

call for proposals

Stronger Roots for Civil Society:

**Constituency Building of Organizations
in the Czech Republic, Hungary
and Slovakia**

Deadline: 15 October 2019 at 13:00 pm

**Are you a Czech,
Hungarian
or Slovak
civil society
organization?**

**Would you like to
build up a stronger
base of supporters,
volunteers or
individual donors of
your organization?**

**Do you feel you
need to strengthen
the connection to
the people in your
community to
achieve your goals?**

**Do you want to
improve your online
media performance?**

**Are you ready to
boost your strategic
development and
become a more
progressive
organization?**

**Do you want to receive a highly
professional consultancy in
organizational development,
campaigning, fundraising and
other areas?**

If yes, apply for this grant!

1. Introduction

The existence of a free and active civil society is an attribute of a healthy participatory democracy. It fulfils a variety of crucial roles, such as building trust and solidarity among people, protecting the environment, providing support to vulnerable groups and enhancing transparency and good governance. Civil society organizations (CSOs) derive from a wide range of joint aspirations and stimulate active participation in public life. At the same time, they need public support to maintain their legitimacy, effectiveness and financial stability. To fulfill their mission, they need to apply different strategies of how to reach out to existing and new audiences, build a network of active supporters and increase the number of volunteers and individual donors, who can in turn help CSOs become stronger, more professional, publicly acclaimed and sustainable over the long run.

Moreover, the importance of strengthened ties of the CSOs to the people around them has been demonstrated over the last decade in particular, when the civil society and democratic institutions in post-communist Central Europe have been challenged by repeated attempts to delegitimize the work and efforts of CSOs and to limit the space in which they operate. CSOs cannot fend off these attempts alone, without the support of the broader public and without some self-reflection on how their organizations function. Increasing its social capital is a vital aim for any organization looking to become more resilient during a time when space for civil society is shrinking.

Reflecting these trends, Open Society Fund Prague (CZ), Open Society Foundation Bratislava (SK), Glopolis (CZ) and the NIOK Foundation (HU) have created a consortium to jointly implement the “Stronger Roots for Civil Society” project. The project strives to increase the organizational and sectoral resilience of CSOs in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary and embed them in the societies in which they operate. As part of this project, the consortium is announcing this call for proposals.

2. Goal and Theme of the Call for Proposals

This call for proposals is open to civil society organizations in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia and **aims at building their constituencies** (groups of supporters, volunteers, donors etc.) **and strengthening their relationship** with the local, regional and/or national communities or professional bodies.

Successful applicants will receive not only funding, but also intensive support and expertise from mentors and external consultants. This combination should help CSOs to re-investigate the needs and opinions of their beneficiaries and the people in their community, respond to those needs and make concrete changes in their organizational policies and processes, with the overall goal to build or strengthen their constituencies.

Local and regional organizations are particularly encouraged to apply in this call for proposals, as it presents them a unique opportunity to reach out to their communities, get feedback from them and invigorate their connection to their beneficiaries, supporters and other constituents. At the same time, while applying these strategies they may become role models for other organizations around them.

What is Constituency Building

Constituency building describes an approach and a series of actions during which an organization gradually opens up and consciously reaches out to diverse groups of the society and strives to build a living and mutual relation with the variety of individuals and societal groups. This relation allows the organization to build its activities, actions and communication more and more on the community's needs, expectations or even actions and at the same time to gain a wider and more stable circle of volunteers, donors and other active or passive supporters (i.e. its constituents).

Examples of Constituency Building Strategies

Constituency building has an impact on the overall operation of an organization, which requires and results in a new approach. It is a long-term complex process which includes the transformation of various organizational and outreach strategies, such as:

- **Communication** – reaching out to new audiences and understanding your current ones, identifying their needs and getting feedback on the organization's work, reflecting the new findings
- **Fundraising** – creating a strategy to turn supporters into individual donors, increasing regular donations, reducing dependence on big/institutional donors
- **Mobilizing and activism, volunteer management and engagement** – approaching and engaging supporters in the organization's work and/or decision-making
- **Campaigning** – implementing new outreach campaigns
- **Leadership, management of the changes** - making constituency building an integral part of the organization's work

Implementing these strategies helps the organization to grow, to increase its social capital and its ability to mobilize people, to raise more funds, to reach out to new audiences, to have an impact on social change, and to increase its social legitimacy. The organization will be stronger, more resistant and reactive to the shrinking space for CSOs, and more independent of funding by the state or major grant institutions.

