



PROGRAMUL DE COOPERARE ELVEȚIANO-ROMÂN
SWISS-ROMANIAN COOPERATION PROGRAMME

Thematic Fund for Civil Society Participation

Block Grant for NGOs

Call for Proposals 2012

1st round

Summary report on the evaluation process

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1 Overview - Block Grant for NGOs

The Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme (SRCP) 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.

Under this Programme different financing instruments have been set up, including Thematic Funds.

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 (SIB) for managing and administrating two Thematic Funds within SRCP, respectively Civil Society Participation and Partnership & Expert Fund.

The Block Grant for NGOs is an instrument within the Thematic Fund for Civil Society Participation (TF CSP). This financing instrument is focusing on offering support in two major domains: social issues and environment protection, therefore two different components are envisaged: Social and Environment.

Financial allocation for the Call for proposals

The initial total allocation of CHF 5,000,000 was supplemented by CHF 5,000,000 through a reallocation from other instruments of the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme. Therefore, a total of CHF 10,000,000 is available for projects under the Block Grant for NGOs, with **CHF 5,000,000 for the 1st round** and **CHF 5,000,000 for the 2nd round** of the Call for proposals.

Taking into consideration the components of the Block Grant, for the 1st Call for proposals, CHF 4,000,000 was made available for the **Social Component** and CHF 1,000,000 for the **Environmental Component**.

Two types of grants were envisaged, respectively:

SMALL GRANTS (for both components): between CHF 10,000 and CHF 75,000 (project duration between 12 and 24 months)

LARGE GRANTS (exclusively for Social Component): between CHF 75,001 and CHF 250,000 (project duration between 12 and 36 months).

The grant amount had to cover a maximum 90% of total eligible costs borne in Swiss Francs (CHF).

2 Launching and promoting the 1st round of the Call for proposals

The date of opening the Call for proposals: May 10, 2012

Deadline for submitting the applications: July 12, 2012, 17:00 at CSDF office for the Social component and REPF office for the Environmental component

Information sessions: 8 information sessions organized beginning with June 2012 in the following cities across Romania: Bucharest, Brasov, Iasi, Craiova, Cluj-Napoca, Calarasi, Timisoara, Galati.

Number of applications received within the deadline: 670 (Social) + 109 (Environmental)

Number of applications received after the deadline: 24 (Social) + 2 (Environmental)

Promoting activities:

Starting with May 2012 until the deadline, an extensive information campaign was carried out through various means as launching conference, information sessions, press releases, posts on the SIB members' websites, but also on www.stiriong.ro portal. CSDF and REPF established help desks providing important information to all interested organizations, both in writing (by e-mail), on the phone or on face-to-face meetings. Special e-mail addresses were set-up for this Block Grant, namely componenta.social@fdsc.ro and componenta.mediu@repf.ro. During this period, the team members answered over 500 questions and the most relevant ones were centralized and introduced in the FAQ list published on CSDF and REPF websites.

Based on the 1st round experience, please find below a few recommendations to be followed during the next round of the Call for proposals:

Recommendations for the 2nd round:

- **Regularly access** the SIB members' websites www.fdsc.ro, www.repf.ro, www.kek.ch or www.stiriong.ro for having access to the news related to the 2nd round of the programme, download the Guidelines for applicants, and check the locations where information sessions will be organized, as well as the FAQ list.
- As much as possible, **attend an information session**, which will be held at national level, to learn information about the 2nd round and receiving answers to your questions.
- In case of misunderstandings or if need of additional information, **do not hesitate** to use the dedicated e-mail addresses or the telephone numbers **to contact CSDF/REPF within the deadline** for asking questions, imposed by the Guidelines for applicants.

3 Receiving and registering the project proposals

Social Component: Until the deadline, CSDF received a total of 670 applications, with 80.17% submitted on the deadline of 12.07.2012, 17:00. A number of 24 application dossiers were received after the deadline.

Regarding the types of the projects based on the size of the grant requested, out of 670, 360 (53.73%) are for small grants and 310 (46.27%) for large grants.

