GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE HUB GRANT APPLICANTS

Reference IPA/2020/421-822

"ARTIVIST STAFETË PROJECT"

Financed by the European Union.

Deadline for submission of full application: 6th September 2021 at 17:00 (Albanian time)

PLEASE NOTE

This is an open Call for Proposals, whereby all documents are to be submitted together (Full application).

In the first phase, only the administrative check will be assessed. Thereafter, for applicants who have passed the administrative check, the full submitted applications will be evaluated. Eligibility will be checked based on the supporting documents requested by the Sub Granting Authority and sent together with the application to the address noted within the following guidelines.

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Call for Proposals: Online HUB

1 APPLICANT REQUISITES

The submitting applicant of any proposal must be:

- A non-governmental /on-profit-making organization or private company ; and
- A legally established entity in Albania; and
- directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action, therefore not acting as an intermediary

Location range:

- All proposals are to be located in Tirana, Albania (see within for further location specifications)

Duration of action:

- 27 month

2 BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

"ARTIVIST STAFETË" is a project funded under the grant for Support to Active Citizenship by the European Commission **and is funded by the European Union. The project is implemented locally** by Dutch organisations MasterPeace and Stichting art.1, in partnership with Open Mind Spectrum Albania (OMSA) and ACT for SOCIETY Center. This project aims to (i) improve the environment for active citizenship and civic participation by providing civil society sector organisations (CSOs) with tools to grant marginalised groups and side-lined voices in Albania with instruments to infiltrate the mainstream narrative and democratic dialogue at a local, Albanian and European level. Furthermore, the project seeks to stimulate activism through capacity building, and by creating a nation-wide network of civil society organisations advocating for increased democratic representation of minorities.

The project will have both an online component as well as a physical component. Part of the latter, is the ONLINE HUB, a multi-disciplinary space in which participants of training, CSO employees, and the general public can produce, disseminate and interact with the project's creative, intellectual and dissemination outputs and activities. As such, the ONLINE HUB space is essential to the project's effective execution and successful completion. The space is projected as a meeting and mingling space for actors from the civil society sector, activists, artists and the general public. All participating organisations connect through the online creative hub platform which enables them to share experiences, bond and work, equipping themselves in soft skill competencies through access to our toolkit with filmmaking and podcast features, as well as key editing software (Adobe Premiere for film, Audacity for podcast and Canva for Walls of Connection). Thus, all participating organisations engage in an online user-friendly platform which functions as both archive as well as forum for the project. The realised products (films, podcasts) will be also hosted on the platform, driving traffic to it from diverse dissemination tools. Also, the online hub is open for any individual, activists, artist or CSO in Albania who wishes to partake in it.

1.   **Applicant's main tasks, responsibilities and competencies**

Main tasks:

- Successful applicants will be in charge of creating the online platform. This entails the timely implementation of all programming, design and connectivity details throughout the grant's duration.

- Successful applicants will be in charge of the on-going administration of the virtual space, as if it were a physical space, therefore ensuring the appropriate use of the space, ensuring the timely distribution of information to its users, and the overall user experience within the space.

- Successful applicants will also have operational commitments to the space, particularly in terms of showcasing information for a wide array of users, as well as showcasing key productions related to the Artivist Stafete project. Likewise, grantees must safeguard the space's impeccable accessibility and connectivity throughout the project's duration.

Competences:

- Applicants must have proven experience in online interaction and engagement, as well as in the recollection and processing of traffic and user feedback with which to implement a constant improvement of the space's usability.

- Likewise, applicants must have proven experience in creating, maintaining and developing online communities.
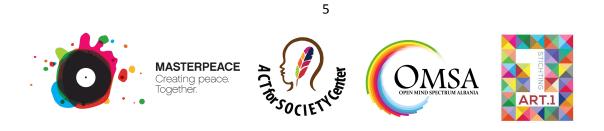
Adherence to virtual protocols:

- Successful applicants must comply with the European Commission's adaptation of the 'Digital Services Act (DSA)'. Together with a Digital Markets Act, to create a safer, inclusive and fair digital space for all users businesses.

Local collaboration

Successful applicants will work in close collaboration with Open Mind Spectrum Albania (OMSA) and ACT for SOCIETY Center, implementing a monitoring and evaluation scheme for the ONLINE HUB execution.

