



**ACTION SEE – Accountability, Technology and Institutional  
Openness Network in SEE  
Request for Applications  
Grants for Civil Society Organizations**

**Submission deadline: January 15, 2017**



The “Accountability, Technology and Institutional Openness Network in South East Europe - ACTION SEE” project is implemented by Metamorphosis Foundation, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, CRTA – Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability, Citizens Association Why not?, Center for Democratic Transition, Open Data Kosovo (ODK) and Levizja Mjajt!.

This project is funded by the European Union

## Introduction

Good governance is key to rule of law. And while issues of corruption, transparency, rule of law and good governance are always in the spotlight, there remains a lack of understanding and systemic problems that hardly receive sufficient coverage. ACTION SEE project aims to raise awareness of such challenges by facilitating cooperation among civic organisations and consolidated strategic efforts for representation.

The project aims to increase the inclusion of civic society and media organisations in decision making processes and the creation of public opinion and policies, as well as to raise the capacity of civic societies to address sensitive issues.

It will provide support for *targeted advocacy campaigns and policy initiatives* that will contribute to achieving the following overall objectives:

- Enhancing the involvement of civil society and media organisations in the creation of public opinion, policymaking and participation in the decision-making mechanisms;
- Increasing capacities of civil society to build its constituencies and tackle bold issues.

ACTION SEE announce this Request for Applications to provide support to civil society organizations to promote good governance and rule of law through a grant scheme of 243,000 EUR awarding approximately 25-30 small grants to CSOs from Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo (5-6 grants per country), through the following two types of grants, in the **range between EUR 6.000 to EUR 8.000 per grant:**

1. Support to local CSOs to perform initiatives within one country.
2. Support to CSOs to perform initiatives between two or more countries from the region.

## Grant features

The Small Grants Scheme will provide support for *targeted media-supported advocacy campaigns and policy initiatives* that will contribute to achieving the overall ACTION SEE goals, transposed to the national circumstances of the targeted country. The grants will target primarily smaller CSOs in order to provide a learning experience and help them build their capacities to fundraise and subsequently participate in grant calls by the EU and other donors. As part of the application process, the applicants will be provided with mentoring assistance to develop their project proposals to the level of full applications with detailed action plans. Furthermore, partnership with at least one media will be required. Media organisations will be directly included in the capacity building activities and advocacy initiatives to further motivate them to become active actors in promoting and initiating a public debate on rule of law and good governance.

The initiatives supported by the Small Grants Scheme are expected to focus on tackling rule of law and good governance issues, in particular anti-corruption, transparency, and access to information, data protection and use of public funds, within the following targeted areas:



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- Free Access to Public Information Act (Freedom of Information – FOI)
- Financing of political parties
- Corrupt Public Procurement Practices
- Bribery Practices
- Privacy and Security
- Gifts/Sponsorship
- Election-related concerns
- Breach of Duty
- Cronyism,
- Other

The Action’s methodology for the Small Grants will treat designing and implementing grants projects as a learning process, particularly for smaller CSOs. Applicants will be supported with constructive feedback at all stages of the grant project – from their project proposal, to the development of their action plan, to managing grant finances responsibly. ACTION SEE will award grants competitively based on the quality of proposals and relevance to the overall Action’s objective.

### **Technical Assistance and Networking**

Once the grants are awarded, Metamorphosis will monitor grant implementation and provide technical assistance to all project grantees based on their specific levels of competence. To facilitate the monitoring process, coaches will be appointed by each Action Partner in each of the country during the grant implementation and reporting phase.

Technical assistance will be provided through tailor-made coaching/mentoring for grantees to strengthen their capacities and to respond to their specific needs, including financial management and reporting, public relations, organizational development, monitoring and evaluation, etc. Capacity building will be organized for the grantees and other CSOs on writing policy papers, government research, oversight and advocacy, and thematic training (EU accession process, public spending, decentralization and division of competences). Reporting on issues related to anti-corruption, transparency and access to information, data protection, use of public funds and fight against organised crime and human trafficking will be part of the training curricula and will particularly involve media organizations in the network.

ACTION SEE will support grantees to develop and implement advocacy plans and build coalitions and issue- based networks. ACTION SEE will organize networking meetings of grantees for exchange of information, experience and lessons learned, discussion on actual problems, possible ways of resolving them, and possibilities for CSOs cooperation in addressing issues of common interest.

### **Co-Financing**

Co-financing of 5% per initiative will be desirable, but not required as an obligation to participate in the Grants Scheme. The applicants that will provide co-financing will have advantage during the process of



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selection within the Small Grants Scheme. Applicants will also be encouraged to provide cost share from their own or other sources/donors also.