Under this Block grant scheme, large grants are available only for the Social Component.

Environmental Component: Within the deadline, REPF received a total of 109 applications, out of which 86 (78.90%) were submitted on the day of the deadline, namely on 12.07.2013 until 17:00 o'clock. A number of 2 applications were received after the deadline.

Since the Environmental Component had only small grants, all the received applications were this type.

There were organized opening sessions, where each application received a reference number. Each applicant was subsequently informed via e-mail with regard to the registration number of the submitted project.

Recommendations for the 2nd round:

- Prepare the **application dossier** with much attention, in accordance with the information enclosed in the Guidelines for applicants.
- **Do not miss** the deadline mentioned in the Guidelines for applicants; a project submitted after deadline (for example, 17:01) will not be taken into consideration, no matter the reasons of the delay.
- **Check if the contact information specified in the application is correct**, since this information will be used in the further correspondence. Do not miss to provide a **valid e-mail address**.
- Keep in mind that the **application's reference number** received via e-mail is the one that need to be used in further communication (if the case).

4 Evaluation process

All applications received within the deadline, entered in the evaluation process consisting of two stages:

1. Administrative compliance and eligibility verification;
2. Technical and financial evaluation.

Two Grant Evaluation Committees (GEC) were set up with the involvement of independent evaluators for the two components. The Committees were in charge with the evaluation process and the results of the entire process were subsequently approved by the Selection Committee of the TF CSP.

1. Administrative compliance and eligibility verification

This phase consisted in checking whether each applicant and its partner/s meet the imposed conditions and requirements specified in the Guidelines for applicants, by completing a grid with dichotomic checkpoints (Yes/No), according to the grid published in the Guidelines. Only the applications that met all the verification criteria entered the next phase of the evaluation.

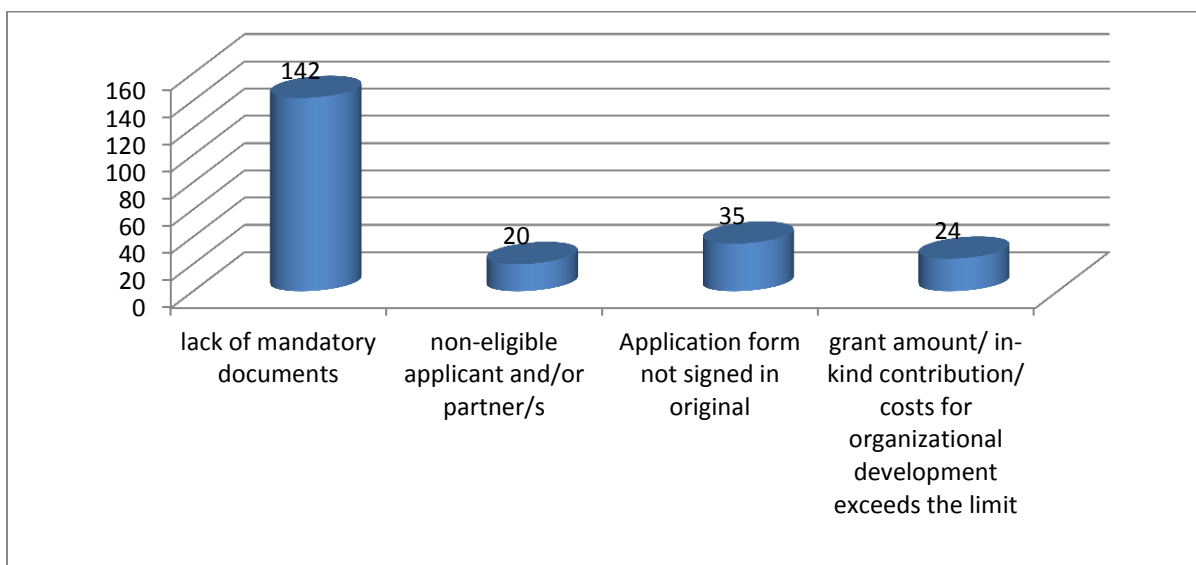
Social component:

In 129 cases (19.25%), the GEC decided to request clarifications as the provided documents were not sufficient for establishing the eligibility of the applicant and/or partner/s.

