

APPLICATION GUIDE

SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME – DEMOCRACY 2021¹

This Guide describes the rules and procedures of the submission, selection and implementation process for the Small Grants Programme under the “Enhancing democracy in Moldova through inclusive and transparent elections” Project (Phase II), implemented by UNDP Moldova with the financial support of the USAID.

1. BACKGROUND

Electoral support and capacity development are part of UNDP’s democratic governance assistance worldwide, through which UNDP helps nations build democratic frameworks to improve representation, accountability, and transparency for the benefit of citizens.

UNDP has a long-standing partnership with the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) and the Center for Continuous Electoral Training (CCET) aiming at advancing the democratic electoral processes in Moldova by consolidating the transparency and efficiency of elections’ management, modernization of electoral IT solutions and enhancing the inclusiveness and participation of voters. This partnership, which spans over 10 years, resulted in the establishment of strong professional institutions, development of a modern State Automated Information System “Elections” (SAISE), the enhancement of the State Register of Voters’ accuracy and the design and implementation of effective long-term civic and voter education instruments. Throughout the last electoral cycles, the CEC and CCET, with the continuous UNDP support, have demonstrated strengthened capacities and, despite challenges and persistent financial limitations faced by the institutions, delivered “well-administered elections” as attested by the OSCE/ODIHR Observation Missions.

Since 2017, the Project “Enhancing democracy in Moldova through inclusive and transparent elections” supports the Central Electoral Commission to enhance the transparency and inclusiveness of the electoral process in Moldova by ensuring a more independent and credible electoral administration and better informed and pro-active citizens. Building on the sustainable results achieved during its first phase (2017 – 2020), the objectives of the current Project phase (2020 – 2023) are to:

- Enhance the inclusiveness of the electoral process by increasing the functional and technical capacities of the State Automated Information System “Elections” (SAISE);
- Enhance the political participation of citizens by setting up and implementing the voters’ information and civic education programs;
- Strengthen the capacity for effective and coherent oversight and monitoring on political party financing; and
- Improve the legal and regulatory framework to respond to the EOM recommendations.

To achieve its objectives and ensure the sustainability of results, the Project will further enhance strategic partnerships and will engage with key stakeholders, including public institutions, civil society organizations and the donor community. The Project shall continue to support the CEC and CCET in implementing extensive civic education and voter information programs following their strategic documents.

Citizens worldwide, in addition to the lack of information, are facing the challenge of media manipulation through a variety of techniques, such as fake news, populist assertions, propaganda, etc. These pervasive

¹ The Small Grants Programme - Democracy 2021 is implemented under the support of the “Enhancing Democracy in Moldova through Inclusive and Transparent Elections” Project (Phase II).

problems are also present in Moldova, where the electoral processes are prone to misinformation that often leads to a lack of trust in the electoral process.

It is vitally important to support citizens' ability to assess information enabling Moldovan men and women to have an informed opinion, critically assess electoral and democratic processes and hold institutions to account.

The goal of the Project's programs is to inform the public, including different target and vulnerable groups (youth, women, linguistic minorities and people with disabilities) about the electoral and democratic processes, as well as to improve the communication between the CEC, citizens and other relevant stakeholders.

Considering the above, the EDMITE Project (Phase II) announces a
Call for Proposals for the Small Grants Programme – Democracy 2021.

OVERALL OUTCOME OF THE SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME – DEMOCRACY 2021: Strengthened capacities and enhanced knowledge in electoral area of Moldovan citizens through tailored civic and voter education activities by:

- addressing their existing electoral information gaps;
- providing equal participatory and engagement conditions in the electoral process; and
- raising awareness among disadvantaged and vulnerable groups on the non-discrimination provisions of the electoral framework.

2. IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME AND PROJECT SIZE

The proposed Projects should be implemented between **April – December 2021**.

The maximum amount the Applicants can request should not exceed **20,000 USD**.

3. ELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS

Entities eligible to submit Project Proposals should meet all the following criteria:

- be a non-profit (NGO) or civil society (CSO) organization registered in the Republic of Moldova;
- demonstrate a working experience of at least 2 (two) years in the area of civic engagement and/or voter education;
- represent and/or work with clearly identifiable target group(s);
- be able to organize and carry out activities in the area of civic and voter education within the required timeframe;
- have the organizational capacities (staff, experts, trainers) to be directly responsible for the conceptualization, management and implementation of the proposed Project;
- be a distinct/dedicated Project Proposal and not part of an existing Grant Program financially covered by other donors/entities;
- submit only 1 (one) Project Proposal per organization under the current Call of Proposals;

4. SPECIFIC GRANTS PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The proposed Projects should pursue a long-term vision, which should result in the establishment of a sustainable partnership with the target groups/ beneficiaries - for future exchange and distribution of information.

Applicants will identify the specific needs and priorities of their target group(s), which will be addressed through their Project Proposal.

A key requirement under SGP – Democracy 2021 is that all proposed activities should be planned with due consideration of the COVID-19 safety measures and official requirements.

4.1. Target groups

The target groups can include, but not be limited to²:

- youth;
- women, including from marginalized groups;
- elderly people;
- citizens currently residing abroad;
- citizens from ATU Gagauzia;
- citizens residing in the localities from the Security Zone and left bank of the Nistru River;
- linguistic minorities;
- citizens with different types of disabilities;
- distinct rural or urban citizen groups.

The Applicants may cover more than one target group as part of their activities.

The type, number and brief characteristic (including specific needs) of the target group(s) shall be stated in the Grant Application Form.

Only Project Proposals clearly defining a reason for the choice of the target group(s) will be eligible.

4.2. Activities

All planned activities stated in the Project Proposal must support the overall Outcome of the SGP – Democracy 2021.

Activities should be clearly defined, the Project should have SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-limited) outputs and deliverables, and demonstrate value-for-money.

Activities should demonstrate a good knowledge of the needs of the target group(s) and identify the best way to engage with the target group(s) on civic and voter education.

All proposed activities should actively engage the target group(s) through innovative approaches (designed with due consideration to the COVID-19 health safety measures).

Simple training activities shall not be accepted. Only applications detailing a method of active engagement with the target groups using creative and innovative approaches will be eligible.

Note: All Applicants are asked to undertake from 2 to 6 electoral practical sessions, simulating the voting process in at least two locations for their target group(s). This exercise will be additional to the activities proposed by the Applicant and funds shall be indicated separately in the Project Proposal Budget. Materials and training of electoral practice session facilitators will be provided by the CEC/CCET after the initiation of the Project.

Eligible activities

- Awareness-raising activities, including elaboration and distribution of audio-visual and printed materials.
- Online activities that use social media and modern technologies to convey informational and educational messages (in various formats) to large or targeted audiences.
- Activities that use traditional and emerging media to convey informational and educational messages (in various formats) to large audiences. *While these activities might be primarily a one-way communication, they could be complemented by modern feedback techniques (e.g., surveys, online interaction, etc.) that will engage the audience and have an impact.*

² Applicants are strongly encouraged to refer to the *Study on Equality Perceptions and Attitudes in the Republic of Moldova* (http://md.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/moldova/docs/pub/ENG-Studiu%20Perceptii%202015_FINAL_2016_Imprimat.pdf) which identifies a total of 14 groups of population considered to be most vulnerable and marginalized in the Republic of Moldova

- Direct / peer-to-peer interactions, practical sessions and election simulations, conducted in accordance with the COVID-19 health safety measures.
- Civic and voter education through cultural activities.

4.3. Elaborated materials

Information and civic education materials pertaining to the proposed activities shall be elaborated by selected Grantees, based on the SGP – Democracy 2021 visibility guideline provided by the UNDP Project. All information and visibility materials (pens, T-shirts, bags, banners, posters, etc.) to be produced by the Grantees shall be submitted for approval to the UNDP Project.

In case of information and electoral practice sessions, the required electoral equipment and source materials will be provided by the CEC and CCET (in the Romanian and Russian languages).

If an Applicant targets a specific **linguistic minority**³ (or citizen groups with special needs) then it shall plan the necessary translation or adjustment of the provided materials (to not exceed 2% of the overall Project budget).

