**Application Guidelines**

**Switzerland’s Small Grants Programme in Moldova**

**(May 2025 - April 2029)**

1. **Introduction**

These guidelines explain the thematic areas and the terms of application for the funding offered by Switzerland through its Small Grants Programme in Moldova.

The Swiss Small Grants Programme in Moldova is managed by the Swiss Cooperation Office/ Representation of the Embassy of Switzerland in Moldova (SCO-M), which is the country office of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). SDC, the international cooperation agency within the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), is responsible for the overall coordination of development support and humanitarian aid provided by the Swiss Confederation worldwide. The Swiss Small Grants Programme in Moldova provides funding, based on a competition, to small action and culture projects.

1. **Eligibility criteria**
	1. **Conditions for funding**

The application for a small grant represents a request for a **one-time contribution**. Recurring proposals submitted by the same organization for the same project, such as, for instance, different editions of a festival, may be accepted for funding more than once during the four-year phase of this Programme, only if the applicant provides evidence that the quality of activities, their scale, as well as the contributions of other donors have considerably increased.

The submitted project proposals have to fulfil the following conditions:

* The proposed project has a **duration of max. 18 months**.
* The requested **Swiss contribution does not exceed CHF 50’000**.
* The **Swiss contribution covers maximum 80% of the total project budget**. Applicants shall prove their capability **to cover at least 20%** of the total project budget, either from own resources or from contributions of other donors. Although financial independence is not the sole criteria for awarding the grants, the Small Grants Programme shall give priority to those applicants proving their capacity to fundraise or contribute with their own resources. Applicants are therefore encouraged to look for co-funding from other donors or provide their own financial and/or in-kind contribution. The information about co-funding and applicants’ contribution should be clearly indicated in the budget.
* In case of small action projects, the proposed projects shall either reflect explicitly in their objectives, or integrate as transversal themes at least one of the following three topics: **social inclusion**, **gender equality**, **good governance**.
* The applicant organization has **sufficient capacities to implement** the submitted project.
	1. **Eligible thematic areas**

The Small Grants Programme will fund:

(1) **Small Action projects** that complement / are synergetic with the priority areas of the current 2025-2028 Swiss Cooperation Programme in the Republic of Moldova (Governance and Social Cohesion; Economic Development and Resilence; and Health and Local Public Services) and promote:

* Inclusive nation-building and social cohesion;
* Social inclusion of marginalized / excluded groups, e.g., various minorities and refugees;
* Democratic values, human rights, good governance and rule of law;
* Civic engagement, advocacy and oversight of reform implementation;
* Green development;
* Critical thinking and media literacy;
* Education, promotion of new technologies and skills development.

(2) **Culture projects** andadvocacy actions of cultural organizations that use culture and arts as means to support:

* Democratic transformations, social cohesion, cultural diversity and diversity of social narratives, human rights, social inclusion, and equal opportunities;
* Freedom of (artistic) expression and pluralism of views;
* Inter-cultural dialogue, incl. between rural and urban population, ethnicities, refugees and local population, generations and regions (including the Left Bank of the Dniester River);
* Access to cultural life for disadvantaged groups and remote geographical areas;
* Innovation in arts;
* Culture and arts in education and skills development;
* Awareness raising on social issues and environment protection.

**Priority** will be given to projects:

* With geographical focus on areas outside Chisinau;
* Promoting innovative approaches, new technologies, and sustainable and inclusive development;
* Bulding confidence and promoting dialogue and cooperation across various societal divides and across regions (including the Left Bank of the Dniester River).
	1. **Eligible applicants**

Only the following legal entities, registered in Moldova, can submit projects proposals:

* non-governmental and non-profit organizations,
* professional associations and unions,
* local offices of international organizations,
* media organizations,
* commercial entities with non-profit projects, including social enterprises,
* *as an exception,* the programme can accept project proposals from public institutions, incl. educational, central and local governmental entities.
	1. **Non-eligible applicants and activities**

Physical persons and legal entities registered outside Moldova cannot apply for funding.

