme is financed by Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein from the EEA and Norway Funds.

These documents form the legal framework for ACF–Regional:

- Protocol 38c to the EEA Agreement on the EEA Financial Mechanism (2014-2021),
- Agreement between the Kingdom of Norway and the European Union on a Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the period 2014-2021,
- Memorandum of Understanding on the Implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 between Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Kingdom of Norway and the Republic of Poland,
- Memorandum of Understanding on the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 between the Kingdom of Norway and the Republic of Poland,
- Programme Implementation Agreement on the implementation of the Active Citizens Fund – Regional Programme in Poland financed from the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021, between the Financial Mechanism Office and the Jerzy Reguiski Foundation in Support of Local Democracy,
- Manual for Fund Operators of the Active Citizens Fund.

The organisational grants budget of the call is EUR 1,600,000, coming from Norway Grants.

All grant applications should contribute to achieving the [planned Programme outcomes](#) in at least one of the support areas (outcomes).

The Programme supports activities implemented by organisations based across Poland, however those activities cannot take place in the city of Warsaw. They should take place outside of Warsaw and aim to reach beneficiaries not living in the capital. As long as their planned activities meet these requirements and clearly contribute to results addressing needs of persons and communities outside of Warsaw, applicants with headquarters in Warsaw are eligible for grants.

The organisational grant budget is a country-based pool of funding, meaning there are no fixed funding limits per region. However, the ACF-Regional aims to provide balanced support to civil society organisations (CSOs) distributed across Poland, boost grant opportunities for smaller local and regional organisations, and foster key ACF-Regional actions by ensuring that all voivodeships are represented as proportionately as possible in the application evaluation procedure.

The Selection Committee and the Executive Committee base their decisions on: the score given by experts and representatives of the ACF-Regional Management Board, the call budget, and the aspiration to apportion available funding to all regions.

Grants will be awarded only for applications evaluated at no less than 50% of the total score attainable through the expert evaluation and interview combined. Please note that funding will not be granted to all applications which score above this threshold.

There is one type of organisational grants available:

- Minimum grant amount: EUR 85,000
- Maximum grant amount: EUR 100,000
- Grant implementation period: between 18 and 20 months,
- Co-financing: facultative,
- Applicant must submit a multiannual strategy/development plan (min. for years 2022-2024);
- Applicant must have generated average annual turnover of at least PLN 500,000 per annum in a period of 3 full fiscal years selected from the 5 years preceding the call.

Applications can only be submitted by the Electronic Grant Application and Management System (EGAMS), hereinafter referred to as the "Generator", available at:

<http://generator.aktywniobywatele-regionalny.org.pl/>.

No partnership projects are accepted. This applies to Polish and international partnerships alike.

A single organisation may submit only **one application in the call for organisational grants**. Organisations can apply for an organisational grant even if they have already received or applied for grants in previous calls (for thematic or intervention projects) organised by the Active Citizens Fund – Regional Programme.

One organisation can receive an organisational grant only from one AOFR competition for organisational grants: either organised by the Active Citizens Fund – National Programme **or** the Active Citizens Fund – Regional Programme. The ACF-Regional Operator reserves the right to not sign a grant agreement under this call with an Applicant that has been already awarded an organisational grant by the ACF-National.

Applications timeline:

- from 27 April 2022 (Wednesday) from 12.00 (noon) CET to 7 June 2022 (Tuesday) up until 12.00 (noon) CET.

Announcement of call results:

- administrative and eligibility evaluation of applications: 15 June 2022,
- first stage of content-related evaluation and information on invitations for interviews: 11 July 2022,
- two-stage content-related evaluation of applications: 12 August 2022.

ABOUT THE ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND – REGIONAL PROGRAMME

Active Citizens Fund– Regional is a programme funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway (hereinafter referred to as ‘Donor States’) under the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism (so-called ‘EEA Funds’ and ‘Norway Grants’) open to 15 EU Member States in Central and Southern Europe.

