



PROGRAMUL DE COOPERARE ELVEȚIANO-ROMÂN
SWISS-ROMANIAN COOPERATION PROGRAMME

Thematic Fund Partnership and
Expert Fund

Partnership Block Grant

Guidelines for Applicants

Call for Proposals 2014

March 2014

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Abbreviations

AA	Activity Agreement
CHF	Swiss Francs
CSDF	Civil Society Development Foundation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EA	Executing Agency
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland)
EU	European Union
GEC	Grant Evaluation Committee
KEK-CDC	KEK – CDC Consultants
NCU	National Coordination Unit
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PF	Partnership Fund
REPF	Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation
SCO	Swiss Contribution Office, Bucharest
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SIB	Swiss Intermediate Body
SRCP	Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme
SteeCom	Steering Committee
VAT	Value Added Tax

1 General Information about the Programme

The Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme is a part of a non-refundable aid offered by the Swiss Federal Council to 12 European member states who joined between 2004 and 2007. Switzerland's support is an expression of solidarity with new EU member states and puts the ground work for stable economic and political connections with these countries.

The Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme aims to:

- contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities between Romania and more advanced countries of the enlarged European Union, and
- contribute within Romania to the reduction of economic and social disparities between the dynamic urban centers and the structurally weak peripheral regions.

The Swiss contribution is an important element of the bilateral relations between Switzerland and Romania. The Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme shall enhance the visibility of bilateral relations and provide room for a good use of Swiss knowledge and expertise. Supporting measures in the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme shall pursue a sustainable, economically and socially balanced development.

The Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme is guided by the following principles: transparency, social inclusion, equal opportunities and rights, environmental sustainability, commitment to all actors involved, subsidiarity and decentralization.

Under this Programme different financing instruments have been set up. These Guidelines for Applicants are related to the second Call for Proposals under the Partnership Block Grant for the financing of joint projects of Swiss-Romanian institutional partnerships.

In 2011, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) selected a consortium formed by **KEK-CDC Consultants** (www.kek.ch), **Civil Society Development Foundation** (www.fdsc.ro) and **Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation** (www.repf.ro) as the Swiss Intermediate Body for managing and administrating the Partnership and Expert Fund.

The Partnership Block Grant is an instrument within the Thematic Fund Partnership and Expert Fund (TF PF & EF).

2 Objectives of the Partnership Block Grant

Purpose

The general objective of the Partnership Block Grant is to promote and/or enhance institutional partnerships between Romanian and Swiss partners in order to contribute to the solution of specific development challenges, to strengthen the capacities and structures of the Romanian institutional partners, to benefit from Swiss added value and to contribute to the strengthening of the partnerships. In particular partnerships based on personal engagement and voluntary commitment should be honoured and strengthened.

Priorities shall be given to institutional partnerships between Romanian and Swiss non-profit organizations, governmental and other public organizations, territorial entities and social partners that tackle relevant development challenges.

The progress and achievements of the projects should be followed up by **programme indicators**¹. The selection of the programme indicators to be used will depend on the concrete objectives and activities of the project.

Envisaged projects

The overall indicative amount available under the second round is **CHF 3,183,641.76** (CHF 1,000,000 for small grants and CHF 2,183,641.76 for large grants). However, the Steering Committee can decide to reallocate funds from the small to the large grants scheme or vice versa if there are unallocated funds in one of the grant schemes.

Under this Call for Proposals, two types of projects are envisaged, respectively:

	Small grants	Large grants
Grant amount	between CHF 10,000.00 and CHF 100,000.00	between CHF 100,001.00 and CHF 250,000.00
Duration	between 18 and 36 months	between 18 and 36 months
Financial allocation	CHF 1,000,000.00	CHF 2,183,641.76

Number of proposals per applicant

An applicant may **submit only 1 (one) application** per Call for Proposals, either for small grants or for large grants. Should the applicant submit more than 1 (one) application, all applications will be rejected on this sole basis.

¹ Through the following programme indicators:

- Enhanced quality of partnerships between Swiss and Romanian institutions
- Most significant change based on Swiss knowledge and expertise
- Most significant insight Swiss partners gained through engagement
- Proportion of Swiss financing per Romanian partner
- Number of people (men/women) that benefited from Swiss knowledge and expertise
- Level of exchange (number of persons, ideas, tools, frequency of exchange visits)
- Level of cooperation in local networks
- Number of partners on the Romanian and Swiss side
- Number of workshops for good practice and learning transfer

3 Rules for this Call for Proposals

3.1 Eligibility criteria

3.1.1 For the applicant

In order to be eligible for a grant, the potential applicants may be:

- non-governmental and non-profit organisations, with a legal status and the headquarters in Romania, organised and managed according to the Romanian enforced laws regarding the NGOs, respectively: association, foundation, federation constituted according to the provisions of GO 26/2000 or the Law 21/1924 regarding associations and foundations, with subsequent modifications and completions;
- Romanian local and central public authorities, public institutions/agencies, deconcentrated public services at a local level;
- Romanian territorial entities;
- Romanian social partners meaning nationally recognized and representative trade unions and employers' organisations.

