

ROMA CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS PROMOTING EU VALUES

Application guide for Roma and pro-Roma NGOs in EU Member States other than Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Czechia, Slovakia, and Spain

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The European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) Network is launching a call for applications for Roma¹ and pro-Roma civil society organisations registered and operating in EU Member States other than Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Czechia, Slovakia and Spain. Eligible organisations should work to enforce, monitor and raise awareness of fundamental rights and EU values, strengthen Roma communities, and support Roma empowerment and participation.

EU Values are defined in Art. 2 of the Treaty on the European Union. The EU is founded on the values of **respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities**. The ROVA project aims to support Roma and pro-Roma civil society in promoting these shared values. For information regarding EU values and fundamental rights, please consult this [short video of the European Parliament](#) or the [Charter of Fundamental Rights](#). Compliance with EU values, and how the proposed project raises awareness, monitors and enforces EU values and fundamental rights, must be explained in the application.

Aim and objectives of the call

Overall aim: to build capacities of Roma and pro-Roma civil society and Roma communities through raising awareness of, monitoring and enforcing EU values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and respect for human rights, including those of minorities.

Objectives:

- To promote access to fundamental rights for Roma.
- To promote equality and social inclusion of Roma.
- To promote a human rights perspective on the situation of Roma.
- To combat antigypsyism.
- To monitor the implementation of national Roma Integration strategies at local, regional or national level.
- To develop cooperation between Roma communities and public institutions.
- To develop cooperation between Roma and non-Roma civil society.

¹ The umbrella term “Roma” encompasses diverse groups, including Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels, Boyash/Rudari, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal, as well as Traveller populations (gens du voyage, Gypsies, Camminanti, etc.), in accordance with terminology used by the [European Commission](#).

Duration of projects and level of support

- Projects supported under this call must be implemented between 1 September 2026 and 30 September 2027 (13 months).
- Each organisation may submit only one application. Consortia are not eligible to apply under this call.
- Organisations that received a grant for individual NGOs under the 2025 ROVA calls for proposals are not eligible to apply again.
- The total available grant for projects funded under this specific call for proposals is EUR 200,000 with a maximum grant of **EUR 20,000 per project**.
- Own contribution (including voluntary work or financial contributions) is not required and will not be considered an advantage during the evaluation process.

Application process

The application process consists of two rounds: Concept notes and full proposals. The first round (submission of concept notes) is open until 5 pm CET on Monday **16 March 2026**. **Applications must be submitted by completing the online form available [here](#).**

To help you prepare your concept note, you can find the application form as a WORD document [here](#). **Please note that applications must be submitted through the [online form](#)!²**

During the application process applicants will be able to attend **information sessions** with the aim to help potential applicants to develop good project proposals.

Info sessions will take place online on **29 January** and **02 March 2026** at **11:00 CET**. The content of both sessions is the same. If you would like to attend an info session, please register under [this link](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

All questions from applicants and their answers will be collected in a list of [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#). It will be regularly updated.

² Application documents will be kept by the intermediary organization for 5 years according to the reporting and auditing rules stipulated by the grant agreement between the ROVA consortium and the European Commission. Application documents will be processed by the ROVA consortium partners, and, in case of an audit, by the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors, or OLAF.

Are you unsure whether your idea fits well with this call?

Book a consultation of up to 45 minutes with the grant manager by contacting rova_ergo@ergonetwork.org.

Applicants will be notified of the results of the first round of the competition no later than **23 April 2026**. If shortlisted for the second round, they will receive an application form for the full proposal, which must be submitted no later than **26 May 2026 at 5 pm CET**.

Funding decisions will be communicated no later than **3 July 2026**, and funding contracts will be concluded with successful applicants by **14 August 2026** at the latest.

Applications will be evaluated by external evaluators and a selection committee in both rounds.

Eligible organisations

Civil society organisations legally registered and operating in EU Member States other than Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechia, Slovakia, and Spain may apply for the grant if they meet the following conditions:

- They are a **Roma or pro-Roma organisation** (see definition below).
- They have not received a grant for individual NGOs under the ROVA calls for proposals in 2025.
- They are legally registered.
- They are not established for private gain.
- They may engage in paid economic activities and employ staff, but any income must not be distributed among members, founders, or managers. Economic activities must remain secondary and support the organisation's mission.
- Their main purpose is not to represent the economic or professional interests of their members.
- They were established voluntarily by private individuals or groups, and their activities include elements of voluntary work.
- they operate in the public interest and in public life, for the well-being of people, certain groups or society as a whole, but do not aspire to political power.
- They have a clearly defined mission, internal structure, and governing rules, laid out in their statutes or founding documents.
- They operate in a transparent, and participatory manner, with elected or appointed leaders who are accountable to the organisation's members and supporters.
- They publish annual activity and financial reports, in line with national legislation, and ensure that their activities are publicly accessible. Newly established organisations

that are not yet legally required to submit public reports may instead provide a description of their initial activities and planned transparency measures.