Would you like to engage more people for your cause?

These success stories will show you how constituency building helped other organizations to do so!

1

Once a radical group fighting the excessive use of cars in a city decided to change their communication and overall strategy to a more positive tone. They started to approach cyclists and promote cycling to work. Then they called the city inhabitants with a proposition to organize neighbor events. In a few years, the overall change of strategy paid off: today, the organization has thousands of supporters and is able to call them for action if needed, covers one third of its annual budget from individual donors and is a well-known and trustworthy partner for city institutions whenever transportation in the city is discussed.

2

Fighting corruption is not easy, especially if the government ignores your recommendations and accuses you of being unprofessional. You need a big public movement behind you, but how can you make people interested in a complicated issue like transparency? One CSO found a good strategy - in a campaign, it individually approached different groups and showed them how they can benefit from openness in their daily life. For example, parents were approached with the access to information on safety in schools, patients with transparency on medical misconduct and public servants with whistleblowing procedures. Looking at the issue through the lenses of specific groups and professional online communication helped the organization to get in touch with around 50,000 accounts on various social media sites and cover 50% of their annual budget from individual citizens.

3

Organizations providing social services are often dependent on funding from governmental and institutional donors. But here is the case of one organization dedicated to palliative care that demonstrates it does not have to be so. The issue of palliative care and providing support to people with incurable illness is a very serious issue which some people may find unpleasant. Despite that the organization set up a very clear and understandable communication campaign about why palliative care is important and was not afraid to combine the difficult issue with softer or more likeable fundraising methods, such as holding auctions of paintings, selling T-shirts and other marketing products, publishing and selling books, launching a club for regular donors etc. Sensitive, but bold communication together with an individual approach to different groups of potential donors made it possible for the organization to cover 50% of its annual budget from individual and corporate donors.

If you would like to learn more about constituency building, you can also download a brochure *“Constituency Building – Insights and Ideas”* summarizing the constituency building experience of a variety of organizations from the Visegrad countries. Please download the brochure at www.osf.cz.

3. Guidelines for Proposed Project

Applicants are welcome to introduce their own ideas and plans for how to approach their constituency/ies, increase their number and strengthen the relationship with them. They should also re-think how to discern the needs of their constituencies, look for their feedback on the organization's work, reflect the findings and engage the constituencies in their work.

The projects should include a well-designed and detailed plan on how to build or change the organization's strategy of interaction with their constituencies and how to reach and engage the target groups with clearly stated benchmarks and measurable indicators (e.g. an increase in the number of supporters, Facebook followers, individual donors, volunteers, etc.). The quantity (increased number) should be combined with deepening the quality of the relationship (e.g. striving to turn the passive supporters into active ones).

The proposed project should fit into the general strategy of the applying organization. It may include creating a communication or fundraising strategy, or a strategy of organizational development to make the organization ready for more effective work with its constituencies, however the focus should be placed on strengthening the relationship with the constituencies in these strategies (this call for proposals is not aimed at pure organizational development or financial stability).

The applying organizations should be eager to start or strengthen the interaction with their constituents and ready to transform their organizational functioning if the relationship with the constituency demands it. However, the applicants are also advised not to be over-ambitious – constituency building is a very complex process. A complete organizational transformation cannot be done in 24 months. Therefore, we advise the applicants to choose a particular constituency or a few constituencies to start with and strive to change only a selected aspect or aspects of their organizational functioning or outreach strategies at first.

Examples of Constituency Building Activities

Here you can find some concrete examples of what type of activities other organizations have done within the constituency building projects. This is not a full list of possible activities, just examples of typical ones.