In addition to the criteria mentioned above, the potential applicants must also:

- have legal personality, be managed and organised according to the Romanian enforced laws **and**
- be able, according to their statutes/regulations, to act in the domain addressed by the project **and**
- be directly responsible for the preparation and implementation of the project, not acting as an intermediary.

Non eligible applicants include:

- the entities who do not meet all criteria mentioned above,
- political parties,
- religious structures (religious denominations, religious associations etc. organized and managed according to the law 489/2006 on the freedom of religion and the general status of denominations),
- natural persons,
- for-profit entities,
- entities (EAs and partner/s) already involved in projects financed through the 1st round of Call for Proposals of the Partnership Block Grant.

Potential applicants **may not be awarded grants if**:

- (a) they are bankrupt, are entered in judicial administration or are under liquidation, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- (b) they are guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means;
- (c) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes to the state budget in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established;

- (d) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization or any other illegal activity detrimental to financial interests, without evidence of substantial correction measures taken in the past years;
- (e) they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations in connection with a procurement procedure or other grant award procedure financed by the Swiss Government or other international donors;
- (f) they are subject to a conflict of interests with the organizations or persons who are directly or indirectly involved in the grant award procedure;
- (g) they are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Swiss Intermediate Body as a condition of participation in the Call for Proposals or fail to supply these information.

Each applicant must submit a Declaration of Eligibility (Annex III) stating that the applicant and partner/s are eligible (meet all the eligibility criteria listed above). The Declaration of Eligibility shall be filled in, signed (hand writing signature), stamped, dated and submitted in original, together with the Application.

3.1.2 Partnerships and eligibility criteria for the partner/s

Given the objectives of the Partnership Block Grant, under this Call for Proposals it is **mandatory to have (at least) one partner from Switzerland**.

In order to be eligible, the Swiss partner/s must be:

- non-governmental and non-profit organisation/s, such as associations and foundations organised and managed according to the enforced laws from the country of origin;
- governmental and public organisation/s (e.g. educational, cultural institutions or health organisations);
- territorial entities such as cantons and communes;
- social partners (nationally recognized and representative trade unions, employers' organisations).

All partners from Switzerland involved in the project must be legally constituted, be non-profit, act in the domain addressed by the project and develop relevant activities within the project. The application should clearly show the value added for both sides as a result of the implementation of the project.

Non eligible partner/s from Switzerland include:

- political parties,
- religious structures (religious denominations, religious associations etc.),
- natural persons,
- non-governmental organizations that receive regular programme credit from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)²,
- for-profit entities,

² Please refer to http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/About_SDC/Invitations_to_tender/Contributions_for_NGO

- non-governmental organizations whose core business is international cooperation and without constituency in Switzerland or without sufficient connection to Swiss institutions,
- entities (Swiss partner/s) already involved in projects financed through the 1st round of Call for Proposals of the Partnership Block Grant.

Besides the compulsory partnership, the applicant may have as well **Romanian partner/s** such as:

- non-governmental and non-profit organisations with the headquarters in Romania, organised and managed according to the Romanian enforced laws regarding the NGOs, respectively: association, foundation, federation constituted according to the provisions of GO 26/2000 or the Law 21/1924 regarding associations and foundations, with subsequent modifications and completions;
- Romanian local and central public authorities, public institutions/agencies and deconcentrated public services at a local level;
- Romanian territorial entities,
- social partners, meaning nationally recognized and representative trade unions, employers' organisations.

In addition, the Romanian partner/s **must also**:

- have legal personality, be managed and organized according to the Romanian enforced laws, and
- be able, according to their statutes/regulations, to act in the domain addressed by the project.

The supplementary conditions regarding the eligibility of the applicant are also applicable to all partner/s, see conditions from (a) to (g) above.

Non eligible partner/s from Romania includes:

- the entities who do not meet all the criteria mentioned above,
- political parties,
- religious structures (religious denominations, religious associations etc. organized and managed according to the law 489/2006 on the freedom of religion and the general status of denominations),
- natural persons,
- for-profit entities,
- entities (EAs and partner/s) already involved in projects financed through the 1st round of Call for Proposals of the Partnership Block Grant.

Please note that entities from other countries than Romania or Switzerland are not eligible as partners under this Call for Proposals.

It is required that partnership agreement/s are signed by all organizations involved in the implementation of the project, showing the role and responsibilities of each party. The applicant may sign partnership agreement/s with each of the partner/s or one partnership agreement with all the organizations involved. In case there will be only one partnership agreement signed with all partners, this must be in English language. In case there will be separate agreements signed with the partners, the one with the Swiss partner/s must be in English language, the agreements with the Romanian partner/s (if the case), may be submitted in Romanian.