- They are independent from national, regional, and local governments, public institutions, political parties, and for-profit entities. A majority of their founders or governing body members must not represent any of these institutions.
- They have no outstanding public debt.
- They respect and promote the fundamental rights and values of the European Union, as outlined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. A signed declaration confirming this must be submitted with the application.

Definition of Roma and pro-Roma organisations

Only Roma and pro-Roma organisations are eligible to apply. In the selection process, preference will be given to Roma organisations as opposed to pro-Roma organisations.

We consider **Roma organisations** to be civil society organisations working for the strengthening and social inclusion of Roma communities, which define the inclusion and strengthening of Roma communities in their founding documents as part of their goals and activities, and in which people who identify as Roma constitute the majority of the organisation's leadership and staff.

We consider **pro-Roma organisations** to be civil society organisations working for the empowerment and social inclusion of Roma communities, which define the inclusion and strengthening of Roma communities in their founding documents as part of their goals and activities, and which do not have a significant proportion of people who identify as Roma within their leadership and staff.

Eligible types of activities

The following activities that promote the above objectives of the call for proposals are eligible for support under the application:

- **Capacity development activities** targeting organisations, professionals, or community members, such as training, coaching, workshops, mentoring, and other non-formal education tools.
- **Awareness-raising activities** aimed at the broader public, including communication actions and campaigns, the creation and dissemination of offline and online materials, public events, and cultural products.

- **Advocacy and monitoring activities** to strengthen the rule of law and represent disenfranchised groups, including legal advice and advocacy work, community organising and mobilisation, monitoring and evaluation of government policies and programmes targeting Roma, and drafting position papers and publications.
- **Community initiatives** that foster active citizenship and participation among Roma and other societal members, such as local actions, volunteer initiatives, and support for grassroots movements.

Ineligible activities

The programme does not support the following:

- Activities supporting or financing political organisations or candidates.
- Investments, including land or real estate acquisition.
- Purely charitable or humanitarian activities or service provision without empowerment of the target group.
- Activities that fall under statutory obligations of public authorities (e.g. services that municipalities are legally required to provide).
- Leisure, sports, or cultural events that are primarily entertainment-focused and not clearly linked to the programme's goals, or that lack opportunities for follow-up reflection or learning.
- Religious activities.

Financial rules

The grant will be paid as a **lump sum**. In the first application round, only the total planned grant amount requested must be provided. In the second round, the requested grant amount must be supported by a detailed budget. The awarded amount will be paid as a lump sum, which means that the grantee is not required to submit a detailed financial report on the use of the Lump Sum grant, i.e. the amount awarded.

However, the grant managing organisation and the European Union are entitled to an audit, which can check whether the deliverables for which the lump sum was paid were achieved.

Monitoring and accountability

Financial reporting is not required under this lump sum funding scheme. Grant recipients are expected to implement their projects in line with the objectives and deliverables agreed in the grant agreement. To ensure accountability and the proper use of funds, the following mechanisms will apply:

- All supported projects must produce clearly defined outputs and outcomes, as specified in the grant agreement. The achievement of these deliverables is a condition for the full disbursement of the grant.
- Grant recipients must provide verifiable evidence of project activities and deliverables, such as reports, participant lists, materials, photos/videos, and media coverage, as applicable.
- All project-related expenses must be supported by standard financial documentation, such as receipts, invoices, and cash register slips. These documents must be retained by the organisation according to general financial management rules.
- The Grant Manager reserves the right to carry out site visits and on-the-spot checks. These visits are mandatory and will be conducted where feasible to verify that activities are being carried out as planned.
- If deliverables are not met, or if the activities deviate substantially from the approved plan without justification, the Grant Manager may require partial or full repayment of the grant.

Eligible cost categories

All direct costs necessary and proportionate to the implementation of the project and incurred by the supported organisation are eligible, as follows:

- incurred during the implementation of the project (i.e. the performance and invoicing related to the cost take place during the project period).
- necessary for the implementation of the project.
- identifiable and verifiable costs, recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary or its partners in accordance with the relevant legislation; - reasonable, justified, comply with the conditions of efficient and effective financial management.
- comply with the relevant legislation.