The co-financing taken into account shall consist exclusively from financial contribution which is necessary to achieve project results and which is verifiable from the recipients' records. In-kind contributions shall not count as co-financing, but will be noted during the evaluation process.

### Evaluation Process

This Request for Applications will support innovative and bold proposals that:

- a) Directly support ACTION SEE objectives;
- b) Demonstrate a commitment to citizen outreach and inclusion;
- c) Involve at least one media partner
- d) Provide creative and effective strategies for access to information and for policy input
- e) Strategically use traditional and new media for grassroots mobilization and citizen engagement;
- f) Promote an integrative approach with special focus on ethnicity and gender
- g) Foster partnerships and coalitions, especially when tackling difficult issues.

Only Civil Society Organizations will be taken into account as applicants to the Grants Scheme. Citizen groups or coalitions of CSOs or informal networks shall be encouraged to apply through representation of registered local CSOs.

The CSOs will need to submit their applications using the **Metamorphosis Standardized Application Form**, including a precise **Implementation Schedule** and **Budget Form** and relevant attachments: copy of registration documents, annual narrative and financial reports for the previous year, audit report, CVs of key personnel, information on partners and letters of commitment – if applicable.

The selection of grant recipients will be a three step process: pre-assessment, assessment and awarding. Each application will be pre-assessed to ensure that the basic requirements are met and that the application is in compliance with the eligibility criteria, as follows:

- The applicant is a local CSO registered in one of the ACTION SEE countries
- Application form is fully completed and includes required attachments
- Application is submitted before the deadline
- The requested financial support does not exceed the maximum grant amount

An application must comply with all these criteria in order to proceed to the assessment phase. Applications not complying will be rejected.

The following applications will receive priority during the selection process:

- Applications with secured co-financing of at least 5% of the total cost of the action;
- Applications by grassroots and small CSOs (with an annual budget of less than EUR 30.000 during the last three years)



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- Creative and cost-effective initiatives with high potential for long-term sustainability.

All applications positively assessed during the pre-assessment will be presented to the Steering Committee for approval/rejection/conditional approval. The Steering Committee will evaluate applications based on the following **selection criteria**:

1. Technical approach (maximum 60 points)
  - Relevance to the needs and issues addressed (30 points)
  - Quality of the proposed activities (15 points)
  - Results-oriented activities (15 points)
2. Organizational capacity and past performance (maximum 20 points)
  - Administrative, financial and managerial capacities (10 points)
  - Relevant past experience and results in similar areas (10 points)
3. Cost proposal (max. 20 points)
  - Cost-effectiveness of the budget (10 points)
  - Adequate financial management capability (10 points)

Small grants will be awarded only to responsible recipients who possess the potential to perform successfully under the criteria and terms of the Grants Scheme. Consideration will be given to such matters as integrity, record of past performance, financial and technical resources, and accessibility to other necessary resources.

During the evaluation process, the Steering Committee will have the liberty to request additional information from the applicants regarding the proposal or about the organization in general that is necessary to complete the evaluation. Pre-awarding visits to applicant organizations may be also conducted.

Approval, rejection, or conditional approval letters will be sent to the applicants. Approved applications will receive a Grant Contract outlining the recipient organization’s legal obligations, which will be based on the implementation schedule from the submitted application.

### **SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS**

The CSOs will need to submit their applications using the **Metamorphosis Standardized Application Form**, including:

- Implementation Schedule
- Budget Form and relevant attachments:
- Copy of registration documents,
- Annual narrative and financial reports for the previous year,



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- Audit report,
- CVs of key personnel,
- Information on partners and letters of commitment – if applicable.

\*Audit report is ~~mandatory~~ optional for organizations with above 30.000 EUR annual turnover, but will be considered positively by the evaluation committee. Newly established organizations (less than one year) and small organizations with an annual turnover less than 30,000 EUR are not obliged to submit an Audit Report.

One organization can apply with only one project application as a lead applicant and can participate in only one additional project application as co-applicant/partner. One organization can participate in maximum two projects. Alternatively, one organization can participate in up to two projects as partner.

Deadline for submission of complete applications: **January 15, 2017 at 16:00 hrs, exclusively** by online application form: <http://metamorphosis.org.mk/application-form>. Application forms must be completed using English language.

Applicants that would need clarifications or need additional information about the competition, are invited to send them by e-mail to [actionsee@metamorphosis.org.mk](mailto:actionsee@metamorphosis.org.mk) before December 20, 2016, so they can receive the responses in time before the final deadline expires.



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