EEA Funds and Norway Grants have allotted funds for civil society organisations. EUR 59.2 mln has been set aside for supporting social organisations in Poland. This amount has been

broken down into two parts: EUR 33.2 mln for the Active Citizens Fund – National Programme¹ and EUR 26 mln for the Active Citizens Fund – Regional Programme.

The Fund aims to strengthen civil society, promote active citizenship, empower vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion, and level the playing field in terms of opportunities.

Furthermore, the Programme seeks to develop bilateral relations between civil society and entities based in Poland and Donor States, and to promote regional exchange and networking, with particular emphasis on sharing knowledge and good practices in strengthening civil society.

Calls for grants provide support to key outcomes of the Programme:

- Outcome 1: Human rights protection (including gender equality);
- Outcome 2.: Promoting social diversity and preventing exclusion;
- Outcome 3: Building democratic culture and civic engagement at local level (including activism for environment and climate change);
- Outcome 4: Supporting the development of the civic sector.

The Programme supports activities implemented by organisations based across Poland, however those activities cannot take place in the city of Warsaw or aim to reach beneficiaries living in the capital.

The Programme is based on the following values: respecting human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

The Programme shall follow the principles of good governance; it shall be participatory and inclusive, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient. There shall be zero-tolerance towards corruption. The Programme will be consistent with sustainable development, long-term economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection. The Programme will follow a results and risk management approach.

ORGANISATIONAL GRANTS

Organisational grants **aim to support the day-to-day operations (and capacity building) of CSOs, as set forth in the submitted development strategy/plans, including the**

¹ Active Citizens Fund – National Programme is being carried out by a consortium made up of the Stefan Batory Foundation (leader), the Shipyard Foundation, and the Academy of Civic Organisations Foundation (for more, go to: <https://aktywniobywatele.org.pl/>)

evaluation and monitoring plans. Operations funded from organisational grants should be aligned with at least one of the ACF-Regional outcomes. This means that these activities or initiatives should:

- conform with the work plan of the organisation (applicant), e.g. reach out to specific target groups, establish and expand cooperation (also by supporting the CSO sector), and facilitate change in local communities,
- strive to strengthen the organisation's (applicant's) internal structure by investing in staff skills, image building and improving infrastructure.

Unlike calls for thematic and intervention projects, the call for organisational grants looks mainly at CSO capacity to effectively use the awarded grant, i.e. its experience, resources, ideas for further actions and development.

During the term of the grant agreement, the Project Promoter is required to submit operational (content-related) and financial reports on the organisation's activities. However, it will not be obliged to provide the Operator with detailed lists of cost documents under the above-mentioned reports. The Operator remains entitled to monitor the implementation of activities financed from the organisational grant and monitor the costs incurred by the organisation during the grant execution.

Applicants need to specify in their applications how the grant will impact the implementation of their development strategy/plan and the share the grant will have in the organisation's (applicant's) budget for the given financial period.

The Operator will monitor grant-supported activity implementation and expected outcomes by:

- analysing financial and operational (content-related) reports on the organisation's activities in 2022 and 2023, which reflect progress towards outcomes planned in the development strategy/plan,
- analysing interim and final reports on the use of the organisational grant and progress towards outcomes and their indicators planned in the development

strategy/plan, submitted in the Electronic Grant Application and Management System (EGAMS),

- paying monitoring visits to the Project Promoters offices (preparing and sharing content-related and financial documents, and analysing them together with the representatives of the ACF-R team during all project monitoring activities, also during on-the-spot visits,
- analysing the approved financial reports (the balance sheet, the profit and loss statement, the notes) on 2 full fiscal years and the audit report on all activities performed by the Project Promoter in the latest full fiscal year of the project implementation. The audit report should provide assurance that the project promoter has used the grant in accordance with the purpose and provisions of the grant agreement. The audit in question has to specifically mention the EEA and Norway Grants contribution.