Considering the above, the following direct costs are eligible:

- **Salary costs** of employees participating in the project (the total cost of employment, regardless of whether it is an employment relationship, a contract of assignment or an invoiced contractor).
- **Travel, accommodation and subsistence** costs for employees and other participants (e.g. volunteers, participants) involved in the project (specifying the purpose, method and distance of travel).
- **Equipment:** rental or purchase of equipment and supplies necessary for the project, according to the rate used for the project (depreciation of equipment).

- **Costs of services**, including communication costs, events, printing and publication costs, training costs and other services (with a brief description of the name and content of the service).
- **Overheads**: Costs that are not directly related to the project (office rent, cleaning, maintenance costs, utility bills, telephone, internet, accounting, etc.) are eligible up to a maximum of 7% of all other costs.

Ineligible costs categories

- purchase of land, plots, real estate
- construction of new buildings
- purchase of vehicles
- cost of overdraft, other financial transaction costs
- recoverable taxes (including recoverable VAT)
- leasing fees
- foreign exchange/currency exchange losses
- commissions and dividends, profit payments, losses and write-offs of future receivables
- settlement of interest debt and default interest; - fines, penalties and legal costs (except for legal costs incurred during public interest advocacy activities); items already financed from other sources
- costs incurred before the date of conclusion of the contract
- excessive and unnecessary expenses
- debts and provisions for losses or debts

Payment schedule

The first instalment of the grant – 80% of the total grant amount – will be transferred by the grant manager to the supported organisation within 10 working days of the signed contract sent to ERGO Network. The remaining 20% will be transferred in the second half of 2027, after the final report has been approved. In specific cases, a payment schedule with three instalments can be agreed to reduce risks in financial management. The grant amount can be reduced if not all deliverables set out in the grant agreement have been achieved.

Selection process

After receiving the concept notes (stage 1), as well as after receiving the full proposals (stage 2), the grant manager will carry out a formal assessment of administrative compliance. In this assessment, the following will be checked:

- Whether the applicant organisation fulfils the eligibility criteria.
- Whether the applicant has submitted only one application to the call for applications.

- Whether the duration of the application remains within the specified framework (1 September 2026 and 30 September 2027).
- whether the requested grant amount does not exceed the permitted value (maximum EUR 20,000).
- whether the applicant has filled in all fields with the information requested in the given field.

In cases of doubt, the applicant must answer clarifying questions and may be requested to provide documents confirming the data provided in the application. The e-mails requesting clarifying questions and the necessary documents will be sent by a staff member of ERGO Network to the e-mail address of the contact person indicated in your application form. The deadline for responding (and/or submitting documents) is included in the e-mail: usually 5 working days are available. After sending, the grant manager will also contact the applicant by phone.

If the applicant fails to respond by the specified deadline, the application - depending on the nature of the deficiency - will either be rejected or will continue in the system without the requested information, with the resulting disadvantages.

An applicant excluded due to formal, or legal (administrative) non-compliance may request a review of the decision from the grant managing organisation within 10 days of receiving the notification in written. This request will be forwarded by the contact person to the Selection Committee, which will make a proposal to accept/reject the application. If accepted, the application will be returned to the evaluation process.

Award criteria

First round - Concept note stage:

Applications that pass the assessment of administrative compliance are scored by three evaluators based on the following criteria:

- **Relevance:** To what extent is the project concept relevant to the objectives of the call? (0-3 points)
- **Quality:** To what extent is the proposal logical, coherent, and well justified? (0-3 points)
- **Expected impact:** To what extent does the proposal demonstrate the potential for meaningful change in the awareness, support and implementation of EU values, and for a substantial, measurable change in relation to the target groups and the problems and objectives presented (0-3 points)

Applications will be scored on a grade from 1 (poor) to 9 (excellent) based on the above criteria. Only proposals between scores 9 and 5 will be considered for the second round. The Selection Committee will consider the evaluators' suggestions and decide whether to invite a given project proposal to the second round. A maximum of 30 proposals will be shortlisted for round 2.

