

**FAQs: Frequently asked questions and answers  
in the context of the application and project funding for the Eastern partnership program  
“Expanding Cooperation with Civil Society in the Eastern Partnership Countries and Russia”**

**How does the Federal Foreign Office decide on funding and how does the application process work?**

The Federal Foreign Office decides on formal applications in accordance with § 44 BHO. Due to the very high number of project ideas submitted, it will prospectively not be possible for the Federal Foreign Office to support all ideas submitted in the coming year. For a maximum in transparency and in order to keep your effort as low as possible, the decision on funding will follow in two stages:

- **1. Pre-selection process:** As part of a pre-selection process, project ideas that briefly present the planned project are used to identify those project ideas that have the best chance of being funded based on the criteria specified in the [program's description of objectives and purposes](#) and for which an application for funding can be recommended. Project ideas can be submitted **between 10/14/2024 and 11/08/2024**.
- When all the project ideas received will have been evaluated, the potential applicants will receive notification, probably beginning of 2025, with an assessment of whether an application for funding in accordance with § 44 BHO is likely to be successful, taking into account all other project ideas received.
- **2. Submission of applications:** Formal applications, including all relevant documentation, can be submitted for projects that have received a positive assessment. Applications must be submitted in German or English by the above deadline - via mail in PDF format only - in order to be considered. More information for submission of application including deadlines and documents will be received within the notification regarding your project idea. Please refrain from asking questions beforehand.

**General questions and information:**

- **What is a project idea?**
  - In order to keep the administrative burden as low as possible for you, the decision on whether or not a measure can be funded is made in two stages: During the first stage, you must submit a *project outline* via the [online submission form](#), which includes the most important information (project title, cost, project partners, target group etc.) as well as a short description of the project (max. 6000 characters).
- **What is a project application?**
  - If you receive the notification that your application is likely to be successful, please submit a formal *project application*, based on the previously submitted project idea, in the second stage by mail only. The application includes (1) a detailed description of the project, (2) a financial plan, (3) a logframe (including project objectives and indicators formulated according to the SMART rule), and (4) a declaration stating that the project was planned in cooperation and has not yet been started. You will receive an advance copy of the required forms by email, if your project outline is likely to be successful.

- **What information must be included in the outline describing the project?**
  - When writing your outline, try to address the funding criteria set out in the description of [the aims and purpose of the program](#) as precisely and clearly as you can. You will find additional helpful information online when you are filling in the various sections of the [submission form](#). Please keep in mind that you must clearly state WHO is planning WHAT (e.g. activities, measures) with WHOM, as well as WHERE and WHEN this will occur.
  
- **What project ideas are eligible? What are the prerequisites for funding?**
  - We support projects that establish and expand permanent civil society structures of cooperation between stakeholders from Germany and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries and Russia, that are adapted to the specific contexts of the program countries as far as possible, and that contribute to one of the four funding objectives of the program (strengthening pluralism and resilience; promoting discourses on values and human rights; creating future perspectives and democratic transformation; supporting dialogue and rapprochement). The focus should be on promoting cooperation and exchange, jointly working on a topic, and building knowledge and skills together. You can find the funding criteria and focal points of each year in the [program's description of objectives and purposes](#).

### Applying organizations

- **Which organizations can apply for project funding through the Eastern partnership program?**
  - Project ideas can be submitted by civil society organizations in Germany that want to conduct a joint project **together** with at least one partner organization from at least one program country (**Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Russia**).
  - The funding of national projects as well as projects without partners in Germany or in the countries of the Eastern Partnership/Russia is **not** possible.
  - In addition, the **participation of French and Polish civil society** is **possible** in order to deepen cooperation in the sense of the Weimar Triangle. Therefore, joint German-French as well as German-Polish projects with one or more partners in the program countries are welcome. The **active** participation of a Polish or French partner organization is a prerequisite for funding these projects.
  - **Only the German partner is entitled to apply for funding**, since in the case of funding, regulations of German funding law must be applied.
  
- **Can the applicant be a natural person?**
  - No, the application must always be submitted by a legal entity, i.e. an organization, association etc.
  
- **We have not yet registered as a legal entity. Are we still able to apply for Foreign Office funding, or should we do so in partnership with an already registered organization?**
  - If you should be invited to submit an application after a corresponding positive project outline evaluation, this is only possible as a legal entity. The applicant must therefore be registered as a legal entity by the time the application is submitted at the latest.

- **Can the project partner be an individual?**
  - No, the project partner cannot be an individual. It must be an organization, association, union of activists with appropriate registration as a legal entity, etc.
  
- **Can the request be made by an organization associated with governmental or economic activity?**
  - Organizations that are associated with governmental or economic activities can only be funded in exceptional cases, e.g. if, due to local conditions in the program countries, civil society actors are not available and the specific measures to be funded offer sufficient guarantee that the political objectives pursued will be achieved. Cooperation with Russian and Belarusian state or state-related agencies or organizations is excluded in any case.
  
