

FAQs – frequently asked questions and answers in connection with the pre-selection and application process for the funding of projects for the Eastern Partnership programme: Expanding Cooperation with Civil Society in the Eastern Partnership Countries and Russia

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

The Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt) evaluates formal applications in accordance with § 44 of the Federal Budgetary Code (BHO). Due to the high volume of project ideas submitted, it is unlikely that all proposals will be supported in the coming year. To ensure maximum transparency and minimize your effort, the decision on funding is made in two stages:

- **1. Consultation Process:** First, we ask you to submit concise project ideas digitally via the program's website (oepr.diplo.de). Project ideas can be submitted from August 7, 2026, to September 15, 2026. Based on these brief project descriptions, we identify the most promising ideas that align with the program's objectives and criteria. If your idea meets the requirements, you will be recommended to submit a formal funding application.
- After evaluating all submitted ideas, all applicants will receive an information about whether a formal application for funding (under § 44 BHO) is likely to succeed, considering other proposals and available budget. These messages are expected to be sent by the end of 2026.
- **2. Formal Application Submission:** If your project receives a positive assessment, you may submit a formal application. The application must be submitted in German or English with complete documentation, strictly on time, exclusively by email in PDF format, and additionally in Excel or Word format. Further details on the application process, including deadlines and required documents, will be provided in the information regarding your project idea. Please refrain from inquiries before receiving this information.

General questions and information:

- **What is a project idea?**

To minimize your effort, the decision on project funding is made in two steps: In the first step, you submit a project idea via the online form, where you provide the key information (project title, costs, project partners, target audience) and briefly describe the project (max. 6,000 characters).

- **What is a project application?**
 - If you receive a message that your application for funding is likely to be successful, you must, in a second stage, submit a formal **application** that is based on the previously submitted project proposal (by email only). The application includes (1) a detailed description of the project, (2) a financial plan, (3) a logframe (incl. the project's objectives and indicators, if possible formulated as SMART goals) and (4) a declaration stating that the project was planned in cooperation with your partner organisation and has not yet started.
- **What should be included in the project description of the project idea?**
 - When developing your project idea, please ensure it closely aligns with the funding criteria outlined in the program's objectives and purpose description. Additional helpful guidance for crafting your idea can be found in the information fields on the platform oepr.diplo.de, where you will submit your project ideas. It must clearly state who is involved, with whom, and what is planned (specific activities or measures), along with where and when the project will take place, and what concrete goals it aims to achieve. This structure helps us to evaluate your proposal effectively and ensures it meets the program's requirements.
- **Which project ideas can be applied for, and what are the eligibility requirements for funding?**
 - We support projects that strengthen and develop sustainable civil society partnerships between German actors and those from the Eastern Partnership countries and Russia. These projects must be tailored to the specific contexts of the target countries and contribute to one of the program's four funding goals: Strengthening pluralism and resilience, Promoting values discourse and human rights, Creating future perspectives and democratic transformation, Supporting dialogue and rapprochement. The focus is on collaboration, exchange, and joint development of content, knowledge, or skills. The annual funding criteria and priorities are outlined in the program's objectives and purpose description.

Applicant organisation

- **Which organisations may apply for project funding through the programme Expanding Cooperation with Civil Society in the Eastern Partnership Countries and Russia?**
 - Project proposals may be submitted by **civil-society organisations in Germany** that wish to jointly implement a project with **at least one partner organisation from at least one programme country (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Russia)**.
 - **Purely national projects and projects without a partner in Germany or the Eastern Partnership countries or Russia are not eligible for funding.**

- Furthermore, **participation by French and Polish civil society is possible**, in order to deepen cooperation in the context of the Weimar Triangle. Both joint Franco-German and German-Polish projects with one or more partners in the target countries are thus also welcome. The prerequisite for funding these projects is the active participation of a Polish or French partner organisation.
- Only the German organisation is entitled to submit an application, as the project, should it receive funding, will be funded in line with the regulations set out in German funding legislation.
- **Can the applicant be a natural person?**
 - No, the application must be submitted by a legal person, such as an organisation, an association, etc.
- **We have not yet registered as a legal person. Can we still apply for Federal Foreign Office funding, or should we apply by partnering with an existing registered organisation?**
 - If, after submission of your proposal, the assessment should determine that your application for funding is likely to be successful, then the application may only be submitted by a legal person. Therefore, the applicant must be registered as a legal person by the time that the application is submitted.
- **Can the partner organisation in the target country be an individual?**
 - No, the project partner may not be an individual / natural person. The partner must be an organisation, an association or a group of activists.
- **Can an application be submitted by an organisation involved in governance or business activities?**
 - Stakeholders involved in governance or business activities are only eligible for funding in exceptional cases – such as if civil-society stakeholders do not exist in the target countries due to local conditions and if the specific measures to be funded provide sufficient guarantee that the political objectives being pursued will be achieved. Cooperation with Russian and Belarussian state bodies or organisations and those with close ties to the state is not possible under any circumstances.
- **Who are civil society stakeholders?**
 - Typical stakeholders are associations, federations, foundations, universities, youth associations, culture professionals, non-profit media organisations and other NGOs. Public-service broadcasters are also regarded as part of civil society.
- **Are Franco-German or Polish-German organisations with headquarters in Germany considered to be French or Polish project partners?**