Grant tranches will be disbursed upon approval of the above reports on organisation's operations, interim reports (interim tranches), and final and auditor reports (final tranche).

Both the ACF-R Operator and the FMO may order a financial audit of the entire organisation (beneficiary) which received a grant under this call.

Organisational grant settlement will be based only on the above-listed reports detailing all Project Promoter operations, compliance with procedures and binding laws, as well as - first and foremost - achieved outcomes. The provisions on eligibility of expenditures applicable to thematic and intervention projects under the Active Citizens Fund - Regional Programme shall not apply. **Settlements regarding grants will not be based on a detailed budget, but on fulfilment of the Project Promoter's strategic plans and outcomes expressed in related indicators.** The project promoter will not need to provide financial reports on the specific expenditures made under the grant. Payments do not depend on the costs actually incurred by the project promoter. The costs are considered as incurred within the project once paid to the project promoter.

APPLICANTS

Grants are only available for entities that meet the following requirements:

- a) Applicant must be a **non-governmental organisation whose objectives include at least one of the ACF-Regional outcomes** (Human rights protection, including gender equality; Promoting social diversity and preventing exclusion; Building democratic culture and civic engagement at local level, including activism for environment and climate change; Supporting the development of the civic sector);
- b) **Applicants must submit a multiannual development strategy/plan** (min. for years 2022-2024);
- c) Applicant must have generated **average annual turnover of at least PLN 500,000 per annum in a period of 3 full fiscal years selected from the 5 years preceding the call**;
- d) Applicants must be registered with the National Court Register (KRS), entered into the register of ordinary associations or the register of Rural Housewives Circles maintained by the President of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture (ARiMR);
- e) Applicants are capable of presenting prior to signing the grant agreement their financial statement (the balance sheet, the profit and loss statement, the notes) for year 2021;
- f) Applicants are not dependent² on local, regional and central authorities, public entities, political parties and for-profit entities;
- g) They do not seek to generate profit, and – if they pursue business activity – any profit made is allocated to achieving their statutory goals;

² An entity is defined as dependent when local, regional or central authorities, public entities, political parties and/or for-profit entities have the direct or indirect right to appoint at least half of that entity's governing or supervisory body. If public authorities or a public entity (e.g. theatre or university) or a for-profit entity (e.g. bank or company) enjoy the right to determine at least half of the composition of the given entity's governing or supervisory body, then that entity is considered to be dependent on said institutions, which precludes that entity from standing as applicant for a grant. If an entity associates only public authorities, public and/or for-profit entities, such an entity is dependent on those public and for-profit entities, which precludes that entity from standing as applicant for a grant. If most members of a given entity represent public authorities, public and/or for-profit entities, this means that those representatives have the casting vote on the composition of that entity's governing and/or supervisory bodies. If an entity is identified as dependent on such entities, it cannot apply for a grant.

- h) No application for declaring bankruptcy has been filed against the Applicant, the Applicant is not in liquidation or receivership, has not suspended activity and there are no similar proceedings pending against the Applicant;
- i) They are not in arrears with public-law payments due to the Tax Office (US) or Social Insurance Institution (ZUS);
- j) No governing body member has been convicted or charged of an intentional crime prosecuted by public indictment or a tax offence;
- k) Applicants respect human rights and are guided in their activity by public interest and democratic values, in particular the universal values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and the protection of human and minority rights;
- l) They will refrain from using the grant and co-financing (if applicable) for religious practices or leading a religious cult (including proselytising and spreading faith), political party activity or election campaigns, or business or for-profit activity.

ATTENTION: We encourage organisations active at the regional level (in at least two poviats) to apply. In particular we invite those acting for the benefit of other CSOs, supporting them with respect to content and technically (for example providing information, knowledge, and opinions on civic activity in Poland, building their capacity and capability to act, representing the civic organisation community in watchdog or advocacy activities), as well as sectoral or cross-sectoral unions of associations (such as a federation) operating in at least one of the areas for which funding is provided under the Active Citizens Fund – Regional (see: point a above) and conducting activities to support their member organisations and influencing regional public policies on the issues they deal with.

