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Sub-Granting Authority: **Partners Albania for Change and Development**

Open Call for Proposals

Third Round

Guidelines for Applicants

EMBRACE - Entrepreneurship Models Building Relations and Creative Economy Project

Budget Reference:

Grant Contract No. 2017/394-895

Financed by the EU in Albania under the IPA Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2016-2017 – Support to Civil Society Organizations capacities component

Deadline for submission of full application:

February 4th, 2020 at 17:00 hrs

NOTICE

This is an open Call for Proposals where all the documents are submitted together. In the first instance, only the eligibility will be checked on the bases of the supporting documents requested by the Sub-Granting Authority. Thereafter, for the applicants that have been pre-selected, the full proposal will be evaluated.

The instructions described in this document will help all the applicants to successfully submit their applications. You can download the Application Package at Partners Albania for Change and Development webpage www.partnersalbania.org or you can request for the package by sending an email to the address: ehaska@partnersalbania.org and jalite@partnersalbania.org

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1. THE EMBRACE PROJECT SUB-GRANTING SCHEME

1.1. BACKGROUND

The Project “EMBRACE – Entrepreneurship Models Building Relations And Creative Economy” (hereafter called “The EMBRACE project”), is implemented by Partners Albania for Change and Development, in partnership with Project Ahead and financed by the EU, through the EU Delegation in Albania, under the Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2016-2017 – “Support to Civil Society Organizations Capacities” component.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the development of social economy fostering inclusive development in the country. More specifically, the project will create successful models of sustainable social enterprises and will promote improvement of the legal and practical environment that enables sustainable sources of funding for CSOs. In order to produce the expected results and achieve the specific objectives, the action will implement a participatory approach, and integrate set of activities.

CSOs and social enterprises are the main beneficiary of the project as they are weak in their public outreach and implementation capacities, suffering a heavy donor dependency and difficulties in effectively impacting the decision-making. There is a limited number of CSOs exploring alternative funding opportunities as involvement in economic activity, donations from private enterprises, and social entrepreneurship initiatives. Nevertheless, incomes from these activities play an insignificant role in their financial sustainability and are not based on a clear, long-term revenue generation strategy. Considering the situation, the proposed project will improve the situation of CSOs and social enterprises to initiate/strengthen their social entrepreneurship initiatives. The improvement of public institutions at understanding and policy-making process, through making concrete proposals and policy recommendations for improvements in the legal and regulatory framework for CSOs and social enterprises, will be enabled also. Promoting and enabling the creation of a strong and more financially viable civil society sector, through the identification and application of alternative sources of funding from CSOs and strengthening of social entrepreneurship initiatives, will contribute to the creation of social economy and further economic development of the country. Along with the advocating efforts for the creation of an enabling environment that promote and support entrepreneurship initiatives, the project will provide a significant contribution to the CSOs development, by increasing their capacities on this regards; providing financial support to new and existing social entrepreneurship initiatives; application of an innovative fundraising event using donations from the private sector; and ensuring their involvement in international networks to access funding and partnership opportunities and increasing their visibility toward the business sector in the country.

The main component of the project *is the sub-granting scheme* to provide financial support to the non-profit organizations in Albania for the implementation of new and existing social entrepreneurship initiatives to further contribute to creation of social economy in the country.

The total budget available for CSOs is **EUR 101,000**. This amount will be distributed in two rounds of grants. The total budget for the third round will be **EUR 20,600**.

Up to three (3) civil society organizations will be supported through the third round of sub-granting scheme of the EMBRACE project.

The specific objective of this Call for Proposals is: Supporting the startup of innovative social entrepreneurship ideas or strengthening existing ones, that contribute to increase social inclusion, through integration and employment, and economic development of the local community. Through this call for proposals the interested CSOs can apply to implement a project supported through the sub-granting scheme of the EMBRACE project.

1.2. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Partners Albania invites all civil society organizations (CSOs) which have an innovative entrepreneurship idea, or those CSOs that are currently implementing a social entrepreneurship initiative to apply to this Call for Proposal.

