

MARIO

Minorities | Accountability | Rights | Independence | Organizational development

Detailed eligibility criteria:

1. Small, local, rural, grass-root CSOs representing the rights of minority and vulnerable groups, including minority/community led organisations. Minority led organisations and organisations strongly rooted into minority communities will be encouraged to submit bids. The applicant will need to be registered in one of the target countries (listed) and be a not-for-profit organisation. The applicant who will have overall responsibility for the grant and will be responsible for the financial and narrative reporting.
2. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they truly represent, have a close working relationship with and the trust of one or more disadvantaged ethnic, religious or linguistic community (including migrants and refugees). The degree of disadvantage of the community in question will be a factor considered as will remote and rural beneficiary communities. Applicants will need to show that they will mainstream gender and other multiple discrimination factors in the implementation, performances, and monitoring.
4. Applicants must demonstrate their commitment and compliance to EU fundamental rights and values¹, must be non-profit making organisation or civil society organisation, be established in the target countries, prove having no public debt, comply with GDPR², anti-corruption measures and prove absence of conflict of interest. The application form will raise and clarify all those questions.
5. Applicants will be expected to show that they have basic project management skills, risk management, as well as more fundamental marketing, financial management and monitoring and reporting skills and experience. Applicants will need to show that they have or are willing to learn and put in place suitable methods for monitoring and evaluation. Applicants will need to show that they have or are willing to put in place staffing and processes to seek publicity and media coverage of the project overall.
6. Applicants will need to show that they are not in a group excluded from receiving EU funding as per practical guide 2.6.10.1.
7. Projects will need to focus on awareness raising on EU fundamental rights and values and promote it to local minority communities. The main target audiences should be members of minority communities who are unaware of the use and application of EU fundamental rights in their life such as anti-discrimination measures, Project activities may also focus on: awareness raising activities to minority communities, watchdog and monitoring activities on EU policies and rights and values under the EU Treaties and the Charter, organisation of civic platforms and civic dialogues linked to EU rights and values themes, coalitions and partnerships among CSOs and minority CSOs; advocacy to influence local policy and decision making processes. Applicants will need to be able to demonstrate how they plan to target audiences of between 500-1500 to their activities in total. Projects should be deliverable in 12 months (although the timetable will allow for some slippage plus reporting time and so will allow 15 months for round 1 projects). Applicants will need to show that they have or are willing to learn and put in place suitable methods for monitoring and evaluation. Most project should

¹ For more details on the EU Fundamental Rights and Values, visit [this link](#).

² To read the full GDPR document, visit [this link](#).

include the making and dissemination of short videos or provide audio-visual materials for dissemination and the project website.

8. To meet the financial eligibility criteria, the costs must be:

- actually incurred by the beneficiary;
- must be incurred in the project period;
- must be incurred in connection with the granted project and necessary for its implementation;
- must be identifiable and verifiable, in particular recorded in the beneficiary's accounts in accordance with the accounting standards applicable in the country where the beneficiary is established and with the beneficiary's usual cost accounting practices;
- must comply with the applicable national law on taxes, labour and social security;
- must be reasonable, justified and must comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency (best value for money/price)

9. Applicants will need to commit (and, as needed, budget) for the following in addition to the main project:

- To attend the MARIO central training event in Budapest, Hungary (**travel cost for one person must be included into the application budget**)
- To attend an exchange meeting in Brussels, Belgium (**travel cost must be included into application budget**)
- To attend in-country exchange meetings with other grantees from your country (**travel cost must be included into application budgets**)
- To benefit from legal aid and CSO Shields support if needed
- To participate at the EU Survey on Justice, Rights and Values.
- To carry out monitoring and evaluation of their activities with MRGE Support
- To provide visual or audio materials to promote their activities for media and website (costs included into their budgets)
- To contribute to externally audit the project expenditure with MRGE assistance

Trainings and Meetings

Budapest

Partners will run one MARIO central training session for each round of calls. After the final grant decisions, representatives from all of the grantee organisations will attend a 3-day training event in Budapest. Each organisation will assign one staff member: they should include those with responsibility for a range of tasks on their project which will be covered in the training and/or the areas of capacity that the assessment visits indicated needed strengthening.