179 applications, meaning 26.71% did not meet all the criteria set for the administrative phase and the most common reasons for exclusion were as follows:

- lack of mandatory documents (statutory documents, annual report, partnership agreement etc.) for the applicant and/ or partner's;
- non eligible applicant and/or partner/s (business companies, partner/s from other countries than Romania and Switzerland, partner/s who do not comply with all eligibility criteria, etc.);
- the Application form and/or the Declaration of eligibility was not stamped and signed in original, as required;
- the grant amount requested and/or the in-kind contribution and/or the organizational development costs exceed the imposed limits (90% from the total budget for the grant amount and 5% from the total budget for the in-kind contribution, 20% from the total budget for the costs for organizational development).

Most common reasons for exclusion:



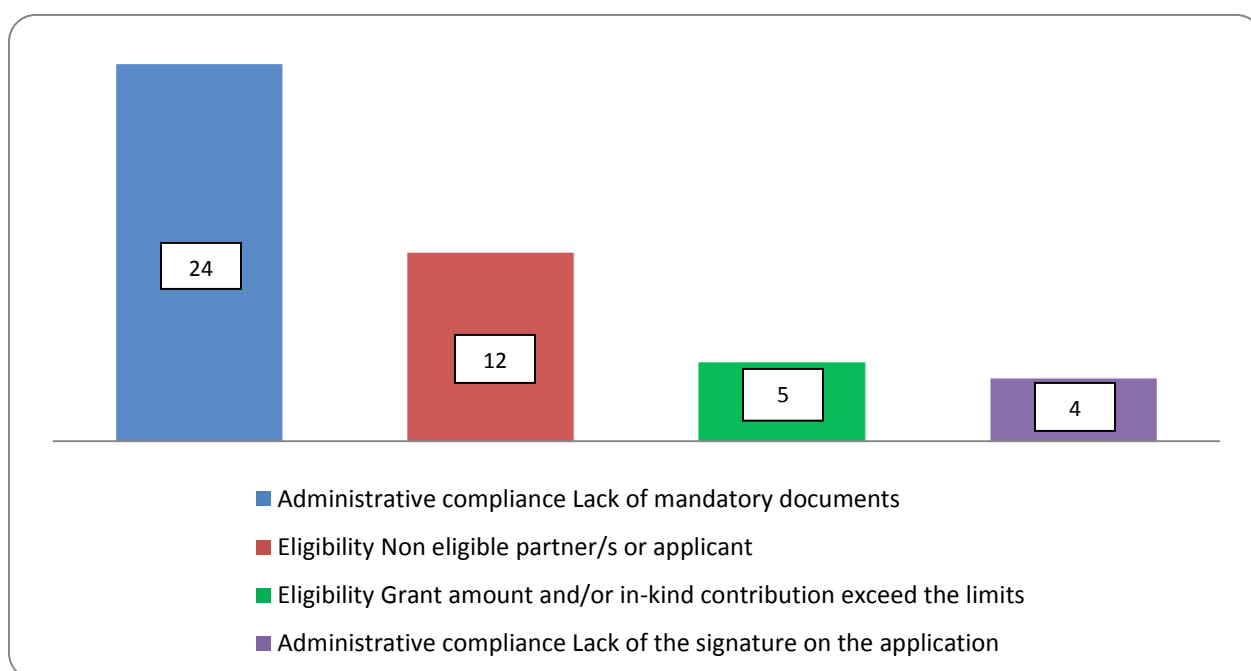
Environmental component:

During the administrative compliance and eligibility verification phase, the GEC decided to request clarifications in 46 cases (42.20%) for an appropriate decision.