The applicant shall act as the lead organization for implementing the project and, if selected, will represent all partners and will sign the Activity Agreement for awarding the grant amount, with the SIB representative (CSDF/ REPF).

3.1.3 Eligible projects

Location of the project

The activities of a project must take place mainly in Romania. Nevertheless, exceptions are possible for selective events such as small parts of activities within projects which involve know-how exchange, trainings, study visits, participation in seminars/conferences etc. that could also take place abroad (in Switzerland or other countries).

Thematic areas

There is no specific thematic area. Activities could take place in the following thematic areas, but are not limited to:

- **social access and community development** (e.g. efficiency of the local authorities/ organizations in providing services to citizens, services for community, advocacy, social policies in favour of vulnerable groups etc.);
- **environment** (e.g. improvement of environmental policies, promoting environmental protection and improvement, promoting community based environmental decision making etc.);
- **democracy** (e.g. promoting participatory democracy, human rights protection, responsibility, accountability and integrity of public institutions and authorities, social dialogue etc.);
- **education** (e.g. human resources development, quality assurance standards and mechanisms, studies, researches, increasing access to education, lifelong learning etc.).

Projects envisaging other thematic areas could also be supported, provided they present a clear and pertinent justification for proposing or addressing the specific objectives of the Partnership Block Grant.

The proposed projects should focus on existing partnerships or cooperation experience between Romanian and Swiss organizations/ institutions. Nevertheless, new partnerships are not excluded. Specific activities that could be included in the projects can take the following forms: know-how transfer, good practice exchange, joint strategy development, conferences, meetings, information activities, study visits, and internships, etc.

All applications shall respect the principles of **sustainable development** (economic and social development, environmental protection), **good governance**, **gender equality** and **social inclusion**.

Visibility actions

Each project must foresee specific visibility actions in order to inform stakeholders and the general public about the support provided through the SRCP and the benefits arising from it. The scope of information and promotion activities should be planned in a reasonable and efficient manner, with due consideration of the assumed objectives and requirements connected with the project promotion. Communication tools should be chosen depending on the specificity of the project. The resources assigned for the project promotion should correspond to its size, type and objectives. The applicant should also ensure that the message (including the

communication tools and language) is adjusted to the group of recipients as well as to the nature and impact of the project.

In all communication and visibility activities the Communication Strategy of the SRCP, the concept and guidelines for its implementation as well as further indications by the Working Group Communication have to be respected. Please carefully read the information made available at:

<http://www.swiss-contribution.admin.ch/romania/en/Home/Communication/Instruments>

During implementation you will receive further indications through the Internal Newsletter of the Working Group Communication as well as ad-hoc guidance at your request from the SIB.

Please also note that visibility actions may also be foreseen in Switzerland by the Swiss partner/s for promoting the project and the support provided through the SRCP.

The applicants will detail visibility activities in the Application Form.

Non eligible projects

The following types of projects are not eligible:

- projects aiming solely or substantially for academic research, feasibility studies, conferences and other one-off events, individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
- projects aiming solely individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- projects for emergency support, except if they form an indispensable part of a project;
- projects including re-granting activities (i.e. using the granted funds to make grants or loans to other organisations or natural/legal persons);
- projects consisting of an annual programme of running activities (the application must be for a specific project, i.e. a set of defined & related activities with identifiable outcomes within a definite time-frame);
- projects already financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation or other donors.

3.1.4 Eligible costs

In order to be eligible, the costs of the project must fulfil the following conditions:

- be necessary for carrying out the project, be provided for in the budget of the project and comply with the principles of sound financial management, in particular value for money and cost-effectiveness;
- have actually been incurred by the Executing Agency or their partners during the implementing period of the project as defined in the Activity Agreement, and have been paid within the period from the date of signing the Activity Agreement and the date of submitting the final report;
- be recorded in the Executing Agency's and/ or its partner/s' accounts or tax documents, be identifiable and verifiable;
- reflect real expenditures and to be calculated according to the activities of the project;
- be made according to the laws in force in Romania and Switzerland.

A special attention is given to the costs related to the extension, rehabilitation and modernization of infrastructure must not exceed 75% of the total eligible costs of the project.

The applicant must prove the right of ownership or the right of use of the infrastructure for the entire project duration and at least 3 years after. In exceptional and duly justified cases, these costs may target buildings owned by the partner/s.

The Executing Agency must have a bank account in CHF, exclusively for the project and must keep a separate bookkeeping for the project incomes and expenses. All registrations must precisely offer details regarding the interest for the amount granted.

Annual and final external audits of the project account are compulsory for the Romanian party (EA and Romanian partner/s) and, therefore, the specific costs foreseen in the budget of the project are eligible up to a maximum of 3% of the total amount that will be audited.