- define and fine-tune fundraising, communication, online communication, volunteer engagement or mobilizing strategies
- define the profiles of target groups for communication and/or fundraising
- reformulate messages and narratives to reach out to new audiences, or to reach out to available audiences in a more effective and impactful way
- plan and implement engagement routes for different target audiences (i.e. techniques to bring them closer and more engaged to the organization/cause)
- launch crowdfunding, peer-to-peer or annual fundraising campaigns to develop their individual donor base
- develop their infrastructure to be able to record new relations, and communicate with them effectively (e.g. Customer Relationship Management systems)
- launch communication campaigns to raise attention to causes or mobilize people
- test ideas, methods that have already had proven results in communication / fundraising / mobilizing in other countries or in the region.
- develop their volunteer base
- extend their core activities to different target groups often with a larger geographic focus
- learn and apply research techniques on measuring and developing their communication efforts

4. Eligibility Criteria

Who Can Apply

This call for proposals is open to **active civil society organizations** with at least **2 years of experience** working in any of the thematic areas of the civil society sector (advocacy, health, education, social, environmental, community development etc.) and geographic scope (working on local, regional and/or national level). However, we strongly **encourage local and regional organizations in particular to apply**.

Eligible types of organizations

Czech Republic: registered legal entity in the Czech Republic, having a non-commercial purpose, defined by the Czech law as a civic association (spolek, ústav, obecně prospěšná společnost), a foundation or endowment fund (nadace a nadační fond), or an organization department of a church or religious society (účelové zařízení církví)

Hungary: registered legal entity in Hungary, defined by the Hungarian law as a foundation (alapítvány) or an association (egyesület). A public benefit organization and/or able to accept a 1% tax deduction at the moment of the application.

Slovakia: registered legal entity in the Slovak Republic, having a non-commercial purpose, defined by the Slovak law as a civic association (občianske združenie), a foundation (nadácia), a non-profit organization providing public beneficial services (nezisková organizácia poskytujúca verejnoprospešné služby), a non-investment fund (neinvestičný fond), a non-profit organization (nezisková organizácia), an association of legal entities (združenie právnických osôb), or the Slovak Red Cross (Slovenský Červený Kríž)

Non-eligible types of organizations

Political party-affiliated associations, state-funded governmental institutions, profit distributing cooperatives or informal groups are not eligible to apply for our support. Neither a sole proprietorship nor a natural person is an eligible project applicant.

Duration and Amount of Grants

In this call for proposals, a total sum of €1,033,000 may be distributed and 10–14 projects are expected to be supported in each country.

Applicants may submit one proposal per organization for a grant of a minimum of **€20,000** up to a **maximum of €30,000 per project**. There is no eligibility limitation on the budget items as far as they are relevant for the implementation of the project. Co-financing is not required for the project proposal.

The compulsory duration of a grant is **24 months**.

Starting date of the supported projects: **January 2020**.

End date of the supported projects: **December 2021**.

5. Other Requirements and Information

Consultancy and Peer Support Program

In addition to funding, successful applicants will receive expert support in a complex consultancy program. The **participation in the consultancy program is mandatory** for all grantees supported in this call.

Each grantee will have a mentor at its disposal who will help the organization to follow up on the indicators and goals set in the project proposal and to support its work toward realizing these goals. According to their specific needs, the grantees will also receive individual consultations from experts from different areas (such as social media communication, fundraising, campaigning, etc.). The portfolio of experts includes well-known personalities from both the private and civil society sectors.

Furthermore, all selected grantees will share their experience in specific training sessions and networking workshops and will attend two regional networking meetings.

By participation in this call for proposals, during the 2-year period of project implementation the applicants commit to take part in an executive workshop (8 hours long), 6 networking workshops (each 3 hours long) and 4 training sessions (4–6 hours long). The applicants will also take part in 2 two-day regional networking meetings. Apart from taking part in these group meetings, the applicant will consult with its mentor each month, and will have access to 20 hours of consultancy in fundraising, communication and mobilizing. Your organization may benefit the most from these 20 hours, if you plan capacities for preparing, taking part and also following up on the consultancy services to incorporate new ideas and approaches into your ongoing activities.

Taking part in the Consultancy and Peer Support Program is provided free for your organization by OSF Prague, OSF Slovakia and the NIOK Foundation.

Matching Grants

In the last quarter of implementing their projects, the successful applicants may be asked to organize their own crowdfunding campaign which they may prepare with the support of the above-mentioned consultants. If the campaigns are successful, the applicants may receive another **matching grant up to a maximum amount of €5,000**.