Second round – full proposal stage:

The detailed project proposals submitted in the second round will be assessed based on the following criteria, scored and textually evaluated by two evaluators:

- **Relevance: How relevant is the project to the objectives of the call? (max 15 points; minimum pass score 8 points):**
 - Alignment with the objectives of the call
 - Relevance for Roma communities / antigypsyism focus
 - Clarity and justification of the needs addressed
- **Quality: How coherent, justified, and well-structured is the proposal? (max 25 points – minimum pass score 12 points)**
 - Problem analysis based on evidence
 - Logical link between goals, activities, and outputs
 - Realism of the workplan and timeline
 - Effective use of resources and realism of resource allocation
 - Risk assessment and mitigation measures
 - Gender and intersectional dimensions; participation of the target group
- **Impact: To what extent will the project lead to meaningful and sustainable change? (Max 25 points; minimum pass score 12 points)**
 - Expected change in awareness and support for EU values
 - Expected change in inclusion and empowerment of Roma communities
 - Clarity and realism of expected results
 - Long-term sustainability and follow-up
 - Potential for replication or wider impact
- **Capacity: Does the organisation have the competence to deliver the project? (Max 10 points; minimum pass score 5 points)**
 - Organisational experience in the thematic area
 - Management and financial capacity
 - Experience and qualifications of key team members

Proposals from Roma organisations will receive **5 extra points** and proposals from pro-Roma organisations **0 points**.

The maximum number of points possible is 80. Only proposals scoring at least 50 points overall will be eligible for funding.

If the difference between the scores of the two evaluators is greater than 30%, the grant managing organisation will also invite a third expert to evaluate the given application. In such cases, the average of the two scores that are closer to each other will be the final score of the application.

During the evaluation of the applications, the independent evaluators may ask additional questions, which the staff of the grant managing organisation will forward to the applicant organisation with a deadline for response of maximum 48 hours. In case of failure to respond, the application will be evaluated based on incomplete information.

Appeals are only possible after the second, full proposal stage. An appeal can be submitted to the selection committee within 10 days after receiving the evaluation letter, describing clearly which parts of the evaluation the applicant contests. The evaluation committee will then review the assessment within 10 days.

The proposal numbers of selected projects will be published on the project website within 3 working days after the decision of the selection committee. The winners will be notified within 7 working days at the contact address provided in the organisational data. Applicants on the reserve list and not selected applicants will be informed by the grant manager within 21 working days. The notification will include the scores achieved, and the textual justification of the decision.

Between the first and second round of applications

A maximum of 3 times the planned number of supported organisations (30) will advance to the second round of the application process.

The shortlisted applicants will receive feedback and development suggestions from the Selection Committee, based on which they will have one month to prepare the full proposal. During this period, staff of the grant manager is available for consultation by phone, email, or in person, and can also get to know the applicant organisation, its activities and target groups through on-site monitoring.

However, the staff of the grant manager **cannot read or comment on written material** in either the first or second round of the application. During the negotiations they can only raise questions with the applicant but cannot give specific suggestions for improving the project proposal.

The grant manager organisation will organise two online **project development workshops** for the shortlisted applicants. The participation of the applicants who advanced to the second round in one of these sessions is mandatory.

Grant agreement preparation

Within 15 days of receiving the funding decision, selected applicants must send the following documents to the grant manager by email:

- Proof of registration of the organisation
- Statutes of the organisation (original + translation into English)
- A copy of a bank account or document provided by the bank, showing clearly the bank details (IBAN and BIC) and the name of the bank account holder
- Latest annual activity report
- Latest annual financial report
- Declaration on Honour from the beneficiary, in which they undertake to follow the highest ethical standards, to respect the fundamental rights and values accepted in the European Union (in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and other relevant legislation), and to refrain from any intolerant or discriminatory actions.

In parallel, the grant manager will prepare the project description as an annex to the grant agreement based on the proposal and eventual suggestions of the selection committee. It will include:

- Project timeline of main activities
- Deliverables (results/outputs)
- Indicators on which basis achievement of deliverables can be verified.

The project description can be agreed upon no later than 7 August 2026. Then, the grant agreement will be prepared by the grant manager and must be signed by the representative of the supported organisation no later than 14 August 2026 in two copies, sent by e-mail to ERGO Network.

Capacity-building for grantees

Applicants will be expected to participate in a series of 6 online webinars organised for all grantees throughout the project period, as well as in a 2-day in-person networking meeting in Brussels during February 2027. The expenses of the in-person meetings will be covered by the programme; you do not have to budget them. Grantees will also have the opportunity to receive additional expert support based on individual needs.

This call for applications is published within the framework of the ROVA project. The ROVA project is implemented by ERGO Network and five of its member organisations (Autonomia Foundation - Hungary, FAGIC - Spain, Integro Association - Bulgaria, Nevo Parudimos - Romania, Romanonet - Czechia) between January 2025 and December 2027. The programme provides

financial support and capacity building to Roma and pro-Roma civil society organisations working to promote fundamental EU rights and values, strengthen Roma communities and promote social inclusion.



**Funded by
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



The project is supported by the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ).