



Co-funded by
the European Union

Co-funded by the Swedish
International Development
Cooperation Agency



Sweden
Sverige

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Announced as part of the Action:

“Furthering Gender Equality through the EU Accession Process”

**funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Swedish
International Development Cooperation Agency**

Issued: 28 June, 2021

Application Deadline: 30 July, 2021

Submit to: grants@reactor.org.mk

Implemented by:

REAC—OR
research in action



**KVINNA
KVINNA**



**PRAVA
ZASV=**


**WOMEN'S RIGHTS CENTER
CENTAR ZA ŽENSKA PRAVA**

CONTENTS

1. Background	3
2. Objective of the Call for Proposals	5
3. Expected results and suggested indicators.....	5
3.1. Capacity Development Opportunities.....	8
4. Eligibility Criteria.....	9
5. Types of activities	10
5.1. Eligible activities	10
5.2. Ineligible activities.....	10
6. Eligibility of costs.....	11
6.1. Eligible costs.....	11
6.2. Ineligible costs.....	11
7. Duration.....	11
8. Location	12
9. Size of grants.....	12
10. Selection criteria and evaluation.....	12
10.1. Minimum Criteria	13
10.2. Selection Criteria	13
11. Application procedure, deadlines and Timeframe.....	14
11.1. Indicative Timeframe.....	15
11.2. Info sessions	15

1. BACKGROUND

Gender equality is a fundamental value of the European Union (EU), and as such, must be streamlined in the EU Accession Process of the Western Balkans (WB). Ensuring that a gender perspective is integrated in all programs, including the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA), involves joint efforts of institutions, governments, National IPA coordinators (NIPACs), line ministries, EU officials, as well as women's rights civil society organisations' (WCSOs). WCSOs' expertise and knowledge are key in supporting WB governments in mainstreaming gender in their programs and ensuring attention to gender equality during the EU Accession process.¹

This Action builds on the work of the regional advocacy network consisting of women's rights CSOs and aims to further gender equality in the WB through the EU Accession Process. It is funded by the European Union and co-funded by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. The regional WCSO partners implementing this project are: [Reactor – Research in Action](#) from North Macedonia, [Albanian Women Empowerment Network \(AWEN\)](#) from Albania, [Rights for all](#) from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the [Kosovo Women's Network \(KWN\) from Kosovo](#), [Women's Rights Centre \(WRC\)](#) from Montenegro and the [Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation](#) from Sweden through its office in North Macedonia.

The overall objective of this four-year Action (2020-2024) is to enhance and broaden existing regional cooperation, to strengthen participatory democracies and to bring about an inclusive gender-sensitive EU Approximation process. Towards this aim, the Action's specific objectives include:

- To enhance WCSO capacities to effectively engage with governments, EU Delegations and Office (EUD/EUO), with local civil society organisations (CSOs) and other CSOs in the region, making all involved actors aware of the gender dimensions of the EU Accession process;
- To improve accountability of governments and EUD/EUO in implementing commitments to gender equality and women's rights during the EU Accession process.

Our collaboration to advance women's rights and gender equality in the region has existed for more than two decades and includes research, monitoring, citizen engagement, intersectional approach to coalition-building, sub-granting, service provision and evidence-based advocacy targeting national governments, national gender equality mechanisms, Members of (national) Parliaments (MPs), EUD/EUO, EU Commission, EU Member States, and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs).

Since 2009, members of our regional network with partner support from Kvinna till Kvinna have advocated to governments and EU stakeholders, holding them accountable for their commitments regarding women's rights and gender equality, including the participation of women and WCSOs in the Accession process and visibility of women's rights issues in Accession-related documents. Therefore, this Action was informed by evidence and experience from our several years' worth of work both at a country level and in the region regarding women's rights and gender equality.