The current Call for Proposals seeks to support CSOs across Albania, which have an entrepreneurship idea or those which have currently established a social entrepreneurship initiative and aim at further development and sustainability of their action. As the main goal of the EMBRACE project is the support of the startup of innovative social entrepreneurship ideas or/and strengthening existing ones, that contribute to increase social inclusion through integration and employment, and economic development of the local community, CSOs through their applications, should present models of social entrepreneurship initiatives, as a real development engine for the social economy in the areas where the projects will be implemented.

The applicants should clearly indicate in the proposal the ways how they plan to ensure the sustainability of the services/products that will be developed and delivered, after the project implementation period. Creation of local networks and partnerships with different stakeholders in the targeted area, as an indicator of the sustainable project is encouraged under this call for proposals.

1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this first Call for Proposals is **EUR 20,600**. The Sub-Granting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

Size of Sub-Grant: Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

Minimum amount: EUR 3,000

Maximum amount: EUR 7,000

2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the operations financed under this Call, in conformity with the Sub Grant Management Manual to contract procedures for actions, applicable to this call for proposals.

2.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

(1) The actors: There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

The Applicant, i.e. the entity submitting the application form; and, **Co-applicant**, if any. (2.1.1);

(2) The actions:

Actions for which a grant may be awarded (2.1.2.);

(3) The costs:

Types of costs that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the sub-grant (2.1.3)

2.1.1. The Eligibility of Applicants

In order to be eligible for a sub-grant, the applicant must:

- (1) Be legal person
- (2) Be a civil society organization, registered as an NPO, according to the Albanian legislation for non-profit organizations
- (3) Be established and acting in the territory of Albania
- (4) Not implement exclusively religious and/or political party activities
- (5) Not have any history of legal proceedings related to fraud or corruption.

The Applicant may act alone or in partnership with a Co-applicant. Potential Co-applicant/s must satisfy the eligibility criteria (1); (2); and (3); (4); (5) as applicable to the applicant himself. Their costs are eligible or not in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant. (See the section 2.1.3 The Eligibility of Costs).

NUMBER OF GRANTS PER APPLICANT AND CO-APPLICANT

Due to the specifications of the call, the Sub-Granting Authority will accept the following:

An organization may submit **only one applications** under this Call for Proposals.

- An organization may submit **only one application** under this Call for Proposals: either as the Applicant or as Co-applicant.
- An organization may be awarded only one grant under this Call for proposals.
- An application may not have more than one applicant and one co-applicant.

2.1.2. The Eligibility of Actions

Duration: The duration of the project awarded under this call for proposals may not be less than **9 months** nor exceed **12 months**.

Location: Actions must take place across Albania.

Types of actions: The proposed strategies should focus on delivering results against the objectives set out in section 1 and must include, but not limited to:

- Activities that contribute to the socio-economic development of the local communities where the project will be implemented;
- Activities that mobilizes the work and expertise of local resources and makes use of their traditional abilities;

- Activities that create social cohesion and foster inclusiveness and linkages among people and community.
- Activities that promote integration and employment, especially of the marginalized groups.

Non-eligible actions: The following types of operation are ineligible for this financial support:

- Only infrastructure reconstruction and/or purchase of equipment;
- Actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
- Actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- Actions addressing issues only or mainly of community awareness and/or advocacy campaigns;
- Projects which consist entirely, or in most part, of preparatory works or studies;
- Projects supporting political parties or illegal activities, and religious activities;
- Core funding of the applicants or (where relevant) its partners;
- Deficit funding and capital endowments;
- Financial subventions to other organizations;
- Purchase of land, building and offices;
- Retroactive financing for projects that are already in implementation or completed;
- Actions taking place outside Albania;
- Humanitarian activities.

Financial support to third parties: Under this call, applicants may not provide financial support/sub-grants to other third parties.

Contract award procedures: Where implementation of the project requires awarding of a procurement contract, beneficiary must award the contract to the economically most advantageous offer; i.e. the bid offering the best value for money, respecting the principles of transparency and equal treatment of potential contractors and ensuring that there is no conflict of interest.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Monitoring and evaluation of the approved project will be conducted by the Sub-Granting Authority.

Visibility: The Applicants must take all necessary steps to publicize the fact that the European Union is funding the action through the EMBRACE project. The proposals that are wholly or partially funded by the European Union must incorporate information and communication activities designed to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the reasons for the project activities and the EU support in the local or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.