The current Call for Proposals seeks to support a consortium of lead applicant of CSO and co-applicant of (private ICT) or (ICT-based organization) OR a

(partnership between CSO and private or other form of ICT company)

OR (CSO that would outsource ICT to a private company as a service providers or any ICT-based organization) including activities on advocacy, citizenship action as our main core of the project, working in the following thematic areas:

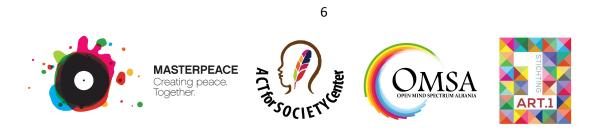| Objective	Type of intervention suggested – non exhaustive
1.1. To enhance opportunities for young women and LGBTIQ+ artivists to participate online with creative artistic productions	Friendly online Platform to connect specifically our target group that hosts trainings, audio/visual materials and online tools for artists and communities alike
	Safe Platform to engage all stakeholders and partners in the project
1.2 Encourage active citizenship, social awareness and social action through artivism.	Support to local CSOs around Albania
	Connection of supported CSOs through our subgrating stages in each cycle for 7 Cities.
	Social inclusion through art
	Advocacy on human right, gender issues etc
	Large networking of local CSOs and other stakeholders

1   RULES FOR THE CALL OF PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, following guiding principles in the EU Practical Guide**.**

Eligibility criteria

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

  (1) the actors:

- The '**lead applicant'**, i.e. the entity submitting the application form (2.1.1),

- 2   **co-applicant(s)** (where it is not specified otherwise the lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) are hereinafter jointly referred as "*applicant(s)*") (2.1.1),

(2) the actions:

Actions for which a grant may be awarded (2.1.2);

(3) the costs:

- Types of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant (2.1.3).
- Min 24 .500 EUR – Max 26 550 EUR

The lead applicant should apply together with one/ or two co-applicant(s). Entities interested to apply are strongly encouraged to form alliances in order to increase the expected impact and efficiency of the proposed action. Alliances between CSO and ICT based organisations are highly valued (*see evaluation grid*).

Co-applicant(s)

Co-applicants participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

Co-applicants must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant himself.

Co-applicants must sign the mandate in Annex 3 of the grant application form

Eligibility of applicants

Participation in procedures awarding sub-grants is governed by specific eligibility criteria referring to rules on nationality, as well as exclusion criteria.

In order to be eligible for a grant, the lead applicant must:

- be a legal person registered and acting in the territory of Albania;

- be a private company or non-profit-making;

- including active citizenship and social inclusion of our target groups & advocacy

- be a licensed CSO/NGO that offers similar supporting components on the specified target groups (in case if the applicant is CSO/NGO)

- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action

The applicants should be able to provide evidence of the above by presenting the following documents under the Albanian law:

a) Court Registration Act;

b) Statute;

c) Fiscal registration Certification/NGO Registration Certification;

d) Tax verification form;

e) Latest financial statements of the organization in accordance with the legislation in force;

f) Document regarding pending financial obligations (Document issued by relevant Albanian body certifying that the CSO has no pending financial obligations);

g) Document regarding pending cases in Court (Document issued by relevant Albanian body certifying that the CSO has no pending cases);

h) Declaration's applicant/mandate co-applicants;

i) License issued by the Ministry of Finance, under Albanian law, if the case;

j) CVs of key personnel implicated in the implementation of the project, in Europass format, http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/documents/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions

Documents from a) to g) and i) may be submitted in national language; documents a) e) and i) may be submitted as certified copies according to the original by the legal representative of the applicant organization. The mark "according to the original" and signature of the legal representative and stamp of the organization must be present on each page of the documents submitted as copies

Number of grants per applicant
- An applicant may not submit more than one application under this Call for Proposals.

- The applicant may not be a co-applicant in another application at the same time.

- A co-applicant may not be co-applicant in another application at the same time

- Applications can be combined also one private company and one CSO/NGO

- Applications can be combined also with two CSO /NGOs and one private company

Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made

Duration

The initial planned duration of the action 27 months.

Location

Actions must take place by online platform

Areas/Themes

The duration of the artivism productions are related to the rotating cycles and are produced according projects implemented by other CSOs supported .
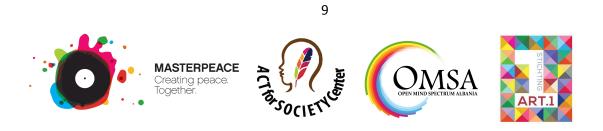
ICT Tools

- Applicants must have experience in hosting interactive trainings on online platform, with experience to make online tools interactive and engaging for users to utilize.

