



EU-RUSSIA CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM ГРАЖДАНСКИЙ ФОРУМ ЕС-РОССИЯ

TRAVEL FUND

COOPERATION & LEARNING AND FOCUSING ACTIVITIES 2022

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

1. Background information

The Travel Fund (TF) is a call for proposals for international projects by the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum (CSF or Forum) members. Its goal is to give the CSF members the opportunity to strengthen mutual learning, enhancing practical knowledge in a specific field and to raise awareness within and outside of the Forum on pressing issues for civil society and for society in general.

In total, three competitions will be organised for the Working and Experts Groups and other initiatives in 2021-2023. In this round, CSF will support around five Cooperation & Learning Activities and Focusing Activities designed by different CSF Groups to enhance their activities and broaden networking opportunities. The total budget for the activities in this round is 20,000 €. Each Working / Expert Group, emerging Working Group or other initiative of the Forum can send more than one application and the maximum request per Cooperation & Learning Activity should be no more than 6,000 €, the maximum request for a Focusing Activity should be no more than 1,500 €.

A **Cooperation & Learning Activity** has to be realized by at least three CSF member organisations¹ working together in one Working or Expert Group, in an emerging Working Group or in other initiatives. Such a Cooperation & Learning Activity can be a **meeting of several days** in an **online, hybrid or in an offline format**. The Activities should focus on the Working/Experts Group's topics and/or on the Forum's Strategic Priorities. Different international perspectives should be taken into account during a Cooperation & Learning Activity. **The Activity should include a public event or the results should be presented to the Forum's members.**

A **Focusing Activity** has to be realized by two or more member organisations, one of the organisation should be based in the EU, one in Russia. It should help the member organisations to **focus on one pressing issue** and to cooperate in a particular field or within a particular initiative. Such an activity can be an **up to three days meeting/event** which can take place **online or hybrid**. The Activities should focus on a topic which is relevant for all the member organisations involved.

¹ One of the organisers has to be from Russia, another one has to be from the EU.

A Focusing Activity can also cover the preparation of a **publication**, such as a printed publication (brochure, journal, book etc.) or an audio or audiovisual publication (podcast, video etc.) on a topic which is relevant for all partner organisations involved.

As of November 2021 there are the following Working and Expert Groups in the Forum: human rights and rule of law, local self-governance, environment and climate change, social issues, development of democratic structures, freedom of information, gender equality, civic education, historical memory and education, migration, public health, research on civil society and fighting transborder corruption.

Activities can contribute to the [Forum's Strategic Priorities 2020-2025](#), such as acting on the sustainable development and climate change, inequality in society, digital inequality and rapid technological development, safeguarding democracy and human rights, and free media.

The activities should take place between 15 February 2022 and 15 June 2022. The reports have to be submitted one month after the activity has taken place and no later than 15 July 2022. All member organisations are encouraged to apply.

2. Objectives and Eligibility of the Projects

The Cooperation & Learning Activities and the Focusing Activities are an important part of the action "EU-Russia Civil Society Forum: Building Trust and Understanding between the EU and Russia through their Societies"². This action seeks to support such target groups as civil society initiatives in the EU and Russia and – both through them and directly – be of benefit to various societal groups in the EU and Russia, which are interested in people-to-people contacts.

Objectives

- (a) To raise awareness within the Forum and outside of it on pressing issues in civil society and in society in general;
- (b) To broaden networking and on-going cooperation among CSF members;
- (c) To enhance the work of the Working and Expert Groups of the Forum;
- (d) To stimulate exchange/ joint initiatives of Working and Expert Groups;
- (e) To raise internationalisation, promote activities and projects of CSF members;

Eligibility

The Travel Funds' Programme supports the Working and Expert Groups and other initiatives of the Forum as well as their joint initiatives. The main participants of a Cooperation & Learning or Focusing Activity shall be the CSF's members, however it can still involve the participation of relevant NGOs that are not (yet) members of the CSF. In all cases, the topic of the Activity should address topics of general interest to the EU-Russia relations and civil societies as well as tackle goals of the respective working / expert groups and initiatives of the Forum.

² The Grant Contract was signed in December 2020 between the EU Delegation Representation in Russia and the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum e.V.

Applications have to meet the following criteria:

- (a) Be submitted by a Forum member from either the EU or Russia which is ready to administer the Activity and receive funds;
- (b) Tackle a topic which is relevant for today's civil society and/or for the society in general in the EU and/or Russia;
- (c) Have high-quality content and integrity of the project;
- (d) Ensure both the EU and Russian partners' contribution;
- (e) Involve at least one other CSF member from the other region³;

It is a plus if the activity involves different target groups (age, gender, background,...).

Applications can be initiated and submitted by any CSF member organisation, which will administer the project in partnership with one other member. Each member can only apply for one Activity as the main applicant, but several applications can be filed within one Working/Expert Group.

Applications may also involve non-member NGOs, external institutions and experts on the topic addressed by the Activity. In such cases, applicants should explain how the participants and the CSF benefit from this non-member participation.