Applicants must comply with the objectives and priorities and guarantee the visibility of the EU financing (see the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU external actions specified and published by the European Commission at:

https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-visibility-requirements-2018_en.pdf

2.1.3. Eligibility of costs: Costs that can be included

Only '**eligible costs**' can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget presented is considered both a cost estimate and a ceiling for 'eligible costs'.

The reimbursement of eligible costs may be based on the agreed budget specified in units and unit costs.

In Annex B, the Budget Proposal Form, in the second column of worksheet no.2, "Justification of the estimated costs" per each of the corresponding budget item or heading the applicant must:

- Describe the information and methods used to establish the amounts of unit costs, lump sums and/or flat-rates, to which costs they refer, etc.
- Clearly explain the formulas for calculation of the final eligible amount¹.

At contracting phase, the Sub-Granting Authority decides whether to accept the proposed amounts or rates on the basis of the provisional budget submitted by the applicant, by analyzing factual data of grants carried out by the applicant or of similar projects.

Recommendations to award a sub-grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the contract do not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs and ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the Sub-Granting Authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. It is not possible to increase the sub-grant or the percentage of the funding by the Sub-granting Authority as a result of these corrections.

It is therefore in the applicant's interest to provide **a realistic and cost-effective budget**.

Eligible costs:

Eligible costs are actual costs incurred by the Beneficiary (ies) which meet all the following criteria:

- they are incurred during the implementation of the Project
 - Costs relating to services and works shall relate to activities performed during the implementation period. Costs relating to supplies shall relate to delivery and installation of items during the implementation period. Signature of a contract, placing of an order, or entering into any commitment for expenditure within the implementation period for future delivery of services, works or supplies after expiry of the implementation period do not meet this requirement;
 - Costs incurred should be paid before the project closing date.
- they are indicated in the estimated overall budget for the Project;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the Project;

¹Examples: - for staff costs: number of hours or days of work * hourly or daily rate pre-set according to the category of personnel concerned - for travel expenses: distance in km * pre-set cost of transport per km; number of days * daily allowance pre-set according to the country; - for specific costs arising from the organization of an event: number of participants at the event * pre-set total cost per participant etc.

- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the Beneficiary(ies) and determined according to the accounting standards and the usual cost accounting practices applicable to the Beneficiary(ies);
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- they are reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.
- The eligibility of the Value Added Tax (VAT) will be clarified during the contracting phase.

Contributions in kind:

Contributions in kind mean the provision of goods or services to a Beneficiary (ies) free of charge by a third party. As contributions in kind do not involve any expenditure for a Beneficiary (ies), they are not eligible costs for this application.

Cost share. The co-funding concept **is not applicable** for the sub grantees under this Call for Proposal. The sub grant scheme will cover 100% of the total project budget within the required limits.

Ineligible costs. The following costs are not eligible:

- customs and import duties, or any other charges;
- purchase, rent or leasing of land and existing buildings, unless the offices have to be rented explicitly to allow for the implementation of the operation (to be demonstrated by the applicant);
- fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation;
- second-hand equipment;
- bank charges (other than bank account maintenance cost), costs of guarantees and similar charges;
- conversion costs, charges and exchange losses associated with any of the component specific euro accounts, as well as other purely financial expenses;
- contribution in kind;
- any leasing costs;
- depreciation costs;
- debts and debt service charges;
- debts and debt service charges (interest);
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- costs declared by the beneficiary and covered by another action or work program;
- credit to third parties.
- taxes, unless the following conditions are fulfilled: a) they are not recoverable by any means; b) it is established that they are borne by the final beneficiary and c) they are clearly identified in the project proposal.

(Note: Personal Income Tax for employees is considered eligible cost under this call for proposals)

2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

The Application package must be submitted in accordance with the instructions provided in this Call for Proposals. Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions on the application form in the Grant Application Form annexed to these Guidelines (Annex A).

Applicants must prepare and submit their applications in **Albanian language**.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions on the application form (e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when the information provided is unclear and thus prevents the Sub-Granting Authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

The project proposal should be prepared following closely the application guidelines and the published formats (the application form; budget; logical framework, etc.). It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the operation.