- Providing online tools on artivism methodologies and interaction for our target group, (some of the tools will be advised by the contracting authority)

- Ability to attract participants from the target group and potential activities, by creating online communities that are engaging to the target group.

- Part of an interactive network of other CSOs that could be invited for training and activities

The online hub is a website which should function as:

> a virtual place which connects all participants (organisations and individuals);

> a virtual place which tells our project visually and inspires and connects through stories;

> a digital interactive hosting space for all the produced art works (think of short films, documentary films, podcasts, online photo gallery);

> an online community for all those participating in the project and stakeholders who are interested in the project result;

> online environment where participants can find our training methodologies;

> online environment where storage links to (vimeo / dropbox);

> online environment with links to editing programs and manuals of these programs/

> Providing a subscription to ICT tools for production of audio and video (Audacity for podcasts, Zoom account, video Editing Tool /Adobe Premiere (Film-editing)), Canva for design)

> online environment where calls are launched / central information point;

> online environment which connects our offline and online activities; as participants can access different information, live streaming, activities

> online calendar with project activities   which includes a collective of cultural activities that showcases the project in the city

3 AVAILABLE BUDGET & PAYMENT INFORMATION

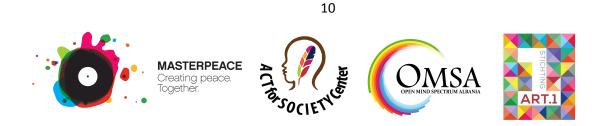The available budget for the ONLINE HUB sub-granting is of 26 550 EUR

Payment allocations are to be made after contract signing

Payments are to be made by bank transfer by sub-granting lead organization-MasterPeace

4 PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

4.1 ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK

All applicants should consider the following requisites and specifications for articulating their proposal submission:

4.1.1 Financial details

- Tax registration at the Albanian tax office, (NIPT-Entity Taxable Identification Number);
- A document issued by the Department of Taxes certifying that the organization has no pending financial obligations, such as social, health or tax obligations – issued within the Call period
- Copy of the financial statements of the organization for the year 2019-2020.

4.1.2 Legal details

- Court registration of the applicant's. (*Please, submit the first decision and any potential changes*);
- Statute and any potential changes to the statute, composition, direction and governance of the organization as reflected in documents submitted;
- Founding Act of the organization;
- Court extract (with the Court seal issued within the last three months);

4.1.3 Staff details

- Organizational CV (in English);

Please note: In case the applicants do not fulfill all the requirements and fails to submit all the listed documents will be rejected.

4.2 Technical & IT Experience and capacities PROPOSAL

4.2.1 Online platform

- Development
- Operation
- Maintenance

4.2.2 Administration

- Staff
- Code of conduct signed by all staff members

Budget

- **Eligible costs** are actual costs incurred by the grantees, which meet the following criteria:
1. They are incurred during the implementation period of the action;
2. Costs relating to services and works shall relate to activities performed during the implementation period. Costs relating to supplies shall relate to delivery and installation of items during the implementation period;
3. They are indicated in the estimated overall budget for the Action;
4. They are necessary for the implementation of the Action;
5. They are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the Sub-grantees and determined according to the accounting standards and the usual cost accounting practices applicable to the Sub-grantees;
6. They comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
7. They are real costs, reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

8. Costs incurred during implementation period may be paid either during implementation period or after, but in any case before the end date of the contract;
9. Cash payment will be allowed only up to a ceiling of maximum 300 EUR per transaction. A payment cannot be divided artificially in different transactions.

Important: The reimbursement of eligible costs may be based on the agreed budget specified in units and unit costs.

Please note that applicants may not delegate or transfer parts of the implementation / finances of the project to third parties in order to help achieving the objectives of the operation, or propose to fund other third parties through the implementation of the project.
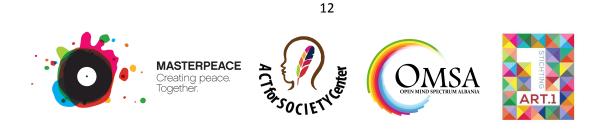
5. SENDING YOUR APPLICATION

The project proposal must be sent in **2 (two) copies** both in electronic and hard copy versions. An electronic version of the project proposal (compiled in one single file) must be submitted at the email address: artiviststafetegrants@masterpeace.org The electronic file must contain **exactly the same** application as the paper version enclosed. The hard copy of the supporting documents must be the exact copy of the scanned ones.