- **Who are civil society actors?**
  - Typical civil society actors are clubs and associations, foundations (including political foundations), universities, youth associations, cultural workers, the media and other non-governmental organizations. Public broadcasting and media institutions are also categorized as civil society.
  
- **Are Franco-German or Polish-German organizations with headquarters in Germany considered to be French or Polish project partners?**
  - No – organizations whose headquarters are in Germany are automatically considered German organizations. Only organizations whose headquarters are located in France or Poland can be considered French or Polish partners. Conversely, this means that these organizations may not receive any direct support via the program if they do not have a German project partner.

### Measures and participants

- **Where can measures be implemented? Do these have to be implemented evenly among all program countries?**
  - Measures can be carried out in the countries of the **Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) and Russia**, as well as in **Germany** - in the case of German-Franco projects also in **France** and in the case of German-Polish projects also in **Poland**.
  - In justified cases of support for partner organizations that are in temporary exile, other venues are also conceivable. Given the Russian and Belarusian repression of civil society, projects with civil societies from these countries can be associated with a high personal risk for the activists. Given the importance of civil society work for Russian and Belarusian society, we support their work regardless of their location, i.e. even in **temporary exile**. In this context, it is important that the measures have an impact in the country of origin / EaP region.
  - Measures do not have to be divided equally among all participating countries.
  
- **Can ideas for projects with participants from countries other than the program countries (e.g. Hungary, Central Asia, Austria, etc.) also be submitted?**
  - In principle, it is possible to carry out cooperation projects with participants from third countries, provided that the project has a clear Eastern partnership connection. However,

expenses for participants who do not come from the Eastern partnership countries, Germany, France or Poland cannot be financed from Eastern partnership program funds. Third-party or own funds are required for this purpose.

### **Formalities**

- **Can I submit my idea in a language other than German?**
  - You may submit your idea in German or in English. Unfortunately, no other languages will be accepted. Applications must likewise be submitted in German or in English.
  
- **Is information about the program also available in other languages?**
  - Yes – on the Federal Foreign Office website and in the [download section](#) of the Eastern Partnership website, where you will soon find detailed information on the program in Armenian, Azerbaijani, Belarusian, Georgian, Romanian, Russian and Ukrainian – as well as in English, French and Polish.
  
- **Can I submit more than one idea?**
  - Yes – you may submit more than one idea.
  
- **Do I have a better chance of being selected if I submit more than one idea?**
  - No – the number of ideas that you submit does not improve the likelihood of being selected.
  
- **My project fits more than one funding goal, can I select more than one?**
  - No, please select the funding goal that most closely matches your project and provide a coherent justification.
  
- **I would like to continue my current project. Is this possible?**
  - Yes – please indicate your current project number in the idea (between one and three digits; cf. your reference number of your previous project) and give a brief summary of what your project has achieved to date. Projects may receive funding more than once under the program. The provision of the maximum three rounds of funding depends on tangible progress being made in terms of the project content. However, there is no guarantee that follow-up funding will be granted (section 23 of the Federal Budget Code). The aim of the program funding is to allocate start-up financing to projects. It is the responsibility of the project organization to ensure long-term financing through other sources of funding or revenue.
  
- **Are digital formats eligible?**
  - In principle, digital or hybrid formats have many advantages. If it makes sense for your project, we encourage you to go digital - with a view to climate, costs and reach. You can already address whether a digital or a presence format is more appropriate for your project in the project idea.

- **To what extent should the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals be taken into account in project design?**
  - The United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) should be taken into account in project concepts with a view to paying greater attention to various aspects of sustainability in project work. Please state at least one SDG that you intend to promote with your project. You may assign up to two SDGs to the project.
  
- **To what extent should the guidelines of feminist foreign policy be taken into account?**
  - As part of a feminist foreign policy, the German government supports projects that strengthen the political and social inclusion of marginalized groups. This also concerns the still insufficient representation of women in the (pre-)political arena. As stated in the [goal and purpose description](#) of the Eastern partnership program, one of the focus of our program is therefore to strengthen the social and political participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups - such as women, children and youth, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ persons, refugees, members of other minorities, people in rural areas.
  - In your idea, you can already address whether and to what extent your project contributes to strengthening the participation of marginalized groups.
  - If your idea has is likely to have success, you will be asked to indicate in your application whether your project is gender-neutral, gender-sensitive, gender-transformative. Gender-neutral projects are those that are neutral on issues of gender equality for women or marginalized groups, projects from which men and women benefit equally. Gender-sensitive projects demonstrate sensitivity to issues of gender equality for women or marginalized groups. At least one of the indicators you select (in the application) for the measure relates to the issue of gender equality for women or marginalized groups. Gender-transformative projects have at least one aspect of gender equality for women or marginalized groups as an explicit focus.