35 applications, meaning 32.11% did not meet all the criteria set for the administrative phase and the most common reasons for exclusion were as follows:

- lack of mandatory documents (statutory documents, declaration of eligibility, annual report, etc.) for the applicant and/or the partner/s;
- non eligible partner/s or applicant (for profit entities);
- the requested grant amount and/or the in-kind contribution exceed the imposed limits (90% from the total budget for the grant amount and 5% from the total budget for the in-kind contribution);
- lack of the signature on the application (Application form).

Most common reasons for exclusion:



Recommendations for the 2nd round:

- **Check carefully the list of the required documents** and do not forget to upload them in the online Application form, as required in the Guidelines for applicants.
- **Check if the documents are signed and stamped**, whenever is required.
- **Read carefully** the eligibility criteria for the partner/s and assure that you will receive in due time all the needed documents from the partner/s.
- **Plan the budget carefully**, and be aware of the limits mentioned in the Guidelines for applicants.
- All the amounts in the budget are preferred to be calculated with **two decimals**, for you to have a better control of those percentage and amounts mentioned in the Guidelines for applicants.

- **Be aware** that the **grant amount**, the **in-kind contribution**, as well as the **costs for organizational development** must not exceed the limits imposed by the Guidelines for applicants.
- Plan the budget for the **total value of the project** and make sure that you have the same amounts both in the Application form and in the Budget form.

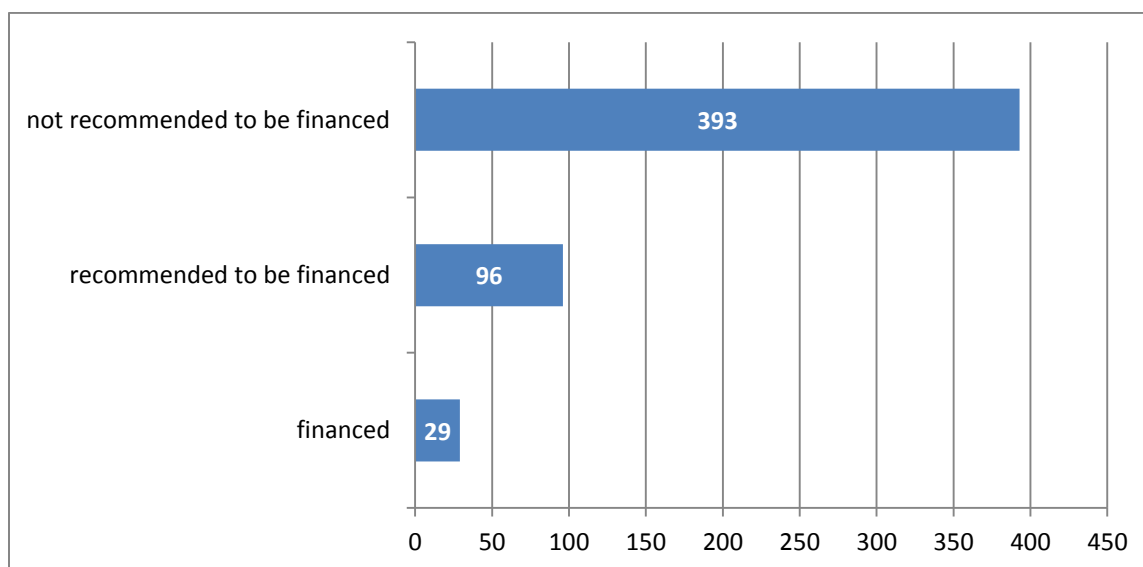
2. Technical and financial evaluation

Social Component:

489 applications (72.98%) entered into this phase of evaluation, and 96 were recommended to be financed, but only 29 (14 small and 15 large) actually received the grant, as the available financial allocation for the 1st round was supplemented and amounting CHF 4,000,000. 394 projects were not recommended to be financed.

The scores received by the project during the technical and financial evaluation phase are between 96 and 5 (294 projects did not meet the minimum level of 20 points at the first chapter from the evaluation grid – Relevance of the project)

Projects during the 2nd phase of evaluation:



A number of 67 projects were included on the reserve list, as these were recommended to be financed, but due to the limitation of the available financial allocation for the 1st round, they could not have been financed. These projects had average scores down to 72.50 that demonstrate a very good quality of the projects received. Unfortunately, there were not identified any other sources for additional allocations for these projects.

