

# COVID-19 Solidarity Programme 2020-2022

## Call for Proposals on Covid-19 in Prisons and Mental Health Institutions

11 May 2022



Funded by European Union



This project is funded by the European Union. As part of its global response to the coronavirus outbreak, the European Commission mobilised a support package for civil society in Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine. One of the branches of the package is implemented by the Netherlands Helsinki Committee & Human Rights in Mental Health – FGIP

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# Background

The Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC) launched a regional “COVID-19 Solidarity Programme 2020-2022” with the financial support of the European Union and in partnership with People in Need and AFEW International. NHC is cooperating with Human Rights in Mental Health (Federation Global Initiative in Psychiatry, FGIP) to deliver activities of the Programme. This programme will support civil society organisations (CSOs) to respond to the immediate and longer-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Eastern Partnership countries. The programme is part of a bigger set of activities carried out by a consortium led by People in Need. The overall aim is to enhance the capacities of CSOs to effectively respond to short- and medium-term challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, and to influence longer-term policy reforms that support vulnerable groups and those disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

In the past year, six CSOs received funding to carry out activities related to monitoring of prisons and psychiatric institutions. Overall, it appeared that many of the institutions that were monitored performed insufficiently in terms of meeting the needs of these vulnerable groups in the Covid-19 response. This was due to, for example, insufficient protective equipment, barriers to (in-person) contact with family and psychologists, and greater physical isolation. There were also issues in terms of access to medical care more generally. At the same time, institutions carried out good practices that suggest that an appropriate response was possible, and should be the focus of future crisis management or pandemics/waves of Covid-19. Based on the monitoring, the next step is advocacy around the main findings and understanding which policies and other decision-making processes may be impacted.

This call for proposals is soliciting proposals for grants to address these issues in 2022.

# Objectives of the Call

As noted above, the findings from the monitoring provided insights into what should be done in terms of national reform. For example, ensuring that governments develop a policy to respond to any form of pandemic or health crisis can be done through the analysis of the legal response to Covid-19. The pandemic also required institutions to think about lowering prison populations, and potentially considering alternatives to detention. For the mental health group, the extent to which the impact on overall health was exacerbated due to both mental and physical health concerns, particularly where stigma plays a large role, needs a more appropriate response in the future. Another insight that arose was the use of internet, and increasing its access and exploring other options of technologies that could still ensure those in closed institutions remain connected to families, and to ensure a uniform strategy for such measures. These outcomes illustrate a few potential options for advocacy and policy change, though many others linked to the Programme may arise and can be elaborated on by applicants.

In the next step, local CSOs will be empowered to leverage the experience and knowledge gained in monitoring activities that was carried out by several organisations in the past months, to influence longer-term policy developments with a focus on inclusive recovery and resilience mechanisms for the targeted vulnerable groups, prevention of a second wave of COVID and policy monitoring of COVID recovery funds. The information that was gathered in previous project activities will be shared with organisations at the national level. This information supports organisations in advocating for changes related to the Covid-19 pandemic and more general health related needs. The previously gathered information may complement the data and resources that organisations may have for the purposes of their own advocacy work. All organisations are invited to apply, regardless of previous monitoring work related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

CSOs will have the opportunity to apply for two types of grants outlined in both Lot 1 and Lot 2, and may apply for both within this Call, though this is not required. Where organisations apply for both, it will be crucial to illustrate how the two grants will be linked.

In Lot 1, NHC seeks to provide grants for activities that support advocacy and policy development in connection to Covid-19 and ensure a response more generally to situations comparable to the pandemic. Here the main aim is to build and strengthen national consortia for agenda setting. Applicants are required to propose their own activities that support them in setting their own agenda at the national level, together with other CSOs that receive funding. Grants will be provided for a maximum amount of 14.500 euros. Examples of activities are as follows:

- Policy research for advocacy purposes
- Joint policy development meetings and other events in coordination with other CSOs, public and private stakeholders, etc. with the aim of agenda setting
- Conference to meet with all CSOs and other experts to finalize policy and advocacy agenda

In Lot 2, grants will be available for advocacy initiatives and activities encouraging policy dialogue. Here the target are external advocacy stakeholders. The total budget per organisation is 11.000 euros. Grants may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Local or national-level advocacy initiatives (including roundtables, press conferences, other public events, participation in national consultation processes)
- Community mobilization/awareness raising

Organisations may choose to apply alone or together with co-applicants.

At the same time, NHC will offer various capacity development initiatives for those organisations that receive funding for the above, which will run parallel to the advocacy and policy development activities. This capacity building will include concrete engagement, the form of which will be decided upon in the first weeks of the project. This capacity building will help organisations to structure their own process leading up to the initiatives outlined in the above paragraph, while building and/or strengthening (existing) advocacy and communications skills. The capacity development initiatives (a blend of individual coaching, on the job training, mutual learning sessions, workshops and concrete initiatives) may focus on advocacy (message development and delivery, using law in policy influencing), organisational theory of change, and network-building, and to an extent other needs identified by the CSOs. Exactly how this capacity-building trajectory will look will depend on the needs and advocacy plans of the CSO. At least two participants from each organisation that receives funding will be required to attend a training that will take place in the second half of June/July.