¹ <https://kvinnaatillkvinna.org/publications/womens-rights-organisations-at-the-center-of-implementation-of-the-eu-gender-action-plan-3-2021-2025/>

Throughout this work, we have established some general conclusions and gaps to be filled in:

Conclusions	Action to be taken
<p><u>There is a general lack of inclusion and participation of (W)CSOs in the EU accession process</u> and women's rights and gender equality are not prioritized in the EU accession process.</p> <p>Despite significant improvements and continuous pressure by WCSOs, women's organizations are seldom included in the processes associated with the countries' EU accession. Gender equality remains a marginal issue in the accession process. The pre-accession process provides the best opportunity for women's organizations to strongly advocate and make changes when it comes to advancing women's rights.</p>	<p>There is a need for more structured interaction with EU institutions as well as the institutions that coordinate the accession process on the national level, so that gender equality is prioritized within the local EUD/EUO, local governments, DG NEAR and DG JUST (responsible for gender mainstreaming). Furthermore, in official documents such as the Country Reports and IPA programming, women's rights need to be continually addressed, making it crucial for women's organizations to be involved in advocacy efforts both at national level and in Brussels.</p>
<p>The EU has committed to mainstreaming gender in both political dialogue and programming, as well as to increasing its support to women's rights defenders and CSOs, both in the Comprehensive Approach to the EU Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and in the EU Gender Action Plan III. The GAP III builds on the previous GAP II document, which has set the target that 85% of new programs will receive an OECD gender marker 1 or 2 by 2020. It also makes a new commitment to have at least one action per country and one per region with gender as a principal objective (GM2) during the duration of GAP III. Moreover, the GAP III has ambition to tackle the root causes of inequalities and discrimination through the adoption of a gender-transformative approach, intersectionality in addressing discriminations and the rights-based approach. However, EUD/EUO staff, as well as National IPA coordinators (NIPACs) and line ministries do not always have sufficient gender expertise to ensure that all programs involve a gender perspective. Additionally, while all counties in the WB region have laws on gender equality there is a weak implementation of these laws in all policy areas, which is necessary to ensure gender mainstreaming.</p>	<p>Organizations that work on advancing gender equality and women's organizations that have the specific gender expertise are critical on order to improve the implementation of these commitments by actively monitoring the EU approximation processes on national level and holding institutions accountable. Hence (W)CSOs must be involved in these monitoring initiatives and activities and represent watchdogs of the gender equality commitments.</p>
<p>Women's rights groups and organizations have extensive expertise and knowledge in gender analysis and gender mainstreaming, which support the government in mainstreaming gender in its programmes and ensure</p>	<p>WCSOs' gender expertise should be utilized, acknowledged, and fairly compensated. Women's rights organizations, especially on local level,</p>

Conclusions	Action to be taken
attention to gender equality during the EU Accession process. However, with exception to a few best practices, the expertise of women's rights groups has been barely recognized or utilized in the EU accession process, thus gender perspective is largely missing. More broadly, implementing the plethora of the EU Accession-related reforms may become difficult without support of diverse citizens in implementing reforms. Moreover, there is evidence of shrinking space for women's rights organizations, particularly for grassroots organizations and organizations on local level.	can contribute to a great extend in providing gender analysis, providing gender input to relevant legislature, mainstream gender in programs in several policy areas, and provide invaluable input based on their own experiences and those of the women they support.

To address the recommendations resulting from our work to date, the Action partners have recognized the need and thus planned to cooperate closely with other (W)CSOs in the region. In support of this collaboration towards joint aims, the Coalition opens this Call for Proposals for interested (W)CSOs

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The objective of this Call for Proposals is **to support local (W)CSOs in furthering their capacities in areas where they need additional development, by using a “learning by doing approach”**. The Sub-granting process will seek to strengthen local (W)CSOs organisational, networking, research, monitoring and advocacy capacities.

Moreover, the financial support to local (W)CSOs through this sub-granting aims at: (1) enhancing the capacities of CSOs to engage more effectively with governments, EUD/EUO and other CSOs in the region, while making these actors more aware of the gender dimensions of the EU Accession process and of their importance and agency; (2) improving accountability of governments and EUD/EUO in implementing their commitments to gender equality and women's rights during these processes.

3. EXPECTED RESULTS AND SUGGESTED INDICATORS

The expected results include:

- R1. Local (W)CSOs' participation in decision making processes and reforms related to gender equal EU Accession increased and improved (this aspect includes improved cooperation relations with local and national government officials and other relevant stakeholders);

- R2. Cooperation, networking and exchange of knowledge and best practices (mentoring) among CSOs increased and applied in furthering accountability of governments in implementing commitments to gender equality during EU accession process.
- R3. Capacities of local WCSOs for monitoring, gender analysis, gender mainstreaming and advocacy related to EU Accession increased and improved.

As these grants are in the framework of the aforementioned Action and should contribute to the achievement of these results and addressing the above recommendations, it is advised that applicants strongly consider using some of the following indicators in their proposals and in their logical frameworks, as per the intervention logic of this broader Action:

Logic	Results chain	Indicators
<i>Impact (Overall objective(s))</i>	<i>Enhanced regional cooperation to strengthen participatory democracies and inclusive gender-sensitive EU Approximation process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strengthened <u>Regional Network</u>, including more WCSOs (local and grassroots) and engaging other CSOs as allies, while showing stronger dedication, improved cooperation and engagement with governments and EUD/EUO and more meaningful participation in the EU Approximation processes; - strengthened <u>national networks</u> of WCSOs; inclusion of local/grassroots and other CSOs; improved and increased collaboration and engagement on EU Accession process with national governments and EUD/EUD; - increased knowledge on the EU Accession processes, strengthened overall capacities on gender analysis and EU advocacy; - improved accountability of relevant government institutions and EUD/EUO and their stronger commitments to gender equality in the EU Accession processes.
<i>Outcome (s) (Specific objective(s))</i>	<i>SO1: Enhance the capacities of CSOs to effectively engage with governments, EUD/EUO, other CSOs and other CSOs in the region, making these actors more aware of the gender dimensions of the EU Accession process, their importance and agency</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of CSOs working in gender equality and other areas engaged in capacity development through workshops and learning by doing approach # of local/grassroots (W)CSOs equipped with skills and knowledge on EU related advocacy, gender analysis, monitoring of gender commitments of governments # of (W)CSOs, including local/grassroots engaged in EU related advocacy with governments and relevant stakeholders % of joint regional Advocacy strategy implemented # of joint advocacy initiatives on national level undertaken by national (W)CSOs networks and other CSOs allies % of national advocacy strategies implemented

	<p><i>SO2: Improve accountability of governments and EU/EUO in implementing commitments to gender equality and women's rights during the EU Accession process</i></p>	<p><i># of changes² that occur as a result of diverse regional and national (W)CSOs advocacy and monitoring actions</i></p> <p><i># of government institutions/ or government officials, and EUD/EUO per country engaged in implementing gender related commitments within their mandate</i></p>
<i>Outputs</i>	<p><i>Output 1 (linked with SO1&SO2): Improved networking and participation of the existing regional women networks to mainstream gender in EU Accession</i></p>	<p><i># of (W)CSOs (including local/grassroots and other CSOs) participating in the regional network advocacy actions and initiatives</i></p> <p><i># of (W)CSOs (including local/grassroots and other CSOs) participate at networking and advocacy planning meetings on national and regional level</i></p> <p><i># of meetings held among (W)CSOs and other stakeholders to plan and undertake joint advocacy</i></p>
	<p><i>Output 2 (linked with SO1&SO2): Diverse local women rights groups strengthened capacities enable increased and improved participation in EU Accession</i></p>	<p><i># of (W)CSOs involved in mentoring process</i></p> <p><i># of (W)CSOs (including local/grassroots) participating in capacity building workshops</i></p> <p><i># of joint advocacy initiatives on regional and national level regarding inclusion of (W)CSOs in the sectorial working bodies on EU Accession</i></p> <p><i># of published monitoring reports and analyses by (W)CSOs (local/grassroots) on governments' gender commitments related to EU Accession</i></p>
	<p><i>Output 3 (linked with SO2): Governments, EUD/EUO held accountable to mainstreaming gender in the EU Accession process politically and financially</i></p>	<p><i># evidence-based reports, analyses and factsheets/guides published by country and as region</i></p> <p><i># of media cover issues (including social media coverage) related to governments gender equality commitments with reference to EU Accession</i></p> <p><i># joint advocacy actions on national and regional level</i></p> <p><i># of government institutions/officials and EUD/EUO engaged with the advocacy actions</i></p>