5. PROJECT BUDGET

The budget of the proposed Project should:

- be in US Dollars (USD);
- correspond to the Project Activity Plan, as described in the Project Proposal;
- not exceed the total of 20,000 USD;
- contain a detailed breakdown of expenses and clear information about the way the funds will be spent;
- contain the required election simulation practice sessions (from 2 to 6) as described above;
- be realistic and cost efficient;

The Grants will be disbursed to the selected Grantees according to the approved budgets in multiple tranches (up to three).

In-kind contributions (premises, equipment, vehicles, etc.) of the Applicant or partner organization (if applicable) in the Project implementation, are to be indicated in the Application Form (part "Project Description"). However, in the budget of the Project Proposal, the Applicant should indicate only financial contributions (if any).

Budget restrictions:

- maximum 3% of the overall budget can be used for the procurement of specific small equipment and devices needed to conduct certain information/training activities (e.g. hearing aids, magnifying glasses);
- maximum 3% of the overall budget can be used to cover the costs related to the paid broadcast/online promotion of materials and information pertaining to the implemented Project;
- maximum 2% of the overall budget can be used to cover the costs related to translation or adjustment of materials in minority languages.

Ineligible expenses:

- Procurement of video, audio, IT or other equipment (except the small equipment mentioned above) as well as infrastructure procurement;
- Public display of information (e.g., rent of billboard);
- Activities already financially covered by another grant Project/other persons;
- Expenses incurred before the Contract has been signed (including expenses related to the submission of the Project Proposal);

³ Minority languages relevant for Moldova: Russian, Ukrainian, Gagauz, Bulgarian, Romani

- Coverage of current costs of the organization, unless it is clearly related to the Project goals;
- Provision of financial support or coverage of expenses that have already received funding from other sources;
- Sponsorship for participation at workshops, seminars and conferences;
- Individual educational scholarships;
- Fines, penalties or exchange rate losses (if any).

6. DOCUMENTS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE APPLICATION PACKAGE

The Application Package shall include the following documents / materials:

- **Application Form** (which will include the requested budget and activity timelines), filled either in Romanian, English or Russian. *Handwritten Application Forms will not be accepted.* The submitted Application Form shall include sufficiently detailed data, in particular with respect to the means of achieving the Project’s objectives and the way through which the target group(s) will be determined and reached through the planned activities.

The Application Form is attached to the Application Guide and also can be requested from Mrs. Eva Bounegru/ UNDP Project Manager (eva.bounegru@undp.org).

- **Copy of the Registration Certificate** demonstrating the legal status of the Applicant⁴;
- **Declaration of Partnership** (if applicable) signed by Parties;
- **Resumes/ CVs of the team members** to be involved in the implementation of the proposed Project (compiled in the same format for the entire team);
- **Brief overview of the previous activities implemented by the Applicant** (including recommendation letters from other Donors, reports, newsletters, brochures, links to other relevant materials/ information) to demonstrate the experience and ability to implement the proposed Project in accordance with the requirements under SGP – Democracy 2021;
- **Other relevant materials** to increase credibility of the Applicant and to complement the Project’s justification.

The complete **Application Package** shall be sent by email to Mrs. Eva Bounegru at the following email: eva.bounegru@undp.org. The email title / subject shall be **“SGP – Democracy 2021”**.

The deadline for submission of proposals is 25th of February 2021, at 16:00

7. INFORMATION SESSION FOR APPLICANTS

The UNDP Project will organize 1 on-line information session for potential Applicants to address final questions regarding the application procedure and/or the content of the Project Proposals. Representatives of entities willing to apply under the SGP – Democracy 2021 are invited to attend the information session, as per details below:

Date / time	Platform / link
Monday / February 8 th , 2021 14:00	ZOOM application
<i>Languages of the session – Romanian and Russian</i>	<i>Link will be provided by email to the organizations that confirmed their participation</i>

⁴ Organizations targeting Diaspora locations have to be registered in the Republic of Moldova

All interested Applicants are requested to confirm their participation by **February 4th, 2021, 17.00** to Ms. Cristina Panov at cristina.panov@undp.org or by phone at 060010307 with copy to Mrs. Eva Bounegru at eva.bounegru@undp.org.

