



MENTORING PROGRAM

Mentoring for licensing and increasing quality standards, overall strategic development and preparation of documents for applying the Human Rights Based Approach and implementing gender mainstreaming

Project title:

Strengthening capacities and policy engagement of community service providers – IRIS PROGRESS

Deadline for submission of applications: 01 March 2024

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS



This project is funded
by the European Union



1. INTRODUCTION

Strengthening capacities and policy engagement of community service providers – IRIS PROGRESS is implemented by initiative for Development and Cooperation, in partnership with Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund, e.V. Germany (ASB), Local Initiative for Development Civil Society (LIR CD) from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alfa Center from Montenegro, Community Development Institute from Republic of North Macedonia, Center for Independent Living from Kosovo* and Center for Labour Rights from Albania in period from February 2023 to January 2026. Project is financed by European Union in framework of *EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme in favour of the Western Balkans and Turkey for 2021 – 2023 (IPA III)*.

Since several target countries from SEE region have adopted quality standards for social services and introduced the licensing of social services, CSOs are faced with lack of resources to prepare the documentation and fulfil standards in order to be able to use public funds for financing. Moreover, the state does not perceive CSOs as an equal partner if they are not able to fulfil the standards needed for licensing and have obtained the license for a specific social service. This is influencing the state-civil society dialogue at all levels and affects legitimacy, transparency and accountability of CSOs which are providing social services. Part of the capacity building process will be engaging of experts for specific sectors in order to mentor and consult CSOs in preparation of the required elaborates and reports needed as minimum requirements for the licensing of social services. In Serbia, Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Kosovo* the licensing of social service providers is regulated by legislation and Procedures. Therefore, CSOs service providers in these countries will be able to acquire necessary assistance for licensing through mentoring. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the Procedures for licensing of CSOs social service providers are still not adopted.

The EU Accession policy is a key channel for promoting the adoption of gender equality legislation in line with the EU acquis and gender-sensitive reforms across Western Balkan countries. The building of democratic states based on the rule of law, human rights and protection of minorities cannot be realised without a strong embracement of the gender equality principle and standards. This calls for clear guidance from the EU to the national governments about what reforms to prioritise, how to gender mainstream policies, strategies and legislation in line with the EU acquis and, crucially, how to move from policy to effective implementation. The Country Reports continue to be one of the key tools to exert pressure on national governments to enact reforms and change legislation and practices.

However, efforts to gender-mainstream EU policy documents and reports in the framework of the EU Accession process remain weak. The gender analysis of the 2021 Country Reports for the Western Balkans suggests that overall gender mainstreaming on the enlargement package is improving but at a very slow pace and there are cases of regression compared to previous years. Attention to gender issues is clearly not sown into the fabric of the Country Reports and continues to appear as an add-on. The 2022 Country Report for Kosovo and Montenegro indicates a thorough integration of a gender perspectives in many sections,



Albania considerably improved while in the North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia reports attention to gender issues either declined or stayed the same. Overall, the sections on fundamental rights and Chapter 19 (Social Policy and Employment) continue to draw most attention to the situation of women and girls, often featuring official recommendations related to gender equality. The section on political criteria also generally improved but most other chapters continue to be gender-blind or to include only cursory references to women and girls.¹

Overall objective of the project is to achieve participatory democracies in EU approximation process of WB countries by advancing regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations.

Specific objective of the project are:

- a) to achieve stronger capacity of the CSOs to impact on decision making process in protection of human rights and anti-discrimination policies of marginalized groups in WB region

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Mentoring program is open only to IRIS national networks member organisations **from 6 countries: Albania, Kosovo*, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina**, especially to those who show initiative in active approach in implementing quality standards in their work.

IRIS Member organisations fulfilling the following criteria are eligible to apply:

- Be a publicly recognised, legal non-profit making entity under the relevant laws, where such laws exist;
- Are a local organisation;
- Registered minimum 1 year before this Mentoring program is announced;
- Located and operating within the target countries;
- Working in the area of social inclusion and provision of social services on local level;
- Have a clearly defined focus for improvement of delivery of the social services;
- Have clear decision-making mechanism independent from the government;
- Have strategic determination towards acquiring state licence for provision of social services in the targeted country;
- Are able to prove basic human, technical and institutional capacities for acquiring licence.

Note: Individuals, political parties, international and foreign organizations, public institutions, religious communities do not have the right to participate in this contest.

¹ <https://kvinnatillkvinna.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/KvinnatillKvinna-GENDER-ANALYSIS-OF-EC-2021-Country-Reports-Western-Balkans.pdf>



3. OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

3.1. Overall objective: a) to achieve stronger capacity of the CSOs to impact on decision making process in protection of human rights and anti-discrimination policies of marginalized groups in WB region

3.2. Specific objectives:

- a) to increase quality of social services provided to vulnerable groups through service licencing
- b) to increase organizational capacity and contribute to institutional sustainability
- c) to apply the Human Rights Based Approach and gender mainstreaming into programming

4. SECTORS AND THEMES OF THE CALL

Main output of this Call is: at least 30 CSOs initiated the licensing process or have developed strategic / action plan for specific social services in accordance with CSO needs and required documentation for licencing process in accordance with standards for development of services; at least 30 CSOs are applying the Human Rights Based Approach and gender mainstreaming into programming.