The trainings will be provided by MDF, a training and consultancy organisation with 37 years of experience in providing management training, advisory and evaluation services worldwide. MDF's services are diverse but have three things in common – they are driven by new concepts and theories, are practical, and lead to new insights. The tools and approaches they utilise are directly implementable, and they have a main aim to empower individuals, organisations and networks to increase their positive social impact.

Organisations are expected to work together with the others that receive funding within this Call, within their country, but also with those in other countries (i.e., Armenia, Georgia and Moldova). Proposals can be country-wide or limited to certain regions; they can be focused on one category of closed institutions (i.e. only penitentiary or only mental health) or on all of them. The aim of the proposal is to support CSOs in gaining core skills – where needed – that can ensure they effectively engage in policy advocacy and development and offer them the financial support to carry out relevant advocacy and policy development initiatives.

## Target countries

Proposed projects should target closed institutions in the following countries:

- Armenia
- Georgia
- Moldova

## Eligibility

This call for proposals is open to non-profit-making civil society organisations or consortia of non-profit-making civil society organisations with the status of a legal person, established in Armenia, Georgia, or Moldova. In case of consortia, the main applicant will be responsible for the overall implementation of the action.

Applications should provide evidence of the following:

- Registration status as a non-profit organisation registered under national legislation
- Experience with managing budgets of similar size

Public administration institutions, state agencies, local or regional authorities, political parties or organisations affiliated with political parties are not eligible for this call.

## Grant amount and duration

NHC and FGIP will support CSO's up to the following maximum per two grants (per organisation):

Armenia	25.500
Georgia	25.500
Republic of Moldova	25.500

An average number of three applications per country will be granted depending on the quality of the applications and respective situation in the country.

Proposed project duration should not exceed 30 November 2022. All activities must be implemented before this time.

NHC and FGIP reserve the right to suggest applicants adapt or merge proposals, particularly with regard to project design. Organisations may be required to follow a short project design workshop to build on what they propose.

## Ineligible costs

The budget must be in line with the activities described in the application form. The following activities and expenditures are not eligible under this call:

- Infrastructure projects (constructing roads, bridges, buildings, etc)
- Purchase of land or property
- Political or religious activities
- Environmentally harmful projects

- Retrospective activities (costs related to activities implemented prior to signing the grant agreement)

Eligible costs include all costs necessary to perform advocacy work including the reporting process: such as staff salary costs or fees, travel costs, event organisation, daily allowances, printing costs, publication costs and telephone costs.

# Application Process

Applicants must submit the following:

- Annex 1 – Application Form (any language)
- Annex 2 – Budget
- Registration certificate of the organisation (if possible original with an English translation)
- Statute of the organisation (if possible in English)
- Evidence of track record in similar projects
- CVs of the project team
- If the proposal is submitted by a consortium: an outline of the cooperation process and the division of tasks between individual members in the application form (annex 1).

All submitted applications must be signed by the head of the applicant organisation, scanned and sent electronically.

The application package should be submitted to Malini Laxminarayan at [mlaxminarayan@nhc.nl](mailto:mlaxminarayan@nhc.nl).

Deadline for submission of full applications is **5 June 2022**. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

## Additional information

You may also submit your proposal related questions until 27 May 2022 via email: [mlaxminarayan@nhc.nl](mailto:mlaxminarayan@nhc.nl).

Questions will be responded to within 5 working days.



# Proposal selection process

Submitted proposals that score 70 points or above according to the selection criteria below, will be evaluated using following criteria:

	Proposal Selection Criteria	Maximum score
1	Cost-effective and realistic budget	15
2	Advocacy experience (or interest in gaining experience) and feasible advocacy plan with relevant messaging and likely to make change (track record of applicant on advocacy trajectories, quality of relevant networks)	20
3	Analysis of risks and mitigation measures	10
4	Capability in providing follow-up in individual cases	20
5	Availability of local/ regional monitors	25
<b>Total:</b>		<b>100</b>

You will receive feedback to your proposals no later than **24 June 2022** via email.

Any concerns or feedback related to the proposal selection process can be submitted to the NHC office at Riviervismarkt 5, 2513 AM, The Hague, the Netherlands or via e-mail: [mlaxminarayan@nhc.nl](mailto:mlaxminarayan@nhc.nl).

**Visiting address**

Het Nutshuis  
Riviervismarkt 5  
2513 AM The Hague  
The Netherlands

**Tel** +31 (0)70 – 392 6700

**Fax** +31 (0)70 – 392 6550

**E-mail** [mlaxminarayan@nhc.nl](mailto:mlaxminarayan@nhc.nl)