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INSPIRED Moldova

Call for Proposals

Supporting participatory democracy and civic engagement mechanisms



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1. Objectives of the call for proposals

The **overall objective** of this call for proposals is to provide technical and financial support for joint cooperation initiatives between CSOs and public authorities and civic engagement activities.

The **specific objectives** of this call for proposal are:

- To empower CSOs as key intermediaries to mobilise citizens and ensure their voices are reflected in policy decisions at local and regional levels.
- To strengthen consultation mechanisms by supporting CSOs in creating or enhancing platforms that facilitate dialogue between public authorities and communities.
- To enhance participatory governance by fostering collaboration between CSOs and authorities to improve policy implementation, inclusion, and responsiveness.
- To promote citizen engagement and civic education through participatory budgeting initiatives, policy monitoring and evaluation, and awareness-raising activities that increase transparency, accountability, and informed public participation.

2. Scope of the support programme

Financial support

Selected organisations will receive financial support in the form of grants managed by the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA) and People in Need Moldova (PIN). This funding will enable the successful applicants to cover project-related expenses, facilitating the implementation of their activities and achieving the objectives outlined in their proposals.

Technical support

In addition to financial support, selected organisations will benefit from customised, needs-based consultancy services provided by the CONTACT Centre. This will include on-demand assistance in organisational development and other key areas to strengthen their operational capacity.

Furthermore, thematic capacity-building training will be offered to prepare project implementers to engage effectively in democratic processes, promoting active citizen participation, and engaging meaningfully in policy dialogue.

3. Granting modalities

The grants' duration will range from 6 to 18 months, depending on its size, scope and objectives. It is set to begin in June 2025 and must be completed no later than November 2026.

The grant recipient will sign a grant contract agreement with ALDA or PIN, as grant intermediaries of European Union funding. Several proposals are expected to be funded under this call, divided under three streams:

- Lot 1: Consultation mechanisms at the national, district level or in several municipalities. These grants will support the development and strengthening of consultation platforms (for example, such as District Participatory Councils, Transparency Councils, etc), as well as the work of advocacy coalitions to enhance civic engagement in policy implementation within specific sectoral policies (for example, the implementation of social policies, environmental policies, development plans, etc). *The amount available for these grants can be up to EUR 30,000.*
- Lot 2: Consultation mechanisms for communes and villages. These initiatives should help foster inclusive decision-making at the local level by ensuring that community voices are actively represented in governance processes, aiming at reinforcing existing participatory platforms or at establishing new ones. *The amount available for these grants can be up to EUR 16,000.*
- Lot 3: Grassroots participation initiatives at the commune and village level. These grants enable CSOs to promote active citizen engagement, implement participatory budgeting initiatives, and develop local engagement strategies that integrate communities into governance structures and policy dialogues. *The amount available for these grants can be up to EUR 12,000.*

Selected organisations will be exempted from VAT from the costs incurred within this grant; therefore, the budget proposal should contain the planned costs excluding VAT.

4. Eligible activities and priorities of the call

The **following types of activities are eligible** for funding. The list is neither exhaustive nor cumulative. Additional types of activities may be considered, provided they align with the objectives of this call for proposals. These examples are offered as suggestions to inspire potential applicants and guide their project design.

Civic education and citizens' engagement in democratic processes

- Conducting awareness campaigns to promote democratic governance and support democratic processes in order to increase civic and democratic culture at the local level, focusing on civic and voter education, active participation and inclusion;
- Organising training sessions and workshops on civic education, media literacy and community mobilisation and organisation to encourage informed and active participation in democratic processes;
- Facilitating citizen forums, debates, town hall meetings, and policy discussions to encourage dialogue with local authorities and involve citizens in the public consultation process and decision-making, especially for groups that are less represented;
- Promoting civic responsibility through awareness campaigns and media outreach, including through community events, digital campaign and direct engagement with citizens;

Partnerships for participatory policy-making

- Creating or strengthening multi-stakeholder consultation platforms and other participatory mechanisms involving public authorities to develop sustainable partnerships among community actors and to involve them in solving community problems;