Successful applicants will receive mentoring support and guidance through the process of initiating licencing of social service they provide or assistance in development of strategic / action plan for specific services in accordance with CSO needs and required documentation for licencing process in accordance with standards for development of services.

The Mentor will assist CSOs to prepare for the successful service licencing process or assistance in development of strategic / action plan for specific services in accordance with CSO needs and required documentation for licencing process in accordance with standards for development of services.

Under this call, IRIS Network will provide a mentor fee for the support of the CSOs. The successful applicants will not receive funds for the mentoring. The mentoring fee will be covered by Project partners / National Coordinators in each country. Facilities, working material, communication and other costs, in necessary, are to be CSOs' contribution.

Applications must focus on:

- 1) Improving capacities of the CSOs for licencing by the respective state institutions;
- 2) Adopting quality standards for social services
- 3) Services that are subject of licencing process;
- 4) A clear plan of social service provision after completing the licencing process;
- 5) Preparation / updating of documents to apply human rights based approach and gender mainstreaming into the organization's work and social service(s)



5. FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF THE CALL

Successful applicants will be assigned to the mentors who will charge no costs for the respective CSOs. Other costs of the licensing process that may be occurred are not responsibility of the contracting authority.

Support will be given to at least 30 CSOs in from the eligible countries. Assistance will be distributed in based on the principle of equality between 6 participating countries, depending on quality of the applications.

6. RULES FOR THIS CALL

6.1. Partnerships/Co-applicants

Partnerships are **not allowed or eligible**. Each Applicant must act individually.

6.2. Location

Location of the mentoring program realization must be one of the countries covered by the project: Albania, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, Kosovo*, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

6.3. Project duration

Implementation of mentoring program awarded through this Call should last no longer than 31th December 2024. There is a possibility to extend the duration based on specific country needs.

6.4. How to apply and procedure to follow?

Applications should be written **in English language**. Applicant must submit the filled out **Application form**.

With application documents, Applicants must send the following **additional documentation** (scanned):

- Scanned copy of Registration of organization;
- Scanned copy of Statute of organization;

All documents should be submitted in electronic format, with scanned pages where signature and stamp is needed.

Incomplete applications, applications submitted by any other means and/or forms than provided in this document will not be taken in consideration.



6.5. Deadline for submission of applications

Applications should be sent to email address

for **Albania** to Center for Labour Rights, Gertjana Hasalla - gertjanahasalla@gmail.com
for **North Macedonia** to Community Development Institute, Zivorad Arsic - cdi.zivorad@gmail.com
for **Montenegro** – Alfa Center, Milos Perovic - alfacentar@t-com.me,
for **Kosovo**, Center for Independent Life, Fitore Haxhihasani - QJP_2001@hotmail.com
for **Serbia**, Initiative for Development and Cooperation, Jelena Leskovic - jelena.l@idcserbia.org
for **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, LIR CD - maja.stojcevic@lircd.org

and Cc: iris@iris-see.eu no later than **01 March, 2024 noon (12:00 a.m.)**, with email subject stating “Mentoring program – CSOs”.

Any applications sent after the deadline will be automatically rejected. Evidence of the application submission will be date and time of e-mail reception.

6.6. Further information for the application

In case of additional information required, questions may be sent by email

for **Albania** to Center for Labour Rights, Gertjana Hasalla - gertjanahasalla@gmail.com
for **North Macedonia** to Community Development Institute, Zivorad Arsic - cdi.zivorad@gmail.com
for **Montenegro** – Alfa Center, Milos Perovic - alfacentar@t-com.me,
for **Kosovo**, Center for Independent Life, Fitore Haxhihasani - QJP_2001@hotmail.com
for **Serbia**, Initiative for Development and Cooperation, Jelena Leskovic - jelena.l@idcserbia.org
for **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, LIR CD - maja.stojcevic@lircd.org

and Cc: iris@iris-see.eu no later than **February 22, 2024** with email subject “Questions on the Mentoring program –CSOs”.

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on web site of the Network www.iris-see.eu.

7. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF THE APPLICATIONS

The assessment criteria will include: organisational performance; comprehensiveness of information including relevance of the plan of social service provision; capacity of the applicant to achieve defined objectives; the intended impact of the project and future sustainability.



8. INDICATIVE TIME TABLE

	Date*	Time
Deadline for requests for any clarifications	February 22, 2024	-
Deadline for submission of the applications	March 01, 2024	12.00
Publishing the list of selected applicants on www.iris-see.eu	March 18, 2024	-
Contract signature and beginning of the implementation	April 2024	-

***Note: this schedule may be changed during the call for applications procedure. In case of that, updated version will be posted on the IRIS Network website www.iris-see.org.**

