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Application Guidelines SDC Small Grants Program (2022-2024)

1. Introduction

These guidelines explain the thematic areas and the terms of application for the funding offered by the Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO) through its Small Grants Program.

The Swiss Cooperation Office/ Representation of the Embassy of Switzerland in Moldova is the country office of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). SDC is Switzerland's international cooperation agency within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). It is responsible for the overall coordination of development support and humanitarian aid provided by the Swiss Confederation worldwide.

The SDC Small Grants Program provides funding, based on a competition, to small action and culture projects.

2. Eligibility criteria

2.1. Eligible themes and activities

Initiatives in the following thematic areas are eligible:

I. Small actions that contribute towards fostering peace and security, promote democracy and human rights, as well as those addressing issues related to social inclusion, gender equality and good governance in the main areas of Switzerland's support for Moldova -- Health, Local Governance, and Economic Development & Employment.

Priority will be given to projects:

- Popularizing and promoting democratic values and sustainable green development;
- Promoting and monitoring democratic processes, human rights, gender equality and social inclusion;
- Promoting and monitoring the principles of good governance (incl. anti-corruption) and the rule of law;
- Fighting discrimination, hate speech, propaganda and disinformation;
- Capacitating and harnessing the potential of poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups;
- Reaching out the population from disadvantaged geographical areas (incl. from the Transnistrian region);
- Overseeing reforms in Health, Local Governance, Economic Development & Employment.

II. Culture projects that contribute towards building trust and social cohesion, a free and open society, and towards the development of the culture sector; initiatives that support partnerships between public, private and civic organizations, and strengthen civil society.

Priority will be given to projects:

- Supporting freedom of artistic expression;
- Raising awareness on social issues, e.g. abuse, inequalities, etc.;



- Promoting cultural rights and diversity;
- Reaching out to and promoting dialogue between rural and urban population, different cultures and ethnicities, generations and regions, incl. the Transnistrian region;
- Experimenting on digital, hybrid and innovative forms of art;
- Promoting culture and arts in education;
- Supporting and monitoring reforms in the culture sector;
- Improving quality of life and mental health, i.e. help people (esp. from vulnerable and marginalized groups) cope with crises and conflicts.

Non-eligible activities: Study tours abroad, scholarships, charity events, humanitarian aid, infrastructure projects, running costs of the applicant, and activities conducted outside Moldova.

2.2. Other eligibility criteria

- The application requires a **one-time contribution** from the SCO. Recurring projects submitted by the same organization, such as festival editions, may be funded more than once during the three-year phase of this Program only if the applicant provides evidence that the quality of activities, their scale, but also contributions of other donors have considerably increased.
- The project duration is of max. **18 months**.
- The requested amount does not exceed **CHF 50'000**.
- The SCO contribution covers maximum 80% of the total project budget. Applicants shall prove their capability **to contribute with at least 20%** of the total project budget. Although financial independence is not the sole criteria for awarding the grants, the SCO shall give priority to those applicants proving their capacity to fundraise or contribute with their own resources. Applicants are therefore encouraged to look for co-funding from other donors or provide their own financial and/or in-kind contribution. The information about co-funding and applicants' contribution should be clearly indicated in the budget.
- Projects shall have either explicit objectives related to social inclusion, gender equality, or good governance, or integrate at least one of them as a **transversal theme**.

2.3. Eligible applicants

The applicant shall be a legal entity registered in the Republic of Moldova, e.g.:

- Non-governmental organizations
- Professional associations and unions
- Local offices of international organizations
- Central and local governmental institutions
- Public institutions, including educational
- Media organizations
- Commercial entities with non-profit projects.

N.B. Physical persons are not eligible.



3. Application procedures

There are no application deadlines. Applications are examined in the order of receipt and are discussed **every two months** by a Selection Committee.

Applicants shall submit a **project concept** with a brief (max. 2 pages) description of the project idea in Romanian, Russian, or English, including an estimated budget, via email: chisinau@eda.admin.ch

The shortlisted applicants will be requested to submit a **project proposal** (see point 3.1) in electronic format.