² Difference in policies; approach; fulfilment of governments' gender related commitments in strategies, legislation and/or policy; inclusion and substantial participation of WCSOs in EU accession working groups and processes improved government transparency and accountability in reporting on gender related commitments.

3.1. Capacity Development Opportunities

A tailored support will be provided to all grant recipients towards achieving the overall objectives and results. Initially, each selected grant applicant will undergo an Organisational and Advocacy Capacity Assessment (OACA).³ The one-day assessment will be used to identify organisational strengths, as well as opportunities for furthering their capacities. Based on this assessment, organisations will be asked to develop a simple Capacity Development Plan (CDP) they can fulfil during the grant period. Applicant organisations are encouraged to set aside some resources in their budget proposals for this activity, and some additional expertise may also be available, based on the identified needs. All support will be provided based on the outlined Actions. A follow-up OACA will be carried out at the end of the grant period, to assess the changes in the organisational capacities that have occurred over this period.

Awarded grants will enable (W)CSOs to strengthen their professional skills to monitor gender related reforms at local level, prepare monitoring reports, undertake evidence-based advocacy, participate more meaningfully in the local policy and decision-making processes, and raise awareness on the importance to deliver on the commitments made by the local governments on gender equality policies. Furthermore, sub-grants will enable (W)CSOs to strengthen their organizational, financial and advocacy capacities throughout the implementation period of their sub-granted activities.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In order to apply, the applicant must fulfil the following criteria:

- Be legally registered and operating in one or more of the following six countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo, and Serbia;
- Be non-profit;
- Be a civil society organization;
- Been active longer than a year;
- Fulfil a mission that supports and relates to the proposed activities;
- Have a clear vision of the change it wants to pursue with its initiative, which will contribute to furthering gender equality through the EU accession process; and
- Be able to show evidence of their capacity and previous experience in managing projects of a similar size (in terms of budget and contract duration of the sub-granting activities);
- Be directly responsible for preparation and management of the project;
- Have the professional competences and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action;
- Seek to reach marginalised, grassroots and/or vulnerable persons (e.g., persons suffering from discrimination, particularly women, persons with different abilities, LGBTQIA+ persons, and minority ethnic groups, among others); and

³ This respectable methodology, derived from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Advocacy Index, and further developed by the East-West Management Institute, is used in several countries worldwide to assess organizations' capacities and abilities to carry out effective advocacy.

- Have at least some experiences related to the proposed project activities, like for example:
 - If an organisation wants to include awareness-raising in its proposal, it needs to have at least some experience in raising awareness within the targeted communities;
 - If an organisation is interested in supporting policy and decision making, relevant prior experiences and expertise OR current participation to sectoral working groups or other relevant/similar bodies dealing with decision making and policy approximation will be considered a plus;

Under this Call for Proposals, each organisation may submit only one application.

Experience in furthering gender equality and/or women's rights is highly encouraged and considered an asset, but it is not mandatory for the selection process. We encourage all local organisations to get out of their comfort zone and challenge themselves with novel activities that can further gender mainstreaming at different levels and contribute to the overall gender equality processes in each country, while taking into consideration their current capacities and potentials for successful implementation of the elaborated ideas and planned activities.