- Structured consultations between CSOs, local authorities, and community representatives to increase awareness on their role in local policy-making;
- Public hearings and roundtables to gather citizen input on local policies and initiatives by organising sessions of policy dialogue through budget hearings, participatory budget-making, and social audits with public authorities;
- Mechanisms for feedback collection and response to ensure that authorities act on citizen concerns across the policy and budget cycle (from design to monitoring and evaluation) through joint reflection and coordination meetings with public authorities (central or local) to improve their responsiveness and the quality of citizen involvement in public policymaking;

Transparency and inclusiveness

- Participatory initiatives allowing citizens to propose and vote on local spending priorities through the development of tools that enhance the participation of civil society in budget-making processes at the local level;
- Citizen monitoring mechanisms for democratic and governance processes and budget allocation through the conduction of social audits, public budget hearings, or public consultations, prioritising budgetary processes that relate to policy priorities such as gender, environment, and climate change;
- Community-led development initiatives that reflect the needs of diverse social groups by promoting the needs and rights of the most vulnerable groups towards the public authorities to include specific and targeted provisions responding to their needs.

The **cross-cutting priorities of this call** are to strengthen civil society's ability to protect democratic spaces by fostering citizen engagement and collaboration with public authorities. Additionally, it aims to promote informed decision-making in response to the growing spread of disinformation concerning public affairs and democratic processes. The key elements outlined below should be considered while preparing the application:

- Proposals featuring public awareness initiatives on disinformation risks, digital and media literacy, and electoral integrity will be highly valued, particularly in the early project stages. However, no activities should take place immediately before or on election day.
- Proposals that foster structured and sustained cooperation with public institutions (local public authorities, ministries and decentralised agencies or agencies in relevant sectors, etc) while promoting inclusive participation of citizens in decision-making will be considered highly relevant.
- Given the importance of cooperation between civil society and public authorities to develop effective and sustainable cooperation initiatives with public authorities, prospective applicants are encouraged to work closely with public authorities and coordinate with them while preparing their proposal.
- Complementarity and synergy with ongoing initiatives, advocacy coalitions, networks, platforms and existing permanent consultation mechanisms are strongly encouraged to ensure a coordinated, sustainable, and high-impact approach to strengthening democratic governance.
- Promoting gender-responsive, socially inclusive and environment friendly approaches into policy-making is a high priority.

The following types of activities are **ineligible for funding**: actions that focus primarily on individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, or congresses will not be supported. Additionally, activities concerned mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses are

excluded. Any actions that support political parties and/or individual politicians are also ineligible.. Furthermore, retroactive financing for projects that are already in progress or have been completed will not be considered. Projects that provide exclusive benefits to individuals or restricted groups of individuals will not qualify for funding. Actions within the formal education sector will generally be ineligible, except in special circumstances. Environmentally harmful projects will not receive funding, and the purchase of equipment is only permissible if it is directly linked to the implementation of the project.

A prospective applicant organisation may submit only one application for the entire call for proposals, rather than one per lot. Applications must be submitted by individual organisations, not as part of a consortium. However, collaboration and synergies between project proposals are strongly encouraged. Allocating a small part of the budget for digitization of organizations (e.g. cybersecurity software, subscription to the communication platform, etc.) is encouraged.

5. Application and selection process

The following provides an overview of the application and selection process from the publication of the guidelines to the start of implementation.

5.1 Indicative timeline

Opening of the call	Monday, 24 March 2025
<u>Online information session</u>	Tuesday, 8 April 2025; 14:00 Chişinău time (<i>link to register here</i>)
<u>Online Thematic Training I</u> The Fundamentals of Citizens' Participation and Multi-Stakeholder Policy Dialogue	Wednesday, 9 April 2025; 14:00 Chişinău time (<i>link to register here</i>)
<u>Online Thematic Training II</u> How to Write the Project Proposal Effectively	Thursday, 10 April 2025; 14:00 Chişinău time (<i>link to register here</i>)
<u>Deadline to submit proposals</u>	<u>Friday 18 April, 23:59 Chişinău time</u>
Evaluations of the proposals	22 April - 16 May 2025 (approximately)
Negotiation, finalisation and award	16 - 30 May 2025 (approximately)
Gathering and thematic training for awarded organisations	June - July 2025 (Date TBD)
Indicative implementation period of grants	1 June 2025 - 30 November 2026 (from 6 to 18 months within this period)

For any further questions, please feel free to write an email to inspiredmoldova@gmail.com mentioning the title of this call before Wednesday 16 April 2025.