Safeguarding Standards

The successful applicants will be asked to adhere to the donors' safeguarding standards, in order to protect children and vulnerable persons and prevent any kind of violence or abuse during the implementation of the project.

6. Granting Process

The applicants are asked to **complete an online application form in English.**

The online application includes the Budget Template, the Project in Milestones Table and two short evaluation questionnaires which were prepared by the evaluation team of Schola Empirica and will serve for the evaluation of progress of individual grantees and the Stronger Roots project as such.

Furthermore, the applicants must attach:

Czech and Slovak applicants:

- their last official annual report (if the organization has it)
- a financial report for 2018 (incomes and expenses)

Hungarian applicants:

- last annual report and Public Benefit Annex (Éves beszámoló és közhasznúsági melléklet)

These supporting documents may be submitted in local languages.

Please submit the application and supporting documents electronically at [this link](#). The deadline for applications is on 15 October 2019 at 13:00.

The selection process is three-fold:

1/ Administrative Review

The applications will be reviewed according to the following criteria:

- eligibility (please see section 3)
- application being submitted by the deadline
- application includes all of the required parts (completed application, completed questionnaire, completed budget, annual report, financial report)

2/ Project Proposal Review

The selection committee will review the submitted applications according to the following criteria and score them using the following points system:

Criteria	Maximum Score
<i>Constituency building focus and commitment</i> (the project is relevant for and responds to the goal of this call for proposals, the project fits into the constituency building concept and has outreach to organization's constituents as the main goal, the organization is committed and ready to strengthen its constituencies, build stronger ties to them and contribute to greater transparency)	30 points
<i>Quality of the project</i> (clearly stated goal, achievable results and clear indicators to measure success, the overall coherence of the project)	20 points
<i>Defined target groups</i> (the project clearly identifies concrete constituency/ies or stakeholders that will be approached in the project and are relevant for the organization and their needs)	15 points
<i>Appropriate tools and methods</i> (the project activities and methods reflect the characteristics of the selected target group and the activities are relevant and feasible for the declared project goal)	15 points
<i>Adequate finances</i> (the budget items are relevant for the proposed project activities and cost-effective)	10 points
<i>Local or regional organizations</i> (organizations of all geographic scope will be eligible for the selection process, but local and regional organizations will be slightly preferred in the selection process points system, because they usually do not have access to this kind of funding and this may be a unique opportunity for them)	10 points
Maximum Score per Project Proposal	100 points

Upon this review, a shortlist of applicants with the highest scores will be made.

3/ Personal Interview

All shortlisted applicants will be invited for a **personal interview** with the selection committee members. The interview should prove their **motivation and commitment to strengthen the constituency of their organization** and undergo necessary organizational changes to realize this goal. The interview will help the selection committee to make the final list of successful applicants. **The interviews will be held on November 19 or 20** in Prague (for Czech applicants), Bratislava (Slovak applicants) and Budapest (Hungarian applicants). Please put these dates into your schedules and be ready to be available!

All applicants will receive written notification of the committee's decision.

7. More Information

Information Seminars

The applicants are cordially invited to attend the information seminars where the respective country coordinator will explain the constituency building concept in greater detail, will present more examples of potential projects and will answer all relevant questions.

Czech Republic

17. 9. 2019, 9:00–13:00: Praha

Venue: Kasárna Karlín (Prvního pluku 20/2, Praha 8)

Please register [here](#).

19. 9. 2019, 9:00–13:00: Brno

Venue: VUT – Novobarokní aula (Antonínská 1, Brno)

Please register [here](#).

Hungary

18. 9. 2019, 14:00–15:30

webinar

Link will be sent to the registered participants. Please register [here](#).

Slovakia

18. 9. 2019, 14:00–16:00: Bratislava

Venue: Baštová 5, Bratislava

Please register [here](#).

Contact Persons

If you have any specific questions regarding this call for proposals, please contact the respective country coordinators:

Czech Republic, Hungary: Michael Adamec at michael.adamec@osf.cz

Slovakia: Martina Kaliariková at martina.kaliarikova@osf.sk

Stronger Roots for Civil Society 2019

www.osf.cz

www.niok.hu

www.osf.sk

www.glopolis.org