5. TYPES OF ACTIVITIES

5.1. Eligible activities

The types of activities eligible for financial support will include (but not necessarily be limited to):

- monitoring and reporting on gender related commitments of governments (with focus on local authorities) in reference to the EU Accession process, i.e. monitoring of the implementation of gender equality and women's rights legislation and policy at the local/community level, as an important part of the EU Accession reforms,
- doing advocacy towards relevant duty-bearers, based on monitoring findings,
- conducting evidence-based local campaigns and awareness raising activities regarding women's rights and furthering gender equality through the EU Accession Process at local municipal level, including media monitoring and awareness raising for an improved gender mainstreaming and overall equal inclusion of women and men in the community,
- evidence-based campaigns and advocacy for empowering women and girls in all their diversity to participate in the political dialogue,
- evidence-based advocacy for improved and gender sensitive public services (care sector, for ex.), etc.

The type of legal entities for support will be (but not necessarily be limited to) local and grassroots women's civil society organisations working in the area of gender equality or civil society organisations willing to improve their understanding of human rights and to further gender equality through the EU accession process and contribute to the afore-mentioned objectives. CSOs working in other areas of relevance for this Action (EU approximation, climate changes and environment, and so on) are also welcomed to this Call for Applications if they are willing to support gender

mainstreaming processes in their respective countries by improving their knowledge and expertise on gender equality issues and human rights in general.

Capacity development activities may also receive support as part of the initiatives, particularly as defined by grant recipients' OACA and CDPs (see [above](#)). Applicants are encouraged to set aside some resources for this. However, capacity building should not be the main objective.

5.2. Ineligible activities

The types of action that are ineligible include but are not limited to:

- Actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses and study visits;
- Actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- Purchasing of buildings or offices;
- Purchasing of vehicles;
- Purchasing of equipment (unless necessary for the successful execution of the project);
- Actions linked to political parties or of political/partisan nature;
- Actions that fall within the general activities of competent state institutions or state administration services, including local government; and
- Actions in relation to the tobacco industry (CAEN code 16); production of alcoholic distilled beverages (CAEN code 1591) and arms and munitions (CAEN code 296).

6. ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS

6.1. Eligible costs

Costs eligible under this Call are those:

- Incurred by the beneficiary during the duration of the action AND related to the activities planned within the frame of the Grant agreement;
- Indicated in the estimated overall budget of the action attached to the grant agreement;
- Necessary for the implementation of the action which is the subject of the grant;
- Identifiable and verifiable, including recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is/are established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary; and
- That comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- That are reasonable, justified and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

Salaries and operational costs, where applicants clearly explain how such support will enable them to further gender equality through the EU accession process, as outlined above.

6.2. Ineligible costs

The costs ineligible under this Call are:

- Debts and debt service charges (interest);
- Provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- Costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving a European Union (including through EDF) grant or already funded by other donors;
- Purchases of land or buildings;
- Currency exchange losses;
- Credit to third parties; and
- Salary costs of the personnel of civil servants/national administrations.

7. DURATION

The planned duration of each project application must be at minimum 12 months and may not exceed 18 months in total.

Planned project implementation should start no later than March 2022 and should finish no later than August 2023 (this is the absolute maximum, based on the overall Action timeline, which could allow for timely preparation, submission, and approval of the final reports from the sub-grantees).

(Note: anticipated project start dates should be after 1st December 2021)

8. LOCATION

Activities should take place in the country where the organization is established and operates, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia.

The Grant Review Committee will aim to distribute a similar number of grants per partner country but also take into account the local context and CSO environment, the quality of received applications, and the level of impact they can make at the local community/country level.

The Grant Review Committee reserves the right to make adjustments based on the proposals received.

9. SIZE OF GRANTS

The overall indicative maximum amount for all participating countries made available under this Call for Proposals is EUR 450,000.00. The foreseen maximum amount per an individually awarded grant is EUR 15,000.00.

Organisations are welcomed to apply under this Call for Proposals, with a clear reference in their applications to the area in which they plan to work in their respective countries.

The call will be re-published only if funds are not exhausted during the first call.