Applicants can have the following legal form:

- **associations, including ordinary associations**, acting as associations pursuant to the Associations Law Act of 7 April 1989 (references to Polish Journal of Laws: Dz. U. z 2020, poz. 2261, as amended). Before signing the grant agreement, ordinary associations will be asked to present:
 - o a written consent/resolution of all members to enter into the grant agreement,

- o a power of attorney for the association's management board / representatives to sign the grant agreement on behalf of the association;
- **foundations** operating under the Foundations Act of 6 April 1984 (references to Polish Journal of Laws: Dz. U. z 2020, poz. 2167, as amended); foundations with a single-member management board and no supervisory body are not eligible for a grant;
- **unions of associations** established under the Association Law Act of 7 April 1989 (references to Polish Journal of Laws: Dz.U. z 2020, poz. 2261);
- **social cooperatives**; a social cooperative is eligible for grants only if it is composed solely of natural persons and/or non-governmental organisations and/or faith-based organisations³ as defined in the Social Cooperatives Act of 27 April 2006 (references to Polish Journal of Laws: Dz. U. of 2020, item 2085);
- **non-profit companies** (Polish joint stock and limited liability companies who do not seek profit or allocate any and all of their profit to the implementation of the objectives listed in their memorandums of association, and do not distribute profit between their shareholders and employees. These conditions must be specified in the company's founding documents: memorandum or articles of association.
Moreover:
 - o a company is eligible for a grant if its shareholders are only the following entities (one or more): associations, unions of associations, foundations, social cooperatives, rural housewives circles, church legal entities, which belong to the group of entities eligible for a grant,
 - o companies with only one organisation as its shareholder, with a single-person management board, are not eligible for a grant;
- **rural housewives circles** established under the Rural Housewives Circles Act of 9 November 2018 (references to Polish Journal of Laws: Dz. U. of 2020, poz. 553, 932), acting as associations pursuant to the Association Law Act of 7 April 1989 (references to Polish Journal of Laws: Dz. U. z 2020, poz. 2261) or acting as independent rural circles under the Act on Social and Professional Farmer Organisations of 8 October

³ Social cooperatives whose members include faith-based organisations must meet the conditions applicable to **faith-based organisations** applying independently for grants under this call

1982 (references to Polish Journal of Laws: Dz. U. 2019, poz. 491); the grant cannot exceed the amount determined by the circle members as the highest liability amount which their entity can incur;

- **faith-based organisations** if they meet the principles identified above and if the funded activities do not directly or indirectly promote a religious doctrine, mission or proselytism related to the beliefs of a particular faith (beyond basic religious/cultural awareness raising), on condition that:
 - the objectives listed in their memorandums of association include public benefit activity,
 - they are registered with the National Court Register (KRS);
 - they may incur liabilities on their own behalf.

The actions presented in the application must be compliant with the memorandum of association, bylaws and other documents detailing the mission, aims and methods of the Applicant. The actions set forth in the application cannot consist in religious practices or leading a religious cult (including proselytising and spreading faith), political party activity or election campaigns. Moreover, a grant cannot be allocated for business or for-profit activity. Grant-funded activities cannot include collecting fees from project participants, *i.e.* applicants may not charge a fee for tickets to events or sell project publications prepared by the Applicant.

ATTENTION: Please check whether the Applicant does indeed fulfil the stipulated criteria and requirements. We do not require documentation confirming the above declarations upon application submission. While evaluating the applications, we will rely on the Applicant's declarations and registers which are open to the public. Once a grant is awarded, the Applicant will be requested to present documents confirming the declarations made. If the Applicant fails to produce such proof, it will not be possible to sign the grant agreement. The detailed list of required documents can be found in *Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters. Call for Organisational (Macro) Grants* (see: subchapter 8.1.1). If a declaration made by an Applicant in the application proves to be false, the grant agreement will not be signed.