- No – organisations whose headquarters are in Germany are automatically considered to be German organisations. Only organisations whose headquarters are located in France or Poland can be considered to be French or Polish partners. Conversely, this means that these organisations may not receive any direct funding via the Eastern Partnership programme if they do not have a German project partner.

Project measures and participants

- **Where can project measures be implemented? Must project measures be equally distributed among all target countries?**
 - Project measures can be implemented in all Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) and Russia, as well as in Germany. In the case of Franco-German projects, they can also be implemented in France, and in the case of Polish-German projects, they can also be implemented in Poland.
 - Considering the repression that civil society is faced with in Russia and Belarus, projects with civil society in these countries may put activists at great personal risk. In view of the importance of the work of civil society in Russia and Belarus, we promote their work independent of where they reside – i.e. even if they are temporarily in exile. In justified exceptional cases, funding may also be provided for the work of partner organisations from other countries in the Eastern Partnership that are temporarily in exile, and at other locations. In such cases, it is important that the effects of project measures be felt in their country of origin and/or in the countries of the Eastern Partnership.
 - There is no need to equally distribute project measures among all countries involved.
- **May I submit proposals for projects that involve participants from countries that are not target countries (e.g. Hungary, Central Asian countries, Austria, etc.)?**
 - In principle, cooperation projects may involve participants from third countries, provided that the specific project has a clear connection to the Eastern Partnership countries and/or Russia. Please note, however, that expenses for participants who are not from an Eastern Partnership country, Russia, Germany, France or Poland cannot be covered by this Federal Foreign Office programme. Such expenses must be funded via third-party or own resources.

Formal criteria

- **My project is tailored to more than one funding objective – can I indicate more than one?**
 - No – in this case, you must select the objective that your project is most tailored to and provide the required rationale.
- **I would like to continue my current project. Is that possible?**
 - Yes. Please indicate your current project number in the proposal (between one and three digits, it is the reference number of your current project) and give a brief summary of what your project has achieved to date. Projects may receive funding more than once under the programme. The provision of the maximum three rounds of funding depends on tangible further development of the project's content. However, there is no guarantee that follow-up funding will be granted (section 23 of the Federal Budget Code). The aim of the programme funding is to allocate start-up financing to projects. It is the role of the project organisation to ensure long-term financing through other sources of funding or revenue.
- **Are digital formats eligible for funding?**
 - In principle, digital and hybrid formats have many benefits. If doing so is suitable for your project, we encourage you to implement it digitally, at least in part, as this can be more climate-friendly, can lower costs and can expand your reach. You can already in your project proposal address the question of whether a digital or in-person format would be more suitable for your project.
- **To what extent do the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals have to be taken into account when developing a project?**
 - The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be taken into account when developing a project, so that more attention is paid 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.

Deadlines and important dates

- **What is the time frame for implementation of the project? What is the earliest possible start date for projects?**
 - At the time we inform you that you may submit an application for funding, the project must not yet have commenced.
 - The funding in question is project funding. As such, it is subject to the budgeting principle of annuality, meaning that, as a rule, the projects should be completed

during the year 2027, i.e. **by 31 December 2027**. The Federal Foreign Office can only approve projects that run into the next calendar year in justified exceptional cases.

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

- In exceptional cases, but not prior to us receiving your application, you may request an early start of project measures. The Federal Foreign Office must approve this early start. An early start of project measures may be approved **if own or third-party funding is contributed to the project or is available as pre-funding for the project**. We wish to point out that interest, for example to service a loan, is not eligible for funding. Moreover, you will not be legally entitled to funding until you have received a formal notification of your allocation. If you start your project prior to this formal notification, you will be initiating it at your own financial risk.
- Pursuant to section 8, paragraph 3, of the 2024 Budget Act, special permission is not required for an early start of project measures for projects beginning after 31 December 2023 if the project is similar to a previous project for which follow-up financing is being sought.