The envelope must bear:

- the title of the Call for Proposals
- the reference number of the Call for Proposals
- full name of the applicant
- address of the applicant

Project proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery to the address below:

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Postal address:

  ACT FOR SOCIETY

  Office Address:

Rruga "Naim Frasheri" Vila 77 , Tirane

6. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF FULL APPLICATIONS

The deadline for the submission of the applications 15th of Sep 2021 as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip.

In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is at 17:00 as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt.

Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 7 days before the deadline for the submission of project proposals to the address below, indicating clearly the title of the Call for Proposals:

E-mail address: artiviststafetegrants@masterpeace.org

7. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Sub Granting Authority. All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria:

STEP 1 – Opening and administrative check
STEP 2 - The technical evaluation
STEP 3 - Final evaluation, decision and notification
STEP 4 - Complaints and response mechanism (CRM)
STEP 5 - Negotiation and contracting stage.

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in section 2.1 the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

Annex I: CHECKLIST FORM

	Applicant's eligibility Criteria:	YES	NO	COMMENTS
1	Court Registration Act in Albania			
2	Statute of the Organization			
3	Court Extract			
4	Founding Act of the organization			
5	Active NIPT			
6	A document issued by the Department of Taxes certifying that the organization has no pending financial obligations, such as social, health or tax obligations – issued within the Call period			
7	Bank Proof (Vërtetim bankar) with the bank account, and IBAN in the name of the organization - issued within the Call period			
8	CV of the organization, signed by its legal representative, including all the past and present projects (funding source and contacts, timeframe, region of coverage and partnerships)			
9	Financial statements of the organization as required for each grant 2019-2020			
10	The Declaration by the Applicant			
11	Is the proposal submitted within the deadline			
12	The application forms published in the guidelines for this Call for Proposals have been used by the applicant			
13	The proposal is presented in typed writing			
14	The proposal is in English language			

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15	A CD/USB is enclosed in the application set of documents			
16	The requested budget meets the call's specification			

STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

Firstly, the following will be assessed:

Whether the full application satisfies all the criteria specified in section 2.1 and an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The quality of the applications, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants, will be evaluated using the intensive evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below.

Scoring:

The evaluation grid is divided into sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Scoring:

The evaluation criteria include:
- **The relevance to the action and the priority area addressing,**
- **The organization's reputation, financial records and legal status**
- **The quality of the action proposed**

Evaluation grid: (not biding)

Section	Maximum Score
1. Quality and Project proposal design	**__/(20)**
1.1 Does the project consider the involvement and contribution of different stakeholders and clearly define each other role? (score 1-10)	**__/(10)**
1.2 Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, such as the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of citizenship activation, awareness, advocacy with marginalized groups an LGBTIQA + people, youth or women , or innovation and best-practices (score 1-10)	**__/(10)**
2. Experience	**__(10)**
2.1 Scale of the applicant to show clear experince in ICT developments and deployment online activities (1-5)	**__/5**
2.2 Does the applicant show the ability of the organization to create an online hub (1-5)	**__/5**
Comments:	
3. Proposal Relevance and coherency with respect to the project focus	**__/20**
3.1 Does the proposal address technical aspects of developing, operating and maintaining the online hub	**__/10**
Comments:	
3.2 How coherent is the project with the objectives and priorities of the call for proposal (score 1-10)?	**__/5**

Comments:	
3.3 Does the proposal address clearly the role of engage online audiences on the platform	**__/5**
4. Impact and sustainability of the action (suggested answer from Annex l & Annex lV)	**__/10**
4.1. What improvements / change could the proposal bring in the sector of focus in term of policy making/models at local, regional and national level (score 1-5)	**___/5**
Comments:	
4.2 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable?: **- will there be local "ownership" of the results of the action? (score 1-5)**	**__/5**
Comments:	
5. Community participation and awareness	**__/(10)**
Does the project promote community mobilization, participation and active citizenship ? (score 1-10)?	
Comments:	
6. Visibility action and cooperation	**__/(10)**
Has the applicant presented how to ensure the project's visibility in an convincing manner? (score 1-10)	**__/10**

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Comments:	
7. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	/(20)
7.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget? (score 1-10)	/10
Comments:	
7.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory? (score 1-10)?	__/10
Comments:	
Total score	__/100

Provisional selection

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this Call for Proposal is reached. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this Call for Proposals.