CO-FINANCING

Co-financing is not required.

TIMELINE FOR ORGANISATIONAL GRANT USE

The implementation timeline must fall within 18 and 20 months.

Spending of the organisational grants shall commence no earlier than September 1st, 2022, and no later than November 1st, 2022. The conditions for grant disbursement are signing a grant agreement and submitting a guaranteed blank promissory note with a promissory note declaration.

In exceptional and well-justified cases it is possible to extend or alter the implementation period. However, implementation cannot take place after 30 April 2024. Such an extension requires the consent of the Operator and the signing of an annex to the grant agreement.

All grant-funded activity must be completed by 30 April 2024.

LIMITS ON APPLICATION AND GRANT NUMBER

A single eligible organisation may submit only one application in the call for organisational (macro) grants launched by the ACF-Regional.

Organisations can apply for an organisational grant even if they have already received or applied for grants in previous calls (for thematic or intervention projects) organised by the Active Citizens Fund – Regional Programme.

ATTENTION: One Applicant may receive only one organisational grant under an ACF competition for organisational grants - either organised by the Active Citizens Fund – National Programme or the Active Citizens Fund – Regional Programme. The ACF-Regional Operator reserves the right to not sign a grant agreement under this call with an Applicant that has been already awarded an organisational grant by the ACF-National.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS AND APPLICATION EVALUATION TIMELINE

Applications can be submitted between **27 April 2022 (Wednesday) from 12.00 (noon) CET to 7 June 2022 (Tuesday) up until 12.00 (noon) CEST.**

Applications will only be accepted *via* the Electronic Grant Application and Management System (referred to as the “Generator”), available at:

<http://generator.aktywniobywatele-regionalny.org.pl>.

Instructions are available in the Generator and on the ACF-Regional website <https://aktywniobywatele-regionalny.org.pl/granty-instytucjonalne/> (Attachment 3).

Applications submitted without using the Generator will not be examined.

Deadline for announcing the results: **12 August 2022**.

The Operator will post a list of all successful applications on the Programme webpage. Applicants will also be notified by e-mail when evaluation results are published (to the e-mail address linked with their Generator account) and will have access to their evaluation cards via the Generator.

The application form with instructions is available on the Programme website <https://aktywniobywatele-regionalny.org.pl/granty-instytucjonalne/> (Attachment 2).

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

Applicants are required to provide the following attachments to applications submitted *via* the EGAMS:

- development plan (strategy) for organisation, prepared using the provided template and including the expected outcomes and products table and indicators, as well as monitoring and evaluation plan,
- memorandum of association, bylaws or other document detailing the mission, aims and methods of the Applicant, signed by authorised persons or certified to be a true copy of the original,
- annual reports on the organisation's operations for a period of 3 years selected from the 5 years preceding the call or (if the applicant does not prepare such reports) written information on those operations,
- financial statement for the selected 3 years of operations out of 5 years preceding the call, including the balance sheet, the profit and loss statement, and the notes - certified to be true copies of original documents by authorised organisation representatives (the Applicant selects 3 full fiscal years from the 5 years preceding the call with average annual turnover of at least PLN 500,000 per annum),
- revenue and expenditure forecast for the full term of grant implementation.

COSTS

The **provisions on eligibility** of expenditures stipulated in Manuals for Applicants and Project Promoters of thematic and intervention projects under the Active Citizens Fund - Regional **shall not apply. There is also no list of eligible, ineligible, and excluded costs.** Funds shall be used in ways that clearly contribute to achieving the expected results and products. Project Promoters are obliged to work on the basis of sound financial management that might be verified by the Fund Operator through administrative and on-the-spot verification and monitoring.