A final external audit is also compulsory for the Swiss partner and specific costs are eligible to be foreseen in the budget of the project.

Direct costs

Eligible direct costs for a project are considered the costs that can be directly assigned to the project and which are in accordance with the accounting principles and internal rules used by the applicant and/or partners. The following types of costs are considered as direct costs:

- costs related to persons involved in the project (salaries, including taxes and social contributions for employees; costs related to honoraria for persons working under contracts legally concluded in case of independent activities); these costs shall be those normally borne by the applicant and partner/s; please note that the project manager can work within a project under either a labour contract or a volunteering contract;
- costs generated by the domestic and international travel for the persons involved in the project, not exceeding the thresholds provided by SDC rules; costs for transport of participants, goods, materials and transport within the locality;
- costs related to the procurement of vehicles, furniture, computers and peripherals, new or second-hand, costs related to the procurement of PC software, costs related to other equipment and goods, fiscal depreciation of the fixed assets used exclusively for this project, according to the accounting principles enforced.
- costs related to the extension, rehabilitation and modernization of infrastructure, including equipment, installations and the personnel involved in these activities.
- costs related to subcontracting³ services assigned by the applicant and/or partner/s for the project implementation (publications, studies/ researches, audit, costs for conferences/ workshops, visibility actions, other subcontracted services);
- other costs directly related to the project such as: costs for communication (phone, fax, internet, mail etc.), costs related to consumables (stationery), rent and utilities, which do not require a calculation for distributing per costs centers (projects); other direct costs as bank charges etc.;

In order to classify costs as direct costs, please note the following: a cost is considered directly attributed to the project if the cease of the project leads to the cease of the cost.

³ Subcontracting means entrusting performance of productive tasks, objectives, nonessential activities to providers that have expertise and offer the best cost-efficiency ratio

Indirect costs

The applicant and partner/s may include indirect costs in the project budget to an amount of a maximum 10% of total eligible direct costs of the project.

The indirect costs are those costs that cannot be directly assigned to the project. The indirect costs are those costs for activities, goods or services several projects benefit of, and that can be partially included under this chapter and that are related to the project's activities.

In order to calculate indirect costs the following formulas may be considered:

- number of persons involved in the project/ total number of persons within the organisation or department;
- the space used by staff involved in the project/ total space occupied by the organization or department;
- number of working hours on the project/ number of total working hours within the organization or department.

In case there are indirect costs that cannot be allocated using one of the above formulas, the applicant will apply an adequate allocation formula/ method.

Indirect costs may include:

- part of office costs such as utilities, cleaning services, rent etc.
- part of administrative costs as phone, fax, internet, mailing services etc.
- other administrative costs absolutely necessary for the successful implementation of the project, as costs related to labour contracts of administrative staff, costs of the management of the organization that is not involved directly in the project etc.
- fiscal depreciation of the fixed assets used partially on this project, according to the accounting principles enforced; the monthly depreciation rate shall be adjusted according to the degree of use for the project activities.

Non eligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- expenditures incurred by an EA before the signing of the Activity Agreement;
- VAT if it could be recovered by the EA and/or partners under national regulation;
- salaries of the public servants, except when they are covered from applicant/partner/s own financial contribution;
- interest of debt and provisions for losses or debts;
- fines and penalties;
- credits and loans to third parties;
- re-granting to third parties;
- currency exchange losses;
- expenditures of activities supported from other sources;
- individual scholarships and individual sponsorships;
- financial rewards (such as prizes in money or equivalent);
- purchases of land and purchases/construction of buildings;

- costs incurred from leasing,
- extravagant costs (alcohol, tobacco etc.).

Any bank interest accumulated on the project bank account in CHF during the implementation period of the project shall be returned to the Swiss Intermediate Body or deducted from the last instalment to be paid by the Swiss Intermediate Body.

Non eligible costs, that are necessary for implementing the project as well as any other supplementary costs incurred during the project implementation shall be borne by the applicant and partner/s.

Financing and co-financing contribution

Out of the total grant amount, a percentage of **minimum 51.00% must be allocated to the Romanian party** (applicant and, if the case, Romanian partner/s).

The grant amount for the implementation of the project shall cover **a maximum of 85.00%, respectively 90.00%** of total eligible costs, borne in Swiss Francs (CHF), according to the type of the applicant, as follows:

- if the applicant is a **public institution/authority/territorial entity**, it will receive a grant amount equivalent to **maximum 85.00%** of total eligible costs;
- if the applicant is a **NGO/social partner**, it will receive a grant amount equivalent to **maximum 90.00%** of total eligible costs.