5.2 Full application submission

The application period is open immediately and will close on Friday 18 April 2025; 23:59 Chişinău time. The full application package is composed of:

- The full application form filled in an editable document ([Annex 1](#))
- The Mandate and Statement on exclusion criteria both signed ([Annex 2](#))
- The budget application form filled ([Annex 3](#));
- The identification / registration certificate of the applicant.

Applications should be sent to inspiredmoldova@gmail.com; Applications must be submitted in Romanian, Russian or English languages.

5.3. Evaluation and award procedure

5.3.1 Administrative compliance

All applications will undergo an administrative check that establishes whether the information required by the online application form has been provided. Applications will be assessed through the administrative compliance criteria described below:

- The application package is received complete, in line with section 5.2 above.
- The organisation must be an NGO registered in Moldova and provide a certificate of registration.
- The organisation must be able to sign a grant agreement with PIN or ALDA.
- The organisation is not already a beneficiary of a grant within the INSPIRED Moldova project.
- The organisation declared not meeting any of the exclusion criteria outlined in the Annex 2 - Mandate & Statement on exclusion criteria.

5.3.2 Technical evaluation

The Evaluation Committee will then assess the administratively compliant applications against the criteria listed below:

<u>Evaluation criteria</u>	<u>Max points</u>
Relevance	15
Alignment with the call's objectives	15
Multi-stakeholder cooperation	20
Sustainability	15

Awareness-raising and outreach components	10
Gender mainstreaming and inclusion	10
Originality and innovation	5
Cost-effectiveness	5
Stakeholders involvement & Target groups reach	5

5.3.3 Final evaluation & award decision

Based on this evaluation, applicants will receive an official response with the outcome of their application. If selected for funding, a number of additional documents may have to be completed by the applicant as part of the due diligence process. Once all comments have been addressed and additional information and documents have been provided, a grant agreement will be signed between the applicant and People in Need or ALDA.

6. Background information

INSPIRED Moldova is an EU-funded project running from 2024 to 2027 which aims to contribute to creating an enabling environment for civil society in Moldova by empowering civil society organisations (CSOs) to actively engage in policy discussions at all levels. Building on the momentum generated by the EU accession process, the project facilitates policy dialogue processes on the enabling environment for civil society and relevant plans and programmes stemming from the accession negotiations. Recognising the importance of prioritising democracy building in the EU's new methodology on the fundamentals first accession criteria, the initiative will strengthen the capacities of CSOs to act as catalysts for democracy both at national and local level and in the digital sphere.

The project supports collaborative efforts to cultivate an inclusive and participatory environment conducive to improving public participation, including through the promotion of underrepresented groups and women in Moldova. It does so by empowering Moldovan civil society to actively influence national policies and boost the country's EU integration by involving CSOs in policy-making processes in the national, local and digital spheres. Through technical and financial support to CSOs in Moldova, the project provides the essential tools and resources needed to amplify their voice and achieve sustainable impact. It also encourages dialogue and collaboration with public authorities, ensuring that civil society becomes a key actor in promoting democracy in Moldova.

The call for proposals relates to Output 2, which aims to launch and support joint cooperation initiatives between CSOs and public authorities at the national, regional and local levels. It seeks to support the implementation of the Civil Society Development Programme 2024-2027, which aims to strengthen the cooperation mechanisms between central and local public authorities and civil society, and increase transparency in policy formulation and decision-making; increase the financial sustainability of CSOs; and

improve CSOs' capacities in addressing social issues and promoting democratic values. It further aligns with the European Union Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society 2021-2027, especially objective 1 - Promote a conducive environment for CSOs, good governance, strengthening democratic institutions through increased CSOs' participation in developing and monitoring the implementation of public policies, increasing the transparency and accountability of central and local administrations.

The project is implemented by a Consortium of six organisations, among which the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), Centre for Policies and Reforms (CPR Moldova), the National Assistance Centre for NGOs in Moldova (CONTACT), People in Need (PIN), the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA), and Democracy Reporting International (DRI).

7. Notice

This action is made possible by the financial support of the European Union. Its content represents the sole responsibility of the INSPIRED Moldova project, financed by the European Union. The content of the call for proposals belongs to the implementing organisations and does not necessarily reflect the vision of the European Union.