The following activities are not eligible for funding:

* study tours abroad,
* scholarships,
* charity and infrastructure projects,
* activities implemented outside Moldova,
* profit-oriented activities,
* emergency humanitarian aid activities,
* projects that duplicate or overlap with the existing Swiss Cooperation Programme in Moldova.
1. **Application procedures**

There are no application deadlines. Applications are examined in the order of receipt.

Applicants shall submit the **project applications** via email: chisinau@eda.admin.ch

A **project application** shallconsist of the following documents:

* **Project proposal** of max. 5 pages in Romanian, Russian, or English, based on the provided template (see Attachment (EN) Project Proposal Template).

Please note that, although the project applications can be submitted in Romanian or Russian, in case the project is approved for funding, the applicant will be required to submit the English version of the project proposal and budget before the contract is signed.

* **Project budget** (in Moldovan lei) based on the provided template (see Attachment (EN) Budget Template). Please note that the budget shall include information on contributions provided by other donors and/or by the applicant. Please ensure that:
* both budget spreadsheets are filled in;
* budget lines are clearly formulated and in line with project activities;
* the format of the tables and the formulas remain unchanged;
* salaries of operational staff are included under corresponding *Activity* budget component;
* the percentage of administrative staff occupation (Level of Employment (LOE)) is indicated;
* the digital version of the budget is printer-friendly.

SCO-M might consider covering institutional development and crucial running costs related to project implementation, but no more than 7% of the total of the budget requested from the Swiss Small Grants Programme.

* **Extract from the State Register of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs**, dated less than 6 months prior to the submission of the application;
* **Reference / support letters** from other donors, partners, Moldovan authorities;
* Any other relevant project-related supporting documents.
1. **Evaluation of project proposals**

The submitted project applications are examined by a Selection Committee. When a project proposals is pre-approved, the responsible SCO-M officer will get in touch with the applicants to clarify questions addressed by the Selection Committee and to ensure that the project proposal and the budget meet the following requirements:

* Project thematic areas, objectives, activities and applicant(s) meet the eligibility criteria;
* The project proposal and budget are complete and structured in a clear manner;
* A clear vision on the intended results / changes / effects is presented and the proposed activities are relevant for their achievement;
* Applicants have sufficient management and programmatic capacity, i.e., the required human resources, competence and experience;
* The project is cost-efficient;
* The applicant’s contribution (financial or in-kind) and/or the co-funding by other donors/sponsors is of min. 20% of the total project budget.

A partner/applicant risk assessment[[1]](#footnote-1) might be conducted by the SCO-M at its sole discretion, based on its own risk assessment.

Please note that the process of evaluating the project applications could entail lengthy negotiations and require adjustments to project proposals and budgets. However, it does not guarantee that the project will be finally approved for funding.

1. **Approval and notification of applicants**

When all questions are clarified, the Selection Committee proceeds with the final decision whether the project will be financed or not. The final results shall be announced via e-mail to each applying organization individually, as soon as decisions are made.

The decisions made by the Selection Committee are final and shall present no grounds for any form of appeal, nor do they require any detailed reasoning or explanation.

1. **Contracts**

A contract between the SCO-M and the implementing partner will be prepared, based on the previously negotiated project proposal and budget, and signed prior to the start of activities (**the funding cannot be retroactive**).

For projects with budgets lower than CHF 5’000, simplified procedures shall be used.

1. The Partner Risk Assessment’s (PRA) is carried out during a visit of the SCO-M representatives to the applicant organization with the objective of getting to know the organizational set-up, the management and operational processes of the potential partner, in order to (i) ensure efficient and effective use of funds for the implementation of the project; (ii) identify risk mitigation measures and limit probability of future difficulties; and (iii) provide medium- and long-term organizational development recommendations. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)