STEP 4: FINAL EVALUATION

The applicants who have received the best assessment and score will be announced as winners by the Sub Granting Authority.

The Program Management Team gives final approval of the winning projects based on a ranking list coming as a result of:

- The administrative/eligibility assessment of the proposal;

- The evaluation of the proposed action.

The final Evaluation Report, including the results of the above, will be prepared and signed by each evaluation committee member, and will be sent to the European Union Delegation (EUD) for a "no-objection opinion".

Once the "no-objection opinion" by the EUD is received, the applicants will be notified about the final results of the process.
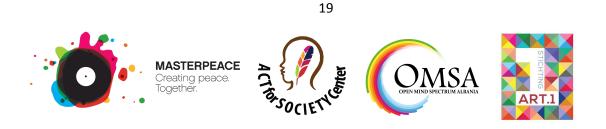
STEP 5: NEGOTIATION AND CONTRACTING STAGE

The Sub Granting Authority, prior to signing the contract, reserves the right to negotiate with the applicant in order to:

- Ensure cost efficiency of the action;

- Ensure a fair balance between operational and non-operational costs;

- Reflect real market costs;

- Reflect costs in accordance with proposed activities.

The points of negotiation should in no way change the substantial part of the proposed action, but rather be in line with the administrative/financial/HR/programmatic rules of the EU and of the Sub Granting Authority.

After reaching an agreement, the sub grant contract will be signed between the relevant applicant and the Terre des hommes Albania.

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5. NOTIFICATION OF THE SUB GRANTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION

5.1 Content of the decision

The lead applicants will be informed via email of the Sub Granting Authority's decision concerning their application.

5.2 Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
1. Official Public Launch of the Call	19th of July	14:00
1. Information meeting/sessions	07 th of Aug	online
2.Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the Sub Granting Authority	09th of Aug	17.00
3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Sub Granting Authority	13th of Aug	17.00

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4. Deadline for submission of applications	6th Sept	17:00
5. Information to lead applicants on the results of the administrative check (Step 1)	07th of Sep	- 17:100
6. Technical Evaluation (Step 2)	15th of Sep	17.00
7. Final decision and notification of applicant. (Step 3)	17th of Sep	17.100
8. Contract signature	18th of Sep	17.00

6. THE RIGHT TO APPEAL (COMPLAINT PROCEDURES DURING THE ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED ACTIONS).

The applicant will be informed in writing (regular mail and e-mail) if rejected, and the reasons for the rejection. Without prejudice, where an applicant believes he has been adversely affected by an error or irregularity allegedly committed as part of the selection procedure, or that the procedure was vitiated by any maladministration, a request of further information and/or complaint must be made in written form by email to artiviststafetegrants@masterpeace.org within **5 (five) days** f**rom the day when the rejection email/notification has been received** as a result of the Administrative/eligibility assessment (STEP 1) or the Final Evaluation (STEP 2). Complaints must be made directly by the applicant and not by legal representatives or his intermediary.

The Complaints Evaluation Committee (CEC) will consider the complaints. A representative from the EUD in Tirana will be invited to sit in on the Complaints Evaluation Committee as a member or to supervise the process. The CEC will prepare a summary report on all procedures performed.

The complaints coming from either the administrative/eligibility and/or the technical assessment will be answered within 5 (five) working days from the complaint application.

The complaining party will receive the Technical Assessment Form, but the decision of Project Evaluation Committee is irreversible.

7. CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AFTER THE SUB GRANTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION TO AWARD A GRANT

Following the decision to award a grant, the beneficiary (ies) will be offered a contract based on the standard grant contract. By signing the application form, the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard grant contract.

8. LIST OF RELEVANT DOCUMENTS AND ANNEXES

All Applicants under this Call must refer to the following documents:

i)   Call for Proposals Guidelines
ii)   Relevant annexes for the applicants
- Annex I - Checklist Form
- Annex II - Project Application Form
- Annex III - Budget Application Form
- Annex IV - Declaration by the Applicant

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