The applicant (further Executing Agency in the implementation phase) shall be fully aware that it must bring its **own contribution** during the project implementation period of at least **15.00%**, respectively **10.00%** of total eligible costs, according to its type. The co-financing can be from its own resources (and/or partners') or from funding other than Swiss funds, EU funds, EEA and Norway Grants.

Own contribution could be totally financial (meaning cash payments, bank transfers, card payments and other financial instruments) or partially in-kind. The in-kind contribution cannot exceed 5.00% of the total eligible costs of the project. In-kind contribution may take only the following forms: work done on a voluntary basis⁴, fiscal depreciation of fixed assets (equipment, technical installations, furniture and vehicles) required for providing project related services and adjusted to the degree of use for the project activities.

3.2 Application procedures to be followed

Please read carefully and totally these Guidelines for Applicants before beginning to write the application.

An applicant may **submit only 1 (one) application** per Call for Proposals, either for small grants or for large grants. Should the applicant submit more than 1 (one) application, all applications will be rejected on this sole basis.

A preliminary step is that all applicants have to complete the online pre-registering form with information regarding the proposal to be submitted.

The form is available at www.finantare.fdsc.ro and will be filled in by the applicants until June 26, 2014.

⁴ In order to determine the work done on a voluntary basis, the time spent in project implementation (in hours/days) and the income that could be earned by a person employed on a similar position (preferably at the same organisation) shall be taken into account.

The application dossier shall be submitted in **3 (three) hard copies (1 original and 2 copies)**, together with **an electronic copy** (for example CD).

The application dossier shall be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery at the address below:

Civil Society Development Foundation
21 NervaTraian St., Bucharest, district 3, zip code 031044

The outer envelope must bear the following information:

Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme
Thematic Fund Partnership and Expert Fund, Partnership Block Grant

Name of the applicant:

Title of the project:

Contact person:

E-mail address:

The **deadline** for receiving the application dossiers is: June 26th, 2014, 17:00 local time, at CSDF office. Any application received after the deadline will be automatically rejected, even if the postmark indicates a date preceding the deadline or if the delay is due to the private courier service.

All potential applicants must periodically verify the websites www.fdsc.ro, www.repf.ro, www.kek.ch in order to stay updated with regard of any information related to this Call for Proposals or to the financing programme.

Information sessions will be organized and exact dates and locations will be announced on the websites mentioned above.

Questions related to this Call for Proposals may be sent by e-mail to partnership@fdsc.ro, no later than June 20th, 2014. Replies will be given by June 24th, 2014 at the latest. Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the website www.fdsc.ro.

3.3 Application dossier

Applications must be submitted using the templates Application Form (see Annex I), Budget of the project (Annex II), Declaration of Eligibility (Annex III). These templates are all available on www.fdsc.ro and www.repf.ro.

Please carefully complete all the requested templates as clearly as possible so that they can be assessed properly.

Before starting to write the project proposal (Annex I), please read all sections of the Application Form in order to have an overview of the contents. When editing the application, please erase the grey indications for completion (as these appear in the format). For completing the formats, please use the font Arial 11, non-italic, black. It is not allowed to erase sections of the Application Form – if not the case for completion, please mention N/A.

Before starting to fill in the Budget of the project (Annex II), please carefully read the worksheets “useful information” that should help to fill in the template. When budgeting the costs needed for implementing the project, please also take into consideration the procurement rules which need to be applied during the implementation. The procurement rules are part of the package of additional documents that is published together with the launching documents for this Call for Proposals. Please note that the format of the Budget contains predefined cells and formulas and correlated worksheets. All costs included will be expressed in Swiss Francs (CHF), will include VAT and need to be in close relation to the proposed activities.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted. The language used in writing the proposal is **English**.

The original application dossier must include the following documents:

- 1) **Application Form** (Annex I), in English, signed (hand writing signature) and stamped (only in the indicated section) in original;
- 2) **Budget of the project** (Annex II), only the following sheets in hard copy: A. Budget summary, and B. Sources of funding. The costs will be expressed in CHF. An electronic version with all worksheets of the budget file will be attached to the application in an editable way by Microsoft Office 2007;
- 3) **Declaration of Eligibility** (Annex III), in English, signed (hand writing signature) and stamped in original;
- 4) **Partnership agreement/s** in English and Romanian (if the case), in original or copy, signed between all the organizations involved in implementing the project, showing the role and responsibilities for each party (see section 3.1.2);
- 5) **CVs** of 3 members of the core staff of the Romanian applicant and 1 key team member for each partner in the project (Swiss and Romanian, if the case), in English.⁵

Do not forget to include the electronic copy of the entire application dossier, together with 3 (three) hard copies (1 original and 2 copies). The electronic copy must be identical to the hard copy. The electronic copy should include the Application Form and the Budget of the project (in an editable way by Microsoft Office 2007) and all other scanned documents from the application dossier listed under this section.

Note: not including any of the documents listed above from 1 to 4 leads to exclusion of the project during the administrative compliance and eligibility verification!

3.4 Evaluation and selection procedure

All applications received under the terms and conditions provisioned for this Call for Proposals, shall be subject to the selection conducted by the Grant Evaluation Committee constituted of 3 independent evaluators. The selection process comprises the following phases:

- 1) Opening of the received applications,
- 2) Administrative compliance and eligibility verification,
- 3) Technical and financial evaluation.

⁵ Please note that the persons included under budget line 1.3 Honoraria are subject to the procurement rules and CVs cannot be provided with the Application dossier.

3.4.1 Opening of the received applications

All applications⁶ received will be registered and appointed with a reference number. All applications submitted within the deadline are opened within the first meeting of the Grant Evaluation Committee. The applications submitted after the deadline will be automatically excluded from the start, without being opened.

Following the opening meeting of the GEC, a complete list of all applications received within the deadline is drafted. All applicants will be informed, via e-mail, about the reference number for their proposal. This number will be further used in the correspondence between the SIB and the applicant. Applicants that submitted their application after the deadline will be informed about the exclusion of their proposal based on the contact information mentioned on the envelope.

3.4.2 Administrative compliance and eligibility verification

All applications received within the deadline will be assessed by the SIB for administrative compliance and eligibility. They will be checked whether each application meets the imposed conditions and requirements included in the current Guidelines for Applicants. For this purpose, a grid with dichotomic checkpoints (Yes/No) shall be filled in for each application.

Requests for clarifications and/or additional information will only be sent to applicants when the information provided is not clear enough and sufficient to allow an objective assessment of the administrative compliance and eligibility of the application, according to the criteria set in the grid below. Please note that documents cannot be requested later on if they are already missing in the application dossier.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE	YES	NO
1. the Application Form (Annex I), edited in English language and signed and stamped in original		
2. the Budget of the project, including the following sheets in hard copy: A. Budget summary and B. Sources of funding (Annex II), is provided in CHF currency		
3. the Declaration of Eligibility (Annex III) in English, signed and stamped, in original		
4. Partnership Agreement/s signed between all the organizations involved in the project (in English and Romanian, according to section 3.1.2)		

ELIGIBILITY	YES	NO
1. The applicant is eligible		
2. Partner/s is/are eligible		
3. The grant amount requested from the Partnership Fund does not exceed 85.00% (public institution/authority/territorial entity), respectively 90.00% (NGO/social partner) from the total eligible costs, depending on the type of the applicant		
4. The grant requested is of minimum CHF 10,000.00 and maximum CHF 100,000.00 in case of small grants and of minimum CHF 100,001.00 and maximum CHF 250,000.00 in case of large grants		

⁶Application means the entire application dossier

5. Minimum 51.00% of the grant amount is allocated to the Romanian party (applicant and, if the case, Romanian partner/s).		
6. The duration of the project respects the limit set up in the Guidelines for applicants from 18 to 36 months and is in accordance with the type of grant requested		
7. The in-kind contribution does not exceed 5.00% from the total eligible costs of the project		
8. The costs related to extension, rehabilitation and modernization of infrastructure (see budget heading 6 from Annex II) do not exceed 75.00% from the total eligible costs of the project		

Note: In case of inconsistencies between the amounts mentioned in the Application Form and those included in the Budget of the project, the figures from the Budget (Sources of funding) shall prevail. Please also note that, when checking the percentages, the amounts mentioned in this worksheet will prevail.

Proposals that do not meet all criteria regarding their administrative compliance and eligibility will be excluded from the further evaluation process.

The applicants will be informed via e-mail whether their proposal passed or not the administrative compliance and eligibility verification.

After receiving this information the applicants have the possibility to submit to CSDF a request for reconsideration of this decision. The request must be sent in writing to partnership@fdsc.ro or fax no.021 310 01 80, within 7 working days beginning with the date of having received the information, mentioning the exact reasons for which such a request is well justified. The final decision will be transmitted to the applicant by the SIB within 15 working days, beginning with the date of receiving the request for the reconsideration of the decision.

3.4.3 Technical and financial evaluation

For each project under the technical and financial evaluation, the following grid will be filled in for each evaluation criteria:

	Maximum score
1. Relevance of the project	25
1.1 Relevance of the project to the objectives of the Swiss – Romanian Cooperation Programme, TF Partnership and Expert Fund and Partnership Block Grant	5
1.2 The need of the project is justified	5
1.3 The proposed project has a clear intervention logic	5
1.4 The target groups and beneficiaries are strategically chosen, clearly defined and quantified	5
1.5 The expected results of the project are feasible	5
2. Activities, working plan	25
2.1 The objectives of the project are specific, measurable and realistic	5
2.2 The activities are well chosen, realistic, feasible and contribute to achieving the project objectives	5
2.3 The work plan is feasible and the risks are identified and properly	5

addressed	
2.4 The expected results are quantified (indicators) and measurable through the proposed indicators	5
2.5 Promotion and visibility activities are clearly described, adapted to the specificity of the target audience, project objectives and the financing programme	5
3. The budget of the project	10
3.1 The costs proposed are in close relation with the activities and the expected results	5
3.2 The costs proposed are realistic, justified and feasible	5
4. Ownership, sustainability and innovation	20
4.1 The project foresees community participation (local ownership)	5
4.2 There are foreseen measures likely to insure sustainability of the project	5
4.3 The project contains elements of added value to both parties (new and/or innovative organizational or technical approaches)	5
4.4 The project contains information on networking/cooperation with other stakeholders and/or synergies with other projects/initiatives	5
5. The applicant and partner/s	20
5.1 The history of the Swiss-Romanian partnership/ cooperation experience	5
5.2 The organizational set-up and the team structure is proper for implementing the proposed project (number, roles, responsibilities, project steering)	5
5.3 Level of the requested professional expertise and qualifications of the applicant, partner/s and of the proposed team in project management	5
5.4 Level of the requested professional expertise and qualifications of the applicant, partner/s and of the proposed team in the specific domain of the project	5
TOTAL	100

Note: In case the score received for the **section 1 “Relevance of the project”** of the project is less than 20 points, the application shall not be further evaluated.

Following the technical and financial evaluation by the Grant Evaluation Committee, an evaluation report will be drafted, comprising the list of projects that entered in this phase, the ranking list of the projects in descending order (in accordance with the total average score), together with the most relevant comments of the evaluators. The proposals will be classified in three groups: recommended to be financed, not recommended to be financed, projects that did not meet the minimum 20 points at section 1 „Relevance of the project“ of the evaluation grid.

The evaluation report shall be approved by the Selection Committee in a meeting. The role of the Selection Committee is to make final decisions on financing the projects.

After the approval of the evaluation report, each applicant will be individually informed via e-mail about the result of the selection process. Moreover, only in case of projects selected to be awarded for a grant, the applicants shall receive an award letter that is also stipulating the conditions to be further fulfilled in order to sign the Activity Agreement (see section 3.6

Contracting). Please note that only part of the projects recommended to be financed will actually receive a grant, according to the available amount allocated to this round of Call for Proposals.

Please note that the decision of the Selection Committee after this phase of evaluation is definitive and cannot be appealed.

3.5 Announcing the final results of the selection process

The indicative date when the final decision of the Selection Committee will be taken is December 2014, but this could be adjusted accordingly if needed.

The final list with the projects to be financed through the Partnership Block Grant, 2nd round of Call for Proposals, will be posted on the websites www.fdsc.ro, www.repf.ro and www.kek.ch, after finalizing the contracting phase.

Copies of the rejected applications can be personally retrieved (following a notification submitted via e-mail to CSDF) within 30 calendar days after having received the information about the application being rejected. After this period, the copies of applications will be destroyed. Please note that the original copy of the rejected applications will remain and be archived by the SIB. Applications received after the deadline cannot be retrieved by the applicants and will be stored by the SIB.

3.6 Contracting

All applicants with projects approved for awarding a grant shall receive an award letter, including the request for the needed documents to be submitted within the timeframe settled in order to prepare and conclude the grant contract, further named Activity Agreement.

Please find below the list of the documents requested for concluding the Activity Agreement:

For the applicant:

- **certified copy, in original**, of the notarized⁷ statute in force⁸ and the respective definitive Court Decision⁹ (for NGOs), or a certified copy of the notarized statute in force and the respective definitive Court Decision and the Court Decision recognizing the national representativity (for social partners) or copy confirmed to be true of the documents/mentions (for non-NGOs) that prove they have legal personality;
- **original certificate of registry**, for NGO applicants issued by the Court where the Executing Agency is officially registered, from a recent date, stating that the organization is not in process of dissolution or that did not submit documents in this regard;
- **original tax clearance certificate** issued by the competent fiscal authorities (General Department of Public Finance – Ministry of Public Finance);
- **original tax certificate** issued by the National Agency for Fiscal Administration (for all fiscal codes owned by the applicant);
- **original financial identification form**, according to a template to be provided, certified by the Bank where the account in **CHF** was opened especially for this project;

⁷ Or certified by lawyer

⁸ Meaning either the initial statute and all changes approved through Court decisions or the revised form of the statute (including all changes) that was also approved through Court decision

⁹ The Court decision should bear all stamps and signatures proving that it is definitive and irrevocable

- in case of projects that include costs related to infrastructure works, the Selection Committee could decide to request a certified copy¹⁰, in original, of the document that proves the right of ownership or use of the building for the entire duration of the project and at least 3 years after; additionally, in such cases, a Statement regarding the maintaining the purpose of the rehabilitated location could also be requested;
- other documents (if the case), according to the requests from the award letter (e.g. for projects which include costs related to the extension, renovation and modernization, a list with estimated quantities and materials elaborated and approved according to the laws in place).