#### **Deadlines and important dates:**

- **Until when can outlines be submitted?**
  - Project outlines may be submitted between 10/14/2024 and 11/08/2024.
  
- **When will I be notified that I can submit an application?**
  - After receiving the ideas, we check them in detail. Due to the high number of project ideas, this takes a few weeks. We plan to be able to give you our assessment at the beginning of 2025 as to whether an application is likely to be successful. You will receive all further information at that time. In any case, you will receive a response to your idea submission. Please refrain from inquiries about the status of processing in the meantime.
  
- **In what time period can the project be implemented? When can the projects start at the earliest?**
  - The project must not have been started yet when we invite you to submit an application. Taking the application processing into account, we recommend that you give priority in your planning to a **project start date of summer 2025**.
  - The subsidies are project funds. This means that they are subject to the budget principle of annuality. In principle, projects should therefore be completed in the course of 2025,

i.e. **by 12/31/2025**. Only in justified exceptional cases can the Federal Foreign Office approve projects lasting longer than one year.

- **Can measures begin earlier than that?**

- In **exceptional** cases, but not prior to us receiving your application, you may request an early start of project activities. The Federal Foreign Office must approve this early start date. An early start of project activities can only be approved if own or third-party funding is contributed to the project. Moreover, you will not be legally entitled to funding until you have received formal notification of your grant. If you commence work prior to this formal notification, **you will be initiating the project at your own financial risk**.

### **Funding amount and financing**

- **Is there an overall upper or lower limit on the amount of funding?**

- Yes, the minimum grant from the German Federal Foreign Office is €50,000. In principle, all expenses related to the project are eligible for funding. For the evaluation, however, it is important that the sums are in reasonable proportion to your described project activities. The principles of economic efficiency and economy apply. There is no maximum funding amount.

- **Is there a percentage of equity in the financing as a requirement? If so, how high is this?**

- There is no fixed percentage for own funds. Within the scope of this project funding, shortfall financing is used. In this case, the grant covers the "shortfall" that the grantee is unable to cover with its own or external funds.

- **Is it possible to apply for full funding?**

- Under certain circumstances, full financing is also possible. However, we assume that you will then contribute in another form, e.g. by providing knowledge or volunteers. Please note that own contributions such as rent/rooms, labor of already otherwise financed employees, etc. are not own funds, but own contributions.

- **What is the basis of a grant? What expenses are eligible?**

- The legal basis is provided by the General Auxiliary Provisions for Project Funding ([ANBest-P](#)) and the Special Additional Provisions of the Federal Foreign Office ([BNBest-AA](#)), which can be found in the [download area](#) of <http://www.oepr.diplo.de/>. In addition, you will find corresponding guidelines on travel and subsistence costs in the Federal Travel Expenses Act ([BRKG](#)) as well as in the Regulation on the Allowance of Travel Expenses for Business Trips Abroad ([ARV](#)).

- **What are the requirements for over- or multi-year funding?**

- The aim is to ensure that the largest possible number of civil society actors can benefit from funding for the largest possible number of projects. Therefore, a reference to the greater impact and sustainability of the project alone is not sufficient.
- Over- or multi-annuality of a specific measure can be recognized if the foreign policy objectives pursued with the funding could not be achieved without this recognition. This is the case, for example, if the specific measure by its nature can only be carried out over

a period of more than one year, because it must extend over a university semester, for example.

- Recognition of the overage of a specific measure is considered mandatory if there is otherwise no implementation alternative.

- **What else needs to be taken into account before, during and after the project?**

- An increase of more than 20 percent in an individual approach in the financing plan, as well as a significant changes to the content that affects the indicators, objectives etc., require prior approval. Please submit a corresponding change request immediately.
- The approved funds are tied to the annuality and have to be used within the respected financial year. For Projects lasting several years, fund from one financial year is not allowed to carried over to another financial year.
- Please report any underspending immediately after the end of the project, but no longer than 6 weeks after the end of the approved period in order to avoid interests being charged on the remaining fund.
- While signing the documents (application, proof of employment of funds, etc.) please ensure that the person signing on behalf of the organization is authorized to sign or represents the organization and, if necessary, attach a proof to your documents. This also applies if the responsibilities change during the project period.
- While preparing the proof of employment of funds it is important to ensure the list of receipts and the numerical proof agree mathematically and that their structure corresponds to the individual approach in the financing plan.
- In case of onward transferred funds, please remember to include in the proof of employment of funds, the audit notes you have drawn up regarding the use of funds by the final recipient.
- Please inform the Federal Foreign office and the BfAA regarding the Project activities in good time.