8. EVALUATION PROCESS

Applications sent by email should not exceed 5 MB in size. Applications larger than 5 MB should be split into several messages and each message subject should indicate its sequence (e.g., "part x of y") along with the title "SGP-Democracy 2021". All submissions are to be confirmed by a reply within two hours. If you do not receive a confirmation by email in this timeframe, please, contact the UNDP Project by phone at 060010307. *Incomplete applications or applications submitted after the deadline shall not be examined.*

Upon the expiration of the deadline, a three-stage selection process will take place.

Stage I: Preliminary evaluation of Project Proposals (short-listing)

During this stage, the UNDP Project will verify the administrative compliance and eligibility of the Applicants, including if:

- the Application package is complete, and the Application Form is duly filled in;
- the Applicant meets the eligibility criteria (as stipulated above in paragraph 3);
- the Project Proposal corresponds to the required implementation period and budget threshold;
- the Project Proposal supports the overall Outcome of the SGP – Democracy 2021.

Stage II: Technical evaluation of Project Proposals

During this stage, the UNDP Project (designated Selection Committee) will verify the compliance of the submitted Project Proposals with the stated objective and priorities of the SGP – Democracy 2021.

Applicants that receive the highest rankings (but not less than 65 points out of 100) will be recommended for final approval by the EDMITE (Phase II) Project Board.

Criteria for the Technical Evaluation of the Project Proposals

Quality and Relevance of the Project Proposal	
Description	Points obtainable
Is the scope of the Project well defined and how well does it correspond to the outcome of the Small Grants Programme?	5
Have the important aspects of the Project been addressed in sufficient details?	5
Have the Project's target group been clearly identified?	5
What is the degree of the Project's sustainability?	5
Is the Project mainstreaming gender and human rights aspects?	5
Subtotal	25 points
Proposed Methodology, Approach and Implementation Plan	
Description	Points obtainable
Is the proposed methodology appropriate for the Project?	15
Is the sequence of activities and the planning logical, realistic and promise efficient implementation of the Project?	10
What is the degree of Project' novelty /creativity/ innovation?	10

What is the total number of direct beneficiaries (up to 3,000 – 5 pts., more than 3,000 – 10 pts.).	10
Subtotal	45 points
Applicant's qualification, capacity and experience	
Description	Points obtainable
What is the Applicant's experience in Project management?	5
What is the degree of experience of the proposed implementation team?	5
Are the resources required for the implementation of the planned activities available (e.g. premises, equipment, transportation, etc.)?	5
Subtotal	15 points
Project budget	
Description	Points obtainable
Is the Project budget clearly detailed and justified?	5
Are the expenses realistic and do they match the Project activities?	10
Subtotal	15 points
TOTAL	100 points

Maximum obtainable points per Project is 100. Only Project Proposals that have accumulated more than 65 points will be recommended to the EDMITE II Project Board for further consideration.

Stage III: Approval of the Grantees

During this stage, the EDMITE (Phase II) Project Board will consider and approve the Project Proposals recommended for financing and implementation under the Small Grants Programme – Democracy 2021. All entities that submitted their Application Package will be informed about the outcome of the evaluation process.

9. METHODOLOGICAL GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT TO THE SELECTED GRANTEES

For the selected Grantees, the UNDP Project, in cooperation with CEC and CCET, will provide a specialized **training of trainers** which will take place during a one-day **induction event** (to be organized online in April 2021).

During the induction event, multiple representatives of each Grantee will be invited and trained on specific tools and techniques to deliver civic education trainings/ activities, as well as will be advised on certain aspects of the proposed activities.

The induction event will also enable the Grantees to fine tune their Projects and crowdsource creative ideas and solutions for Project implementation.

Participation at the online induction event is be mandatory for all Grantees.

10. ANNEXES:

1. Application Form (English, Romanian and Russian versions in Word format)
2. Budget Template (English, Romanian and Russian versions in Excel format)