The Project Promoter must provide an annual statutory financial audit report by an external auditor at the end of the grant implementation. The report must concern the latest full year of the project implementation and must be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Accounting Act of 29 September 1994 (references to Polish Journal of Laws: Dz. U. z 2021 r. poz. 217, 2105, 2106) and of the Act of 11 May 2017 on Statutory Auditors, Audit Firms and Public Oversight references to Polish Journal of Laws: Dz. U. z 2021 r. poz. 1598, 2106). The cost of the audit shall be borne by the Project Promoter from the grant or own funds.

ATTENTION: : The audit report should cover and specifically mention the EEA and Norway Grants contribution.

In case the information provided by the project promoter proves evident non-satisfactory performance, or the strategy/development plan is not implemented in line with the grant agreement⁴, the grant paid to the project promoter may be cancelled or reduced proportionately.

APPLICATION EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Applications will be subjected to the administrative, eligibility and content-related evaluation.

⁴ Including the Programme's principles as set in Article 1.4 of the Programme Implementation Agreement on the implementation of the Active Citizens Fund – Regional Programme in Poland financed from the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021, between the Financial Mechanism Office and the Jerzy Reguński Foundation in Support of Local Democracy.

Administrative and eligibility evaluation of applications

The administrative and eligibility evaluation of applications concerns whether:

- the Applicant is eligible to apply. We will check if the provided Applicant name and registry number match Applicant details in those registries. Furthermore, we will check if the founding documents provide for activity in line with at least one of the ACF-Regional support areas;
- the Applicant had generated average annual revenue of at least PLN 500,000 per annum in a period of three years selected from the five years preceding the call;
- the Applicant has only submitted one application in the call concerning organisational grants,
- the Applicant has filled in all the boxes on the form correctly;
- the Applicant has enclosed all the required attachments.

An Applicant's eligibility will be verified on the basis of the declarations made in the application. The template for the administrative and eligibility assessment sheet can be found on the Programme website:

<https://aktywniobywatele-regionalny.org.pl/granty-instytucjonalne/> (Attachment 4).

If the Applicant makes one of the following errors when completing the form:

- incorrect details are entered into fields A1 to A12 or B1 to B7,
- an empty or an incorrect file is enclosed in place of any of the required attachments,
- the Applicant enclosed a file in a supported format, but the file does not open,

an Applicant has 3 business days from the date on which the Operator sends the notification by e-mail to correct the error. Failure to correct the error within this time limit will result in the application being rejected on formal grounds.

Applications which fail to fulfil any of the above-listed criteria, including the time granted to correct the above-mentioned errors, will be rejected at the administrative and eligibility evaluation stage.

Appeals against administrative and eligibility evaluation results

The Operator will notify Applicants *via* e-mail if their applications are rejected on formal grounds. Applicants whose applications are rejected on formal grounds have 5 business days from the date on which notification of rejection is sent by e-mail to appeal the decision by sending an e-mail to: odwolania.aofr@frdl.org.pl. Appeals received after this time will be

disregarded. Appeals are reviewed by the Operator within 10 business days of the date of receipt. Decisions on accepting or rejecting appeals against administrative and eligibility evaluation results are taken by the Programme Director after consulting with the Operator's team for administrative and eligibility evaluation. Once the administrative and eligibility evaluation is complete, we will publish lists of all applications accepted for content-related evaluation.

Content-related evaluation of applications

The process of content-related evaluation involves:

- independent experts,
- representatives of the ACF-Regional Management Board,
- the Selection Committee, composed of two Fund Operator representatives and three independent experts,
- the Executive Board, composed of presidents of consortium organisations.

Application evaluation is a multi-stage procedure.