Activities

In this call, there are two different types of Activities for which the CSF member organisations can apply for:

Cooperation & Learning: At least **three member organisations**⁴ organise a **working or skill-building meeting**. This meeting should include either:

- 1) an online/hybrid/offline **public event** OR
- 2) the outcome of the Activity should be **presented to the Forum members and supporters**.

Examples for Cooperation & Learning Activities:

1. Example: One member organisation from Poland organises together with one member organisation from Russia and with one from France a Cooperation & Learning Activity in Poland. All three organisations are member of the working group "Public and Inclusive Health". They want to do a podcast series on how the access to health care facilities changed during the pandemic and for that, they go on a research trip to Poland and meet with different organisations and institutes. After the trip they launch the podcast which is published on the Forum's website and announced in the Forum's newsletter.
2. Example: Four member organisations from both regions meet in Hungary for four days for the preparation of a report on strategies against the climate change. The report will be published some months later and it will be announced in the Forum's newsletter.

If the Cooperation & Learning Activity includes a public event, the public event has to tackle a topic, which is relevant for today's civil society or for society in general in the EU and/or Russia. If the Activity includes the publication of the outcome of the Activity, the publication should be ready within one

³ If the applicant is from the EU at least one other organisation from Russia has to be involved in the activity and vice versa.

⁴ One of the organisations should be from the EU, one from Russia.

month after the Activity took place. The outcome can be published on the website of CSF and/or on another platform.

If for security reasons neither a public event nor a publication of the outcome is possible, the applicants should discuss this question with the Secretariat individually.

A Cooperation & Learning Activity should take place online, in a hybrid mode or offline in the EU or Russia. The applicant should check the entry regulations, as they might be restricted due to the pandemic. If an offline meeting is essential for the activity, but it can't take place neither in the EU nor in Russia, an individual solution will be discussed between the applicant and the CSF Secretariat.

Focusing: Two or more member organisations plan and organise **an activity focusing on one specific topic** relevant for civil society in a local and/or international context. There are three types of activities:

- 1) A **public event** (discussion, conference, workshop etc.) focusing on one specific topic.
- 2) An **activity for members**⁵ (seminar, skill-building training etc.) which aims to strengthen the cooperation between the members of the Forum.
- 3) The preparation of a **publication**, such as a printed publication (brochure, journal, book etc.) or an audio or audio-visual publication (podcast, video etc.) on a topic which is relevant for all partner organisations involved.

Examples for a Focusing Activities:

1. Example: Two member organisations, one from Russia and one from Poland, organise an online discussion on the access to health care during the pandemic. During the event, they elaborate how the access to health care was restricted during the pandemic in the two countries.
2. Example: Four member organisations, two from Czech Republic and two from Russia, organise a hybrid skill-building seminar in Prague and St. Petersburg. They communicate via Zoom but have also direct exchange as one group meets in person in Prague, the other one in St. Petersburg.
3. Example: Two member organisations, one from the Netherlands, one from Russia, elaborate a podcast series on hate crime. The podcast will be presented in an online event and in the CSF newsletter.

A Focusing Activity should take place online or in a hybrid mode in the EU and/or in Russia. Due to the short duration of the activity, it should not include any flight travels.

The following types of activities will NOT be supported neither in the Cooperation & Learning Activities nor in the Focusing Activities:

- Vocational training for personnel;
- Projects in support of political parties or religious activities;
- Public protests.

3. Application Procedure

⁵ Civil society actors working in a similar field which are not (yet) a member of the Forum might be invited as well.

For this call for proposals for both types of activities, a **concept note** (max. 2 pages) presenting the project idea, its objectives and target audience(s), and indicating partner organisation(s) and the **budget** has to be submitted. The application form is available [here](#) and the budget template on the [internal platform of the Forum](#).

The detailed description of the project is crucial for the concept note. It has to be clearly formulated, state the goal of the project and the target audience. The planned activity should be realistic, also given the context of the pandemic situation.

Allowed Expenses

The following types of expenses can be supported within a Cooperation & Learning or a Focusing Activity:

- Salaries (employer's gross) of the project staff⁶;
- Per diems for travel⁷;
- *Only for Cooperation & Learning Activities*: International travel. This includes second-class train tickets and economy class flights⁸;
- Local travel⁹;
- *Only for Cooperation & Learning Activities*: Russian and Schengen visa costs (including insurance);
- Local office rental (proportional share for the project's period), maintenance costs such as water, electricity;
- Stationary and office supplies, PPE (only those relevant for the project);
- Bank fees/ services (such as fees for bank transfers, etc.);
- Communication expenses (internet, telecommunication, postage costs, etc.);
- Publications (layout, translating, editing, printing);
- Events organisation (rental costs for venues, catering, support staff, accommodation of participants, interpreting services, rent of equipment but no purchasing of equipment, etc.);
- Expert fees. The honoraria cannot be artificially inflated and must correspond to expert fees according to qualification in the home country or as guest expert abroad;
- Website development and maintenance, when needed for the project implementation;
- Renting of vehicles (if renting is cheaper than traveling on public transportation).