Brussels

An annual exchange meeting for learning, sharing and reflection will occur near the end of each year when grants implementation approaching to its end and will involve all those CSOs receiving grants in that year. One representative from each grantee organisation must attend the meeting in Brussels.

Participating grantees will be encouraged to bring and share their project materials and achievements. It will also strengthen the network by bringing together the CSOs involved in the sub-granting to share their experiences of implementing their sub-grants, in particular lessons learned. The meeting outcome will be to make plans to sustain the network (collaborations and relationships) beyond the project.

In-country

Exchange meetings with national NGOs Partners will encourage grantee CSOs to meet and build connections to bigger national human rights or minority rights NGOs or networks. Grantees with the assistance of the Liaison Officers will identify relevant NGOs. Liaison Officers will assist in scheduling the meetings if needed. The meeting plan and costs will be included into the sub-grants. At least two meetings should take place, but some grantees might go up to four, depending on their connections and inclusion to civil society.

Application assessment criteria:

- (1) Relevance of the proposed project with the objectives of the program;
- (2) Effectiveness of the project explained through; stated objectives, output, outcome, and implementation strategy;
- (3) Realistic target(s) and capacity to deliver planned activities should be in line with the resources, capacities, and previous experiences of the applicant;
- (4) Clearly justifying a budget that represents value for money and efficiency;
- (5) Proposed project includes sustainability aspects as well.

Reporting Requirements:

1. Grantee reporting: Sub-grant management will be led by the grant agreement signed between the grantee and MRGE. Contracts will contain provisions regarding the proper use of the funds, procurement, anti-bribery, GDPR, respect to EU values, the need to request prior approval to any significant changes to any activities, the need to submit proper detailed reporting, and the need to monitor the work closely. Contracts may include specific provisions based on capacity assessment such as the obligation to carry out an organisational audit or to contract a financial specialist.
2. All grantees receiving over €15,000, over the course of the 3-year duration of the MARIO project, will be required by contract carry out either an annual organisational audit or a project audit.
3. Grants will be disbursed in 3 tranches. The first tranche (50%) after the grant agreement signed, second tranche (30%) after 6 months at the submission of the progress report to MRGE and third tranche (20 %) after final reporting with interim narrative and financial reports (including copies of receipts). Accordingly, grantees will be required by contract to report to MRGE, through:
 - Progress report after 6 months of start of implementation.
 - Final narrative and financial report (including copies of receipts).
4. The production of audio-visual materials will be an obligatory requirement for each grant. They will need to present success stories of their project and recent news of the project every 6 months. Project results and the promotion of sub-grants will be presented on MARIO' specific project website set up specifically for this project (WP4) The website will be updated every 6 months.

Grant Management and Control:

Selected organisations will be contracted by MRGE and expected to:

- participate to the EU Survey on Justice, Rights and Values;
- to carry out monitoring and evaluation of their activities with MRGE support; and
- to submit 6 months Progress report and final narrative and financial implementation reports to MRGE.

Liaison Officers will translate the applications essentials submitted in EU languages to English for the Evaluation Committee. Applicants may be asked to supply the details of two independent referees and where the team has concerns about the applicant experience or capacity, and the team may contact at least one referee to ask for their views on the potential grantee.

An evaluation committee comprising four members: the Liaison Officer of the target country, Project Coordinator or Grant Manager, MRGE's Managing Director and PILnet Senior Legal Officer will review all of the submissions and grade them according to a standard assessment grid. They will also meet on skype to discuss shortlisted projects. Shortlisted applicants will be informed, the small capacity building grants of

€250 will be awarded for capacity assessment and project review visits. Once a basic contract is signed, the funds will be transferred as soon as possible and dates for the visits will be fixed by the Liaison Officers. Potential grantees will be alerted to the probable visit schedule in the application pack.