The **first stage** consists of independent experts assessing application and attachments content against a list of criteria. Each application with attachments (incl. the development strategy/plan and financial documentation) is evaluated independently by two experts. This stage produces a shortlist of top-scoring organisations who submitted the best applications, development strategies/plans, and financial documentation, and whose sought budgets will total 200% of the funds allocated for the call. The shortlist will be based on the average score awarded by the experts, provided that both evaluating experts consider a given application congruent with Programme objectives and assumptions of at least one of the Programme outcomes (support areas). If one expert assesses an application as non-compliant with Programme objectives or outcome assumptions, but the other expert adopts a contrary opinion, or if the difference in expert scores exceeds 30% of the higher score and, at the same time, at least one score exceeds 50% of the maximum score, the application will be subjected to additional evaluation by a third expert. In such cases, the ranking position will be based on the average of the two nearest scores or – if the difference between the scores is as indicated above – the two higher scores.

In the **second stage**, representatives of shortlisted Applicants have individual meetings (interviews) with all independent experts who assess their applications and 2 representatives

of the ACF-Regional Management Board. The interview is aimed at deepening and verifying the information contained in the application and attachments, and is evaluated according to the criteria included in the content-related evaluation sheet.

For the **third stage**, the Selection Committee meets to analyse and discuss the rankings produced on the basis of the scores given by the independent experts (based on the applications and attachments, and meetings with Applicant representatives). A list is drawn up of applications recommended for grants for the Executive Committee.

Only applications in which an average of experts' total scores will be no less than 50% of the total score attainable will make it to the list of recommended grants. The Committee may introduce changes to the ranking concerning specific applications, on condition that it justifies its decision in the minutes of its deliberations. The Selection Committee may also create a back-up list of applications recommended for a grant. The back-up list is intended only for applications where the average expert score is at least 50% of the total possible score and which did not win the Committee's recommendation only because the fund allocated to the call had already been used up.

Representatives of the following institutions are invited to participate in the Selection Committee meetings in the capacity of observers: Financial Mechanism Office in Brussels, Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy (National Contact Point), Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway, and the Operator of Active Citizens Fund – National Programme.

In the **fourth stage** decisions on awarding grants are taken by the Executive Committee. Grant-awarding decisions are based on the lists of recommended applications prepared by the Selection Committee. The Executive Committee checks whether applications had been assessed in line with Programme procedures. In justified cases, the Executive Committee can introduce changes to the list of recommended applications prepared by the Selection Committee, provided that it presents the grounds for such a decision in the minutes of its deliberations.

ATTENTION: Before signing the grant agreement, the Operator reserves the right to ultimately determine application compliance with the Programme guidelines. Grant agreements will only be signed when the Fund Operator gives its final approval to the contents of the application and the required attachments.

Procedure for complaints regarding content-related assessment

No complaint procedure is envisaged for content-related assessment and Executive Board decisions.

Please write to wyniki.aofr@fed.org.pl to ask questions about the content-related assessment of unsuccessful grants.

Appeals against content-related evaluation results

Applicants may not appeal content-related evaluation results nor Executive Board decisions. If you have any questions related to the content-related evaluation of an application that has not received funding, please contact us by e-mail at: wyniki.aofr@fed.org.pl.

Complaint procedure

In the cases described in the *Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters* (Chapter 12), *i.e.*

- encountering any breaches of good governance principles (openness, transparency, accountability, zero tolerance for corruption) in the Active Citizens Fund – Regional Programme,
- encountering any failures to hold onto the Programme's guiding values (respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, human and minority rights),
- noticing any irregularities in the implementation of projects funded under the Programme or the use of Programme funding,

you may file a complaint with the Operator.

When lodging your complaint, please provide the following information:

- description of the reported violation (please be as accurate as possible),
- the best way to contact you about the case (e-mail, phone).

The address for reporting violations is skargi.aofr@frdl.org.pl.

The Operator will reply to your complaint within 30 days from the date of its receipt. If you find the reply unsatisfactory, you may report your case to the Complaint Committee appointed by the Operator at skargi.aofr@frdl.org.pl. The Committee will reply to your complaint within 30 days from the date of its receipt.

Content-related assessment criteria

The criteria and rating scale used by experts are also presented in the content-related evaluation sheet, available on the Programme website:

<https://aktywniobywatele-regionalny.org.pl/granty-instytucjonalne/> Attachment 5).