10. SELECTION CRITERIA AND EVALUATION

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Grant Review Committee comprised of six members, one representative from each partner organisation. For the purpose of evaluation, the applicant must ensure that the requested information and documents are prepared. All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

10.1. Minimum Criteria

An initial screening will be performed of all applications received to ensure that:

- The applicant meets the [eligibility criteria](#);
- The applicant has submitted all the requested documents in the requested [format](#);
- The deadline has been met.

Applications that do not meet these criteria will be disqualified and will not undergo further review. If the requested minimum criteria are met, the application will be processed by the Grant Review Committee as per the selection criteria below.

10.2. Selection Criteria

The Grant Review Committee will score proposals based on the following evaluation grid. The highest scoring proposals will be selected to receive the available grants. Applicants must score at least 50 points to receive funding.

Selection Grid	Maximum Score
I. Technical approach	60
<u>I.a.</u> Relevance of the questions and needs covered by the application	30
I.a.1. Precise problem analysis	15
I.a.2. Precise definition of target groups (direct/indirect)	10
I.a.3. Precise description of the project management and the partners/associates	5
<u>I.b.</u> Quality of the suggested activities	15
<u>I.c.</u> Result oriented activities	15
I.c.1. Results framework	5
I.c.2. Timeline for activities	5
I.c.3 Risk assessment and management	5
II. Organizational capacity and results from previous working experience	20
II.a. Administrative, finance and management capacity	10
II.a.1. Structure of the organization	5
II.a.2. The main focus area(s), the main target group(s) and the geographical area(s) of activities	5
II.b. Relevant previous experiences and results in similar projects	10
III. Budget	20
III.a. Cost efficiency	10
III.b. Adequate financial management	10
<u>TOTAL</u>	100

11. APPLICATION PROCEDURE, DEADLINES AND TIMEFRAME

Applications must be submitted in English. Applicants could also submit their applications in one of the local languages (Albanian, Serbian, Bosnian, Montenegrin or Macedonian), but there has to be an English version as well. The full applications must be submitted electronically to the following email: grants@reactor.org.mk, managed by Reactor – Research in Action.

Applicants must submit the following documents:

- 1.1. A copy of their application using the Application Form, including the Timeframe (Word format, attached and available at: [ADD LINK](#))
- 1.2. Budget (Excel format, attached and available at: [ADD LINK](#))
- 1.3. Logical Framework (Word format, attached and available at: [ADD LINK](#))

Proposals submitted must be the original and sole work of the applicant organisation. Plagiarism will result in disqualification.

Questions about the Call for Proposals and Application Form may be sent to Reactor – Research in Action to the following email: grants@reactor.org.mk until the [deadline for clarifications](#) has passed.

Reactor will retain all materials and documents submitted by applicants. Reactor will not use information presented by applicants for purposes other than review; all information submitted will remain confidential, unless required by North Macedonia law or requested by financial supporters.

Upon delivery of their application, applicants will receive a Confirmation of Receipt with an application number.

11.1. Indicative Timeframe

Activity	Deadline
Information sessions	5 – 9 Jul 2021 (see below)
Requests for clarification / further information	16 Jul 2021
Deadline for submission of project proposals	30 Jul 2021
Eligibility review	3 - 13 Aug 2021
Grant Committee Review process	16 Aug – 6 Sept 2021
Requests for further information from finalists (as relevant)	9 - 24 Sept 2021
Notification of award	11 – 15 Oct 2021
Orientation sessions, finalisation and signing of contracts <i>(Note: anticipated project start dates should be after 1st December 2021)</i>	15 – 19 Nov 2021

11.2. Info sessions

Dedicated info sessions are an integral part of this Call for Proposals and they will be organized by the project implementation partners in all six (6) Western Balkan countries. During the info sessions, the Call for Proposals will be explained, and potential applicant questions answered. The schedule of the planned info sessions is as follows:

Pristina – 9 July 2021, 14:00 - 15:30 (Zoom)