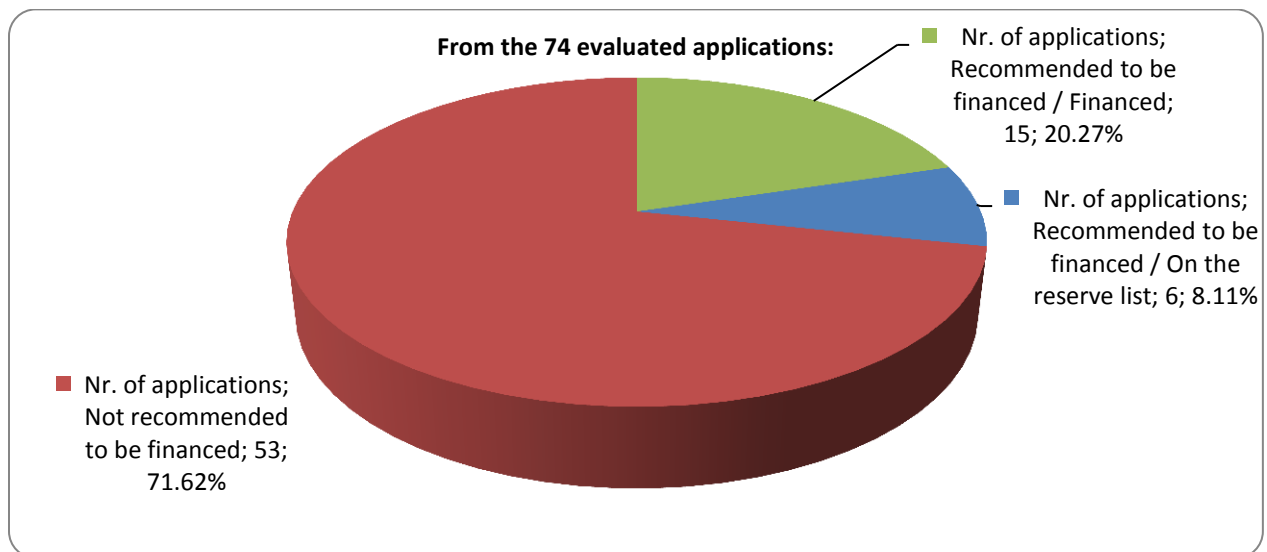
The projects with an average score of less than 72.00 points were not recommended to be financed.

Environmental component:

In the technical and financial evaluation phase 74 (67.89% of the total received) application were evaluated and the scores were between 92.25 and 11.75 points.

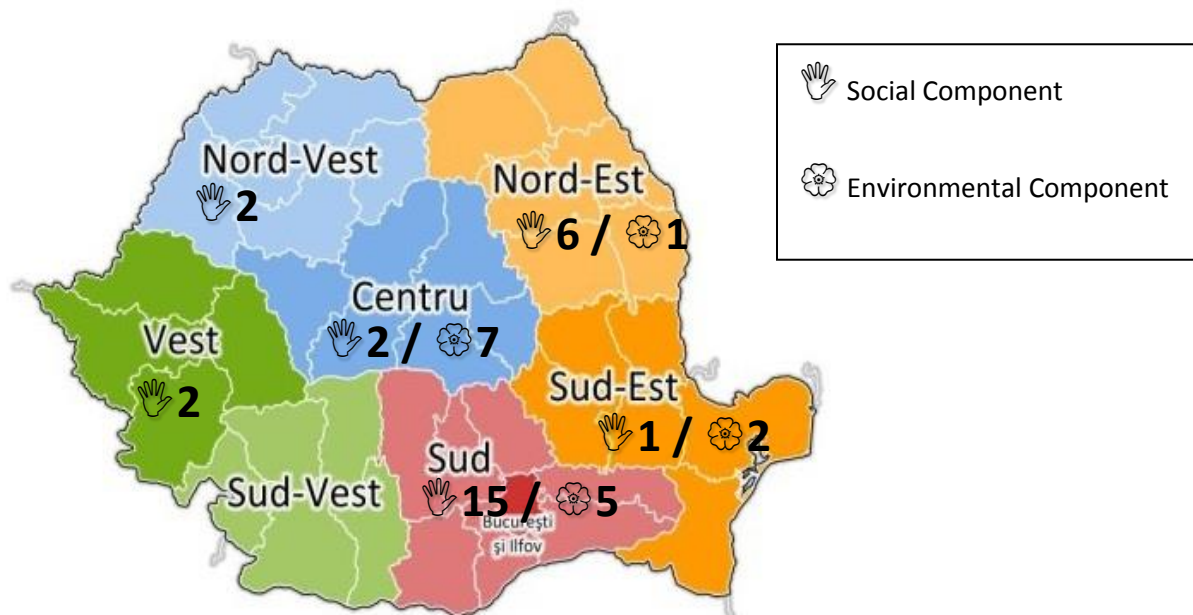
From the 74 applications 53 were not recommended to be financed, among which those 5 applications that failed at relevance, by not reaching the minimum level of 20 points at the first chapter of the evaluation grid (relevance of the project).