The following prerequisites apply:

- the last funding for a similar project was approved no more than two years ago,
- the recipient of the allocation is identical,
- there has been no substantial change to the general conditions for funding allocation,
- funds are available for promoting the project,
- for direct follow-up projects, an application has been submitted prior to the start of the follow-up project

and

- the overall expenses of the project do not exceed 500,000 euro.
- The Federal Agency for Foreign Affairs will also decide whether the conditions for a follow-up project have been met, and it will notify the applicant in writing accordingly.

Funding amount and financial plan

- **Is there an upper or lower limit to the funding amount?**

- Yes – the threshold for funding provided by the Federal Foreign Office is 50,000 euro. All project-related expenses are, in principle, eligible for funding. For a positive assessment, however, the amounts you indicate must be reasonable

and proportional to the project measures that you describe. The principles of efficiency and economy apply. There is no maximum funding amount.

- **Must the financial plan include a specific percentage of own resources? If yes, how high is it?**
 - There is no set percentage for own resources. Funds provided through this programme are granted in the deficit-financing mode. This means that funding provided will cover any shortfall due to insufficient own or third-party funding.
- **Can an application for full financing be submitted?**
 - Under certain circumstances, full financing is available. But this should remain an exception and an appropriate justification must be provided. In this case, it is expected that you contribute to the project in another form, e.g. by providing expertise, premises or volunteers and volunteer work. Please note that such contributions on your part are not considered own resources. Please indicate any own, in-kind contributions for which no application is made (e.g. use of existing infrastructure or voluntary work on the part of members):
- **On what basis is an allocation made? What expenses are eligible for funding?**
 - The legal basis is provided by the General Supplementary Provisions for Project Grants (ANBest-P) and the Particular Supplementary Provisions of the Federal Foreign Office for the awarding of project funding in Germany (BNBest-AA-Inland) and the Particular Supplementary Provisions of the Federal Foreign Office for the awarding of project funding allocations to recipients based solely abroad (BNBest-AA-Ausland), in their current version. These provisions can be found in the [download section](#) of www.oepr.diplo.de. You will also find guidelines on the cost of travel and meals in the Federal Travel Expenses Act ([BRKG](#)) and the Foreign Travel Expenses Ordinance ([ARV](#)).
- **What are the requirements for funding lasting more than one year, or for multi-annual funding?**
 - The aim here is that as many civil-society stakeholders as possible will benefit from funding for as many projects as possible. It is therefore not sufficient to merely state that the project would have a greater and more lasting effect if it were to be extended.
 - A specific measure lasting more than one year, or a multi-annual measure, can be approved if the foreign-policy objectives that its promotion seeks to achieve cannot be reached without such approval. For example, this would be the case if specific measures can by definition be carried out only if they run over a calendar year because they need to cover a university semester.
 - It will be regarded as imperative to recognise specific measures that run over a calendar year if no alternative for carrying out the project is available.

- **What must I be aware of before, during and after project implementation?**

- Mandatory prior approval is required for any increase in an individual item in the project's financial plan of more than 20 percent, as well as for substantial changes to the project content that have an impact on its indicators, objectives, etc. Please submit a respective change request in due time.
- The approved funds are subject to the principle of the annual budget and must be spent during that same financial year. For multiannual projects, funds appropriated for one financial year may not be carried over to any other financial years.
- Please report any lower expenditure immediately after the project is completed and no later than the end of the disbursement period of the most recent request for funds (six weeks or three months), in order to avoid an accrual of interest on the funds that remain.
- Prior to signing any documents (application, proof of employment of funds, etc.) please ensure that the person signing is an authorised representative and signatory of the organisation, and please provide the respective proof along with the other documentation that is submitted. This also applies if responsibilities change during the course of a project.
- When preparing the proof of employment of funds, please make sure that the list of receipts tallies with the statement of account; their structure must also correspond with the structure of individual budget items in the financial plan.
- If you have passed on funds, please remember to include in the proof of employment of funds your audit notes regarding the ultimate recipients' employment of funds.
- Please keep the Federal Foreign Office or the Federal Agency for Foreign Affairs informed in a timely manner regarding all project measures.