Supporting Documents

The Supporting Documents submitted with the application (**applicant and co-applicant, if any**) should include:

- Court decision/registration (copy);
- Certificate of Registration released from the court with the latest updates, no older than 3 months (Original);
- Statute and the Establishment Act of the organization (Copy);
- Tax Office registration (NIPT) (Copy);
- Certificate of tax payment obligations (no debt) (Original);
- Latest one (1) Financial Statements of the organization (Copy);
- Document issued by the Court certifying that the organization has no pending cases, no older than 3 months (Original)
- Document issued by the Prosecution certifying that the organization has no pending cases, no older than 3 months (Original)

Where and how to send Applications

The complete application form (full application form) and the logical framework must be submitted electronically in word format, while the budget form must be submitted in excel format. The Checklist for the Grant Application Form (Section 15 of the grant application form) must be part of the electronic folder. The Declaration by the Applicant and The Co-Applicant Mandate, if any (Section 16 and 17 of the grant application form) must be completed, signed, stamped and submitted electronically in pdf format.

The application package along with the supporting documents must be submitted only electronically via email in the addresses: ehaska@partnersalbania.org and jalite@partnersalbania.org.

Confirmation of Receipt Email – *an email will be submitted to the applicant, to confirm the received application.*

Applicants must verify that their application is complete using the Checklist of the Grant Application Form. Incomplete applications will be rejected.

Deadline for submission of Applications

The deadline for the submission of applications is **February 4th, 2020** as within **17:00 hrs** local time.

Any application submitted after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

Further information about Applications

Questions may be sent by e-mail **no later than 21 days before the deadline** for the submission of applications to the below address, indicating clearly the reference of the Call for Proposals:

Partners Albania as the Contracting Authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

Answers will be given no later than **11 days before the deadline** for the submission of applications. To ensure equal treatment of applicants, Partners Albania cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, an operation or specific activities.

Email address: ehaska@partnersalbania.org

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on PA website: www.partnersalbania.org. It is therefore advisable to consult the above mentioned website regularly in order to be informed about the questions and answers published.

2.3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the EMBRACE Project Coordination Team and the Sub-Granting Evaluation Committee. All actions submitted by applicants will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS

- Compliance with the submission **DEADLINE**. If the deadline has not been met, the application will automatically be rejected. The following will be assessed:
- The Grant Application Form satisfies all the criteria specified in eligibility criteria list.

If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **SOLE** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The answer to each of the following questions must be YES in order to make the project eligible for further assessment - Intensive Assessment based on scores and specific weights.

Administrative Criteria:	Yes	No	Comments
1. The proposal is submitted within the deadline			
2. The application forms published in the			

guidelines for this call for proposals have been used			
3. The proposal is typed			
4. The proposal is in Albanian			
Eligibility Criteria:	Yes	No	Comments
1. Applicants' eligibility (applicant and co-applicant, if any): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Court decision/registration (copy); - Certificate of Registration released from the court with the latest updates, no older than 3 months (Original); - Statute and the Establishment Act of the organization (Copy); - Tax Office registration (NIPT) (Copy); - Certificate of tax payment obligations (no debt) (Original); - Latest one (1) Financial Statements of the organization (Copy); - Document issued by the Court certifying that the organization has no pending cases, no older than 3 months (Original) - Document issued by the Prosecution certifying that the organization has no pending cases, no older than 3 months (Original). 			
2. Range of project budget: The total project budget is within the required limits (minimum EUR 3,000 and maximum EUR 7,000)			
3. Project duration fall within 9 to 12 months			
4. The Applicant has presented only one application (either as the Applicant or as Co-applicant).			

After the evaluation of eligibility, Partners Albania will send letters to all applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted by the deadline, whether the eligibility was evaluated, and the results of that evaluation. The Sub-Granting Evaluation Committee will then proceed with the applicants whose proposals have been pre-selected.

STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

The quality of the applications, including the proposed budget and the capacity of the applicants, will be evaluated using the intensive evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

The selection criteria help to evaluate the applicants' operational capacity and financial capacity and to ensure that they:

- Have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the Action is to be carried out;

- Have the basic management capacity, professional competence and qualifications required to complete the proposed Action successfully

The award criteria help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities, and to award grants to projects, which maximize the overall effectiveness of this Call for Proposals. They help to select applications, which the Sub-Granting Authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover the relevance of the project proposal, its consistency with the objectives of the Call for Proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

Scoring:

The evaluation grid is divided into sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

SECTION	MAXIMUM SCORE
1. RELEVANCE	20
1.1. How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and specifications of the Call for Proposals?	5x2*
1.2. How relevant is the proposal to the needs and constrains of the target region and those involved (target-groups and beneficiaries)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5x2*
2. Financial and operation capacity of the applicant and co-applicant (if any) to implement the project proposal	20
2.1. Does the Applicant have sufficient proven experience in the management of similar types of actions proposed?	5
2.2. Does the Applicant have sufficient experience and capacities in the management of projects of comparable grant size?	5
2.3. Does the staff proposed have sufficient technical expertise and abilities to implement the project?	5
2.4. Does the Applicant have operational systems in place (administrative and financial rules and procedures) that support the successful management of the project?	5
3. Effectiveness and feasibility of the action	30
3.1. Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results?	5
3.2. Is the action plan clear and feasible?	5x2*
3.3. Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outcomes of the project?	5
3.4. Does the project promote social inclusion and/or economic development through integration and employment, especially of the marginalized groups, or mobilization of work & expertise of local resources?	5x2*
4. Sustainability of the project	15
4.1. Is the project likely to have a tangible impact on its target-	5

groups and beneficiaries (<i>does the project impact positively the involved area and the local community and this impact is clearly described and measured</i>)?	
4.2. Are the expected results of the proposed project financially sustainable? (<i>How will the activities be self-financed and/or financed after the funding ends?</i>)	5
4.4. Are the activities proposed for the sustainability of the project realistic and coherent?	5
5. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	15
5.1. Are the activities properly reflected in the budget?	5x2*
5.2. Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5
MAXIMUM TOTAL SCORE	100

*these scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

Provisional selection

After the evaluation, one table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score and within the limits of the funds available. The highest scoring application will be provisionally selected. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria to be used if during the Verification of the Eligibility of the Applicants and Co-applicants there are noticed missing supporting document or any incoherence between the Declaration by the applicant and the supporting documents.

STEP 3: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANTS AND CO-APPLICANTS (if any)

The eligibility verification, based on the supporting documents requested by the Sub-granting Authority (see Section 2.2) will only be performed for the application that has been provisionally selected according to the score and within the available EMBRACE Project sub-granting fund.

The Declaration by the Applicant (Section 16 of the grant application form) will be crosschecked with the supporting documents provided by the applicant and the co-applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the Declaration by the applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.

The eligibility of applicants and the action will be verified according to the criteria set out in Sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3. Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available financial envelope.

STEP 4: NOTIFICATION ON THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY DECISION

The applicants will be informed in written of the Sub-Granting Authority's decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision. This letter will be sent by e-mail.

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint within 5 (*five*) *working days* from the day when the rejection letter/email has been received. The sub-granting Evaluation Committee will consider the complaints. The complaints will be answered within 5 (*five*) *working days* from the receipt of the complaint.

STEP 5: CONTRACTING STAGE

The contracting process will undergo the following steps:

1. Negotiations

Prior to signing the contract, the Sub-Granting Authority reserves the right to negotiate with the applicant in order to:

- Ensure cost efficiency of the action;
- Ensure a fair balance between operational and non-operational costs;
- Reflect real market costs;
- Reflect costs in accordance with proposed activities

The points of negotiation should in no way change the substantial part of the proposed action, but rather to be in line with the administrative/financial/HR/programmatic rules of the EU and of the Sub-Granting Authority.

Upon finalization of the above points, the sub-granting contract will be signed between the relevant applicant and the Sub-Granting Authority.

3. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE OF THE PROCESS

	DATE	TIME
Official Public Launch of the Call for Proposals	January 6th, 2020	-
Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the Sub granting Authority	January 15th, 2020	17:00
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Sub-Granting Authority	January 20th, 2020	17:00
Deadline for submission of Applications	February 4th, 2020	17:00
Information of applicants on opening, administrative checks	February 6th, 2020	-
Information of applicants on the evaluation of the full application	February 24rd, 2020	-
Notification of award (after the eligibility check)	March 6th, 2020	-
Contract signature	March 13th, 2020	-

4. LIST OF ANNEXES

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

- Annex A: Grant Application Form (Word Format)
- Annex B: Budget Proposal Form (Excel Format)
- Annex C: Logical Framework Form