Criteria	Score (application)	Score (meeting/interview)
Compliance with Programme aims and assumptions adopted for at least one of its outcomes (support areas)	YES/NO	does not apply
<i>NOTE: Meeting the above mentioned criterion of compliance with the Programme aims and assumptions for at least one of its outcomes (support areas) is a prerequisite for the application to be evaluated further.</i>		
Organisation resources and experience (24)		
significance of organisation activity and its role in regional CSO sector at least at the level of two poviats	6	2
experience in implementing grant-funded projects	2	1
stable and sufficient resources and operating standards of organisation	6	2
sound financial management of organisation	4	1

Assessment of multi-annual development plan/strategy, its implementation mechanisms and outcomes of actions financed from the organisational grant (26)		
quality of multiannual development strategy/plan and plans for its implementation in day-to-day and strategic decisions	7	3
system for monitoring and evaluating actions and outcomes, and the use of that system in managerial decision-making	3	2
planned outcomes of actions financed from organisational grant	5	2
quality of the planned organisation's budget for years 2022-2024, incl. the assessment of consistency between budget and implementation of the annual organisational workplan / strategy, ensuring the optimal use of resources	3	1
TOTAL AT STAGES:	36	14
TOTAL FOR BOTH EVALUATION STAGES:	50	

GRANT DISBURSEMENT

Grants are disbursed in instalments (advance, interim, and final payment) in compliance with the following rules:

- advance payment: a maximum of 50% of the amount of the grant when the contract is signed,

- an interim payment once the interim report has been approved,
- a final payment of a minimum of 10% of the amount of the grant once the final report has been approved.

In justified cases (e.g. untimely or erroneous reports), the Operator may increase the number of payments and decrease payment amounts during plan implementation. Such changes require an annex to the agreement.

The first payment will be made within 15 working days from the date of placing the last signature on the agreement or submitting a guaranteed blank promissory note with a promissory note declaration. The interim payment will be made within 15 working days from the date of the Operator's approval of interim reports. The final payment will be made within 15 working days from the Operator's receipt of a print-out of an approved final report signed by the Project Promoter's authorised representatives.

Upon completion of activities financed from the organisational grant, the Project Promoter must return the unused portion of the grant within 15 working days from the date of final report approval to the bank account indicated by the Operator.

Payments will be made in euro to the bank account or sub-account presented and kept by Project Promoter. The account can be held in any currency.

SUPPORT FOR APPLICANTS

The Fund Operator provides support for Applicants in the form of, among others:

- a webinar cycle on preparing, modifying and implementing strategic plans in ongoing activities;
- a webinar cycle on CSO development directions key to the civic sector.

The *Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters. Call for Organisational (Macro) Grants* is available at <https://aktywniobywatele-regionalny.org.pl/granty-instytucjonalne/>, along with other useful documents: instructions on how to use the Generator, the application form with instructions, document templates, and webinar recordings.

CONTACT:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding application for a grant, please contact our regional consultants who will be happy to explain the rules of applying for grants and the

formal process of preparing an application. You will find their contact details here:

<https://aktywniobywatele-regionalny.org.pl/kontakt/>.

We will regularly publish answers to most frequently asked questions on the Programme website (<https://aktywniobywatele-regionalny.org.pl/faq/>).

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

1. Manual for Applicants and Project Promoters of ACF Regional. Call for organisational (macro) grants
2. Application form with instructions
3. Instructions for submitting applications via Electronic Grant Application and Management System (EGAMS)
4. Administrative and eligibility evaluation sheet
5. Content-related evaluation sheet
6. Grant agreement template
7. Programme logos
8. Link to Electronic Grant Application and Management System (EGAMS):
<https://generator.aktywniobywatele-regionalny.org.pl/>
9. Table of ACF-R outcomes
- 9a. Table of ACF-R outcomes with explanations