For the very small design grants i.e., €250 (as an exception to our normal practice) completion of the assessment visit and submission of the revised programme design will be the only reporting required on these grants from unsuccessful grantees. Grantees awarded contracts will include reporting on this mini grant in their first set of progress reports.

Liaison officers (LO) will visit each applicant at their offices or in the marginalised minority community area for capacity assessment and project review visits. MRGE provides a two-stage selection process in order for CSOs with less capacity to receive assistance and better develop their ideas into fully-fledged projects.

We will provide support to applicants in the process of preparing applications through the capacity assessment and project review visits respecting principles of equal treatment and absence of conflict of interest. Potential grantees will be sent a list of documents that they should prepare for the visit (and, where possible they should send copies in advance to the team) and will also be sent a list of questions or suggestions from the evaluation committee regarding their project design. The LO visiting that organisation will have the opportunity to review the materials sent in, thus ensuring that the visit itself maximises the time by focusing on key issues.

The potential grantee will have the opportunity to discuss the questions and suggestions sent to them by the project team with their staff, beneficiaries, and any other stakeholders in advance of the visit. Each visit will last for approximately 0.5-1 day being used to discuss the substantive project design (minority community situation, plans for recruiting and training actors, creating scripts, touring, monitoring and evaluating and to assess the organisation's technical capacity e.g. by reviewing financial procedures and records, procedures for a past programmes involving gender mainstreaming, assessing existing match funding or plans to secure this, and giving the applicant feedback on previous narrative and financial reports, previous audit reports, project records and documentation, governance arrangements, communications capacity and infrastructure and so on.

Detailed reports of these visits will be kept by the Liaison Officers, and a summary will be shared with both successful and unsuccessful potential grantees. The visits will also be used to assess the training needs of the selected grantees to inform the design of the training events. If needed, the potential grantees will then have a short period of around 2-3 weeks after the visit to make final decision as to changes to the project design and budget in response to the questions, suggestions, and discussions during the visits and to submit final proposals.

Taking into consideration the visit reports and the revised bids, final decisions as to which of the shortlisted projects should be supported in each country will be made by the evaluation committee.

Finance Officer may carry out two monitoring visit per year. The Grant Manager may also carries out monitoring visit 2x year. LOs will also be able to flag gaps or delays in implementation as they will be able to closely accompany and assess all grantees performance as an average one LO will be responsible for 5 grantees in each year.

Peer review grants

In addition to the 250 EUR application support award, we will also award 1 peer learning grant of 5000 x year aimed to support peer exchange among grantees.

We will discuss with grantees whilst implementation is ongoing, opportunities to visit other projects to learn and share as peers. Visits would normally involve at least 1-2 project staff travelling and the visit would normally last at least three days. The peer review grants will cover the visits 1x year, in total 3 times. Peer review grants are 5000 EUR (total 15.000 EUR).

These visits will have three aims:

1. visiting organisation staff to learn about an aspect of the project being implemented which is particularly innovative, good practice or which has worked particularly well, that is adaptable or can be multiplied elsewhere.
2. visiting organisations staff to reflect on the progress made by the project so far and to provide that organisation with feedback on their work from a peer organisation and
3. to continue to help build relationships and networks between grantees. Again, the costs of these visits will be built into grantee budgets and ringfenced – we appreciate that a variation in costs is possible on the number of people travelling.

We will encourage the grantees to include realistic levels of cost in their budgets and will allow some flexibility i.e., for savings to be reallocated back into the main project. Each visiting and visited organisation will be required to submit a summary report to the project team detailing the points discussed, what has been learnt and their analysis of how they intend to use the trip to inform their future work. Grantees should include translation, disability inclusion costs as sign language, accessibility costs into their own budget.