3.1. Project proposal (to be submitted only by pre-selected applicants)

The project proposal shall consist of the following documents:

- **Project proposal** (see point 3.2);
- **Project budget** (in Moldovan lei); the budget shall include information on the contribution provided by other donors and/or by the applying organization. Use the SCO budget template. Please ensure that:
 - The budget is presented in a clear manner, with all corresponding formulas and information on all contributors;
 - Salaries for administrative staff are separated from salaries of operational staff;
 - The percentage of the admin. staff involvement in the project is indicated;
 - The digital version of the budget is printer-friendly.
- Copy of a valid **registration certificate**, issued by a relevant authority of Moldova;
- **Reference letters** from other donors, partners, Moldovan authorities, upon request;
- Any other project-related supporting documents.

3.2. Structure of the project proposal

The project proposal shall be written in English. The project proposal should be of **max. 5 pages** and contain the following:

1. Background information about the applying organization

- Mission of the organisation;
- Date of founding and list of founders.

2. Previous experience

- A short list of the main implemented projects and donors.

3. Context and problem statement

- Brief description of the context and problem(s);
- What other organizations (governmental, NGOs) deal with the stated problem(s)? How does your project complement their activities?

4. Project goal and objectives

- Overall goal of the project (the proposed solution to the above mentioned problem);
- Objectives (the expected results).

5. Project activities

- Brief description of the project activities;
- Direct outputs ("products") of activities;



- How activities and outputs will contribute to achieving the goal of the project;
- List of target groups and beneficiaries; the estimated number of project beneficiaries.

6. *Timeframe*

Plan of activities.

7. *Partners*

Mention the other donors and partners who support or are involved in your project.

8. *Budget*

- Indicate the total project budget and the amount requested from SDC;
- Attach the detailed budget in Moldovan Lei (template in Excel, provided by the SCO).

9. *Monitoring and evaluation; dissemination of results*

- Describe how you will measure the quality of your project activities and results;
- Describe how you will disseminate the experience and lessons learnt from your project.

10. *Risk mitigation and sustainability*

- What are the risks related to the implementation of your project and how you are going to mitigate them;
- Provide your reflections on how you will ensure the sustainability of the project results.

4. Evaluation of project proposals

The submitted project proposals are examined by the Selection Committee in several stages. After the first examination, the responsible SCO officer will get in touch with the applicants to clarify questions addressed by the Selection Committee and to ensure that the project proposal and the budget meet the following requirements:

- Project thematic areas, objectives, activities and applicant(s) meet the eligibility criteria (see chapters 2 and 3 of these Guidelines);
- The project proposal and budget are complete and structured in a clear manner;
- A clear vision on the intended change(s)/ effect(s) is presented and the proposed activities are relevant for their achievement;
- Applicant(s) have management and programmatic capacity, i.e. required human resources, competence and experience;
- The project is cost-efficient;
- The applicant's contribution (financial or in-kind) and/or the co-funding by other donors/sponsors is of min. 20% of the total project budget;
- Risks are assessed and mitigation measures are presented accordingly;
- A basic results'/lessons learnt dissemination and sustainability plan is available.

For projects with larger budgets, a partner/applicant risk assessment might be conducted by the SCO.

N.B. Please note that the process of project proposal and budget adjustment could be sometimes be lengthy and difficult. However, it does not guarantee that the project will be approved for funding.



5. Approval

When all questions, related both to the project proposal and budget, are clarified, the Selection Committee proceeds with the final examination and decides whether the project will be financed or not.

The final results shall be announced via e-mail to each applying organization individually, as soon as decisions are made.

The decisions made by the Selection Committee are final and shall present no grounds for any form of appeal, nor do they require any detailed reasoning or explanation.

6. Contribution contracts

Agreements between the SCO and the implementing partners shall be prepared and signed before activities start (the funding cannot be retroactive) on the basis of the previously negotiated project proposal and budget. The agreement provides all details on project implementation, narrative and financial reporting.