

Call for Proposals: Flexible emergency assistance for Exiled Russian CSOs Working on the Protection of Human Rights

Background

Since the introduction of the law on “foreign agents” in 2012, the legislative framework for civil society organisations (CSOs) in Russia has become increasingly restrictive and prohibitive. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the scale of the crackdown on civil society escalated further. A series of new laws adopted, in combination with the impact of the sanctions in response to the war, increased the risk faced by human rights organisations and limited the possibilities for them to receive support from outside of the country, making their work nearly impossible. The intensification of persecution and official liquidation of CSOs has increased the demand for their teams to relocate in order to be able to continue human rights work in exile. CSOs and individual human rights defenders in exile also face various challenges, including legal obstacles, difficulty to open bank accounts, and personal issues related to visas, insurance, and housing. Supporting these organisations is crucial to keep the human rights community in and from Russia alive and to maintain the civil society infrastructure to the extent possible so that these organisations are ready to return whenever the circumstances allow.

Objective of the Call

The Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC) aims to provide flexible emergency assistance grants to CSOs from Russia, which work specifically in the field of protection and promotion of human rights and are/were forced to leave Russia and want to relocate their operations. The purpose of these grants is to ensure that these CSOs can re-locate their staff members, re-calibrate and continue their work from exile.

Grant amount and duration

The NHC aims to provide approximately 10 grants, each grant between 1,000 and 18,000 EUR.

The anticipated starting date for the selected projects is 1 July 2023. The selected project should be implemented within 6 months from the starting date of the project.

Eligibility Criteria

The grant can be received by:

- Non-profit civil society organisations that were registered as legal entities but lost their registration as a consequence of persecution;
- Grassroots initiatives (a group of private people represented by one responsible person, united with one civic aim);
- CSOs and grassroots initiatives should have a demonstrated track record in working on the promotion and protection of human rights;
- The work of the organisation should have been negatively affected by the wave of political persecutions in Russia before and after the Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Media organisations or organisations working exclusively on media rights are not eligible to apply for this call.

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

Eligible Costs

The grants can be used for all costs that relate to the relocation of the organisation and its staff and adjustment of the strategy of the organisation to the current circumstances. This may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Costs for legal advice, registering a new legal entity, etc.;
- Personal expenses such as travel and visas for staff members;
- Consultant fees for crisis management and/or strategy development;
- Costs related to enhancing digital and physical security;
- Practical costs such as office rent, purchase of the office equipment, internet subscription, etc.;
- Basic needs of the organisation to continue the operation, including salaries of staff members that may still be active in Russia.

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:

- Humanitarian support to third parties;
- Military purposes or support to military;
- Retrospective activities (costs related to activities implemented prior to signing the grant agreement);
- Medical or any other unexpected (emergency) expenses;

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

Application Process

Interested organisations are asked to **APPLY ONLINE** in English or Russian no later than **12 June 2023**.

The following documents need to be attached to the online application form:

- Filled out budget form ([download the template](#))
- Registration certificate of the organisation or a proof of registration from earlier years (if applicable)
- Statute of the organisation (if applicable)

For questions regarding the call for proposals or the application procedure, please send us an email to hrdprogramme.nhc@protonmail.com no later than 5 June 2023.

Only full applications consisting of a completed online application form and all requested additional documents will be assessed.

Proposal Selection Process

An independent evaluation committee will evaluate submitted proposals based on the following criteria:

	Criteria	Maximum score
1	Compliance of the proposal with the overall goals of the call	20
2	Description and justification of the needs of the organization	30
3	Sustainability of activities after the end of the project	25
4	Realistic and feasible budget	15
5	Analysis of risks and mitigation measures	10
Total:		100

The applicants will receive feedback on their proposals via email within 4 weeks after the submission deadline.

Any concerns or feedback related to the proposal selection process can be submitted to the NHC via e-mail to hrdprogramme.nhc@protonmail.com