For the Swiss partner/s: copies confirmed to be true of the documents proving that they are functioning entities (e.g. statutes, minutes of board meetings and general assemblies) in English language (but also acceptable in German, French or Italian).

For the Romanian partner/s: copies confirmed to be true of the notarized¹¹ statute in force¹² and the respective definitive Court Decision¹³ for the NGO partner/s and the Court Decision recognizing the national representativity (for social partners) OR other documents/mentions for the non NGO partner/s that prove they have legal personalities.

Please note that the statutory documents of the applicant and Romanian partner/s will be presented in Romanian and do not need to be translated in English. If the case, additional documents from the partner/s may be requested, with regard of the award letter sent to the applicant.

Additionally, CVs of the team members need to be provided.

In case the applicant meets all the necessary requests in order to sign the Activity Agreement, the contract will be concluded and the applicant becomes the Executing Agency for implementing the financed project.

The applicant will sign the Activity Agreement either with REPF (in case of projects with a thematic focus on environment) or CSDF (in all other cases).

3.7 Reporting, payment procedures and audit – rules applicable to project implementation

3.7.1 Reporting

The EAs have to submit the following types of reports for approval to the SIB:

- half-yearly report on technical and financial aspects, within 30 days after the first 6 months of each year of project implementation;
- annual technical report and annual financial report, as well as the annual audit report, within 45 days after every 12 months of project implementation;
- final technical report, final financial report and final audit report, within 60 days from the date of completion of the project implementation period.

The reports have to be submitted in English.

¹⁰ Notarized or certified by lawyer or applicant organization (confirmed to be true)

¹¹ Or certified by lawyer

¹² Idem 7

¹³ Idem 8

Note: the audit reports referring to the Romanian expenses will be submitted in English and Romanian.

3.7.2 Payments

Within the Activity Agreement (AA), the SIB will make payments to the Executing Agency, as follows:

- **An advance payment** representing 20% of the grant amount, but not exceeding 75% of the first year's budget will be released within 20 days after signing the AA and submitting the payment request according to the format included in the AA. In all cases, the advance payment will not take place before the date of commencement of the project.
- **A first instalment** representing 30% of the grant amount or the percentage representing the difference between 50% of the grant amount and the advance payment will be released based on the following documents:
 - payment request from the EA according to the format included in the AA, **and**
 - financial statement (according to the AA) submitted by the EA stating that at least 70% of the advance payment received was spent;
- **A second instalment** of 30% of the grant amount will be released based on the following documents:
 - payment request from the EA according to the format included in the AA, **and**
 - annual reports (technical, financial and audit) for the first 12 months of implementation.

In case at least 70% of both advance payment and the first instalment was not spent within the first 12 months of implementation, the annual reports will be submitted without a payment request. The payment request will be subsequently submitted together with the financial statement attesting that at least 70% of the advance payment and first instalment received was spent.

Exceptionally, in case the EA spends at least 70% from the advance payment and first instalment before the first year of implementation is reached and need to receive the next instalment before the annual reports are to be submitted, the EA may submit a payment request together with interim reports (technical, financial and audit) related to the respective period. These interim reports and payment request will not substitute the 1st annual reports which will have to be submitted in any case according to section 3.6.1 above.

- **A third instalment** of maximum 15% of the grant amount will be released based on the following documents:
 - payment request from the EA according to the format included in the AA and
 - financial statement (according to the AA) submitted by the EA stating that at least 70% of the advance payment and first and second instalments was spent.

In case the second year annual financial report together with the audit were already submitted and certifying that expenses made represent at least 70% of the advance payment and the first and second instalments, the financial statement is no longer requested and payment could be claimed based on the second year report mentioned above.

- **A final payment** representing approximately 5% of the grant amount or the balance resulting from the final report.

All payments will be made by the SIB towards the special CHF bank account of the EA, dedicated exclusively to the project.

3.7.3 Audit

The EA must submit financial reports externally audited by an independent accredited auditor, observing the audit standards enforced by law, together with the standards set up in the Terms of Reference Financial Review/ Audit, which will be part of the Activity Agreement (the Terms of Reference are part of the package of additional documents that is published together with the launching documents for this Call for Proposals) and using the audit standard ISA 805.

The frequency of the audit reports is mentioned above, under paragraph 3.7.1 Reporting.

Swiss partners must also submit a final financial report externally audited by an independent accredited auditor, observing the audit standards enforced by law, together with the standards set up in the Terms of Reference External Audit of project accounts for the Swiss partner/s, which will be part of the Activity Agreement (the Terms of Reference are part of the package of additional documents that is published together with the launching documents for this Call for Proposals).