Please be aware that the following costs are **not eligible**:

- Losses on currency exchange;
- Purchasing equipment.

The expenses have to be balanced, i.e. no type of expenditure should exceed 40% of the total amount.

NOTE: The EU-Russia Civil Society Forum adopted its [EcoCodex](#) in January 2021. Whenever possible during the project planning and implementation the codex should be followed.

⁶ Salaries funded from the Activity's budget have to correspond to the historical salaries of the participating organisations and cannot be artificially inflated.

⁷ The Per diems shall not exceed those normally received by the applicant according to its national or the EU regulations (depending on the country of the applicant);

⁸ International travel can be funded only if the international pandemic situation allows safe travels.

⁹ Due to the pandemic local travel might also be restricted.

4. Submission of concept notes

Applicants will submit a filled concept note in English or Russian [here](#) and submit a budget. No other way of submission will be accepted. The deadline for concept notes and budget submission is **Thursday, 3 February 2022 at 11:59 pm CET.**

5. Selection process and awarding stage

The CSF Secretariat will confirm the receipt of the concept note by e-mail and check applications' formal admissibility. Applicants may be contacted to clarify specific minor issues regarding their concept notes.

All admissible applications will be passed to the jury, which consists of three independent civil society experts for assessment on the following criteria:

- (1) Relevance to the overall Activities' objectives;
- (2) Bi-lateral EU-Russia members' participation;
- (3) *Only for activities which include a public event:* Capacity to reach out to local or international communities and present the work implemented on behalf of the CSF;
- (4) Sustainability;
- (5) Content and integrity of the Activity.

Please note that priority will be given to applicants who haven't received funding within the last years. However, that alone does not guarantee any funding, the quality of the application comes before other considerations.

The evaluation of concept notes includes rating each project by each applicable criterion on a scale from 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum) and a jury deliberation.

The CSF Secretariat will inform the applicants about the outcome by e-mail and/or phone. All successful applicants will sign a contract with CSF.

6. Project administration process

The Secretariat will support the beneficiaries and monitor the implementation of the activities.

The specifics of contracting, grant administration and transfers will be discussed with each beneficiary individually. After the project begins, the CSF Secretariat communicates with the project managers, engages in receiving, processing, approving the final narrative and financial reports by the CSF members, ensuring the projects visibility (see more on visibility under point 9). The final reports have to be submitted within one month after the activity took place and not later than 15 July 2022.

The beneficiaries are expected to update the Secretariat on any significant changes or delays in regard to the original application and follow contractual and other relevant guidance at each given stage of the project.

The CSF Secretariat might participate in the events organised by CSF members and their partners in the framework of the Activities and is expected to be regularly informed about them.

Communication through secure channels is possible. The beneficiaries should approach the Secretariat individually on this question.

Up to 80 % of the total grant sum for the Cooperation & Learning Activities can be transferred 14 days after signing the agreement. The rest of the funding will be transferred within 14 days after the submission and approval of the financial and narrative reports.

For the Focusing Activities the total funding will be transferred within 14 days after the submission and approval of the financial and narrative reports.

Other proceedings can be agreed individually between CSF and the awarded member organisation.

7. Timetable

10 January 2022	Travel Fund call is published on the Forum's internal platform and sent out via email
03 February 2022	Deadline for the submission of concept notes
10 February 2022	Decision of the Jury; Contracting
15 February 2022	Start of the Activities
15 June 2022	End of the Activities
15 July 2022	Final reports have to be submitted

8. Regulations due to COVID-19

During the implementation of the project, all local regulations regarding the COVID-19 pandemic have to be strictly followed. E.g., social distancing and hygiene rules have to be followed and indoors events with a high number of attendees should be avoided. CSF may introduce other regulations and add considerations regarding public health to be addressed by the beneficiaries.

If an offline event is planned but due to the local COVID-19 situation can't take place or has to be switched to the online mode, the CSF Secretariat has to be informed immediately. When applying for an offline event, an online option should be elaborated as well.

The events can take place in the EU or in Russia. The entry regulations of the country where the activity should take place, should be checked by the applicant. If a local event is necessary, but it can't take place neither in the EU nor in Russia, the CSF Secretariat and the applicant can agree on an individual solution.

9. Logos, visibility

All printed material or products shall use CSF logo and other logos necessary according to funding rules for CSF¹⁰.

Unless agreed or requested otherwise, all necessary steps shall be taken to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed or co-financed the projects. The EU visibility will be ensured in several ways.

¹⁰ If a project or organisations have concerns regarding the visibility requirements, these should be shared and discussed with CSF at earliest convenience.

- Indication of the EU support for all online materials and web pages related to the project;
- Placement of the EU logo and information about the EU funding in all external documents;
- Placement of the logo on all publications;
- Press releases will contain information about the EU support for this project.

In some cases, applicants may request to lower visibility requirement. The project managers of the awarded projects shall inform the Secretariat about such cases in advance.

For more information contact:

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Good luck with your applications!

The Travel Fund is supported by