The scores of the 21 applications which were recommended to be financed were between 92.25 and 75.00 points. Due to the limited financial resources 15 applications were financed, and 6 applications were on the reserve list.



Within this Block Grant, the partnership was not compulsory, but the partner organizations/institutions could only have been from Romania and/or Switzerland. Even though, most of the projects will be implemented in partnerships.

The distribution of the financed projects by regions from where the applicant organisations are coming from:



Following the technical and financial evaluation phase, the pre-contracting process was initiated in which the applicants proposed to be financed received the award letters with the required general and specific conditions (if the case) imposed by the GEC.

The lists with the financed projects are available on the following websites: www.kek.ch, www.fdsc.ro, www.repf.ro, www.stiriong.ro, www.swiss-contribution.admin.ch/Romania, www.swiss-contribution.ro.

Recommendations for the 2nd round:

- **Carefully write your application** while checking the evaluation grid in order to fully respond to the aspects evaluated and take into consideration the followings:
 - the project need to be designed in a way for giving a clear picture of what it is going to happen and for convincing the evaluators about its necessity;
 - the project must meet the objectives of the financing program (grant scheme); the objectives of the project must be in close relation with its activities and estimated results;
 - the identified problem and the proposed approach must be real and sustained by specific and relevant information (for example researches, SWOT analysis etc.);
 - the proposed activities of the project should either solve, or significantly contribute to solving the identified problem/s;
 - the activities must be designed in a logic manner, must be realistic (taking into account the organizational capacity, its resources and the external factors), efficient and linked to the objectives of the projects, results and the proposed budget allocation;
 - both quantitative and qualitative measurable indicators need to be included in the table included in the Application form;
 - the applicant is recommended to provide practical solutions for the project sustainability;

otherwise a project is susceptible to be a singular and isolated initiative;

- **Plan the budget carefully**, in fully accordance with the activities foreseen in the project; be aware that all the costs included in the budget form must be justified and fully needed for the development of project activities. In this regard, please take into account the followings:
 - It is recommended to plan the budget after the rest of the project has been designed in detail;
 - the budget has to be correlated with all activities and the results foreseen in the project; each cost must be duly justified;
 - the budget must be realistic, taking into account the prices on the local market;
 - the budgetary chapters are recommended to be well-balanced in accordance with the activities, the results and the impact of the project;
- When writing the application, **do not miss any of the sections included in the Application form** and take into account the followings:
 - information regarding the applicant and partner/s expertise in project management is important to be provided;
 - information about the partner/s is important to be provided as well, stressing not only their role in the project, but also their experience and knowledge in the field approached, and the need for their involvement in the project;
- the organizational set-up, team and management of the project need to be efficiently dimensioned and in very close relation to the project activities; it is also recommended to mention the workload for each position.