

Call for Proposals “Children First. Protection of Ukraine's Future”

Guidelines for applicants

1. Objective of the Call for Proposals

1.1. **The objective of this call for proposals** is to strengthen accountability for crimes against Ukrainian children committed by institutions, natural and legal persons of russia and other states, and to strengthen opportunities for children and their guardians to return from temporarily occupied territories or deportation.

Since the beginning of russia’s war against Ukraine in 2014, millions of children have been forced to leave their homes — both within the country and in search of refuge abroad — or have ended up in temporarily occupied territories. The armed conflict has caused a humanitarian crisis during which children suffer injuries, sexual violence, unlawful deportation and transfer, family separation, attacks on schools, and other civilian infrastructure.

Children affected by russia’s war against Ukraine face increased vulnerability due to deliberately disrupted social protection systems, limited access to education, healthcare, and psychosocial support, as well as the loss of legal status and documents. Children deprived of parental care, children with disabilities, and those living in areas close to the front line, in temporarily occupied territories, or who have been forcibly deported face particular risk.

It is necessary to ensure effective accountability for crimes against children and to increase the scope of support for children returning from deportation or temporarily occupied territories, to document violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, to strengthen national and international mechanisms for victim identification, investigation, and accountability, and to ensure victim-centered justice as well as the availability of emergency support.

Project proposals are invited as part of the programme “Children First. Protection of Ukraine's Future”, financed by the Fund for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (the Call).

1.2. Thematic Areas:

1.2.1. Project proposals need to correspond to one or more of the envisaged thematic areas of the call: strengthening legal accountability for crimes; data verification, tracing and victim identification activities, and facilitation of the process of return from deportation or temporarily occupied territories. (see the detailed description of eligible activities in Section 6).

1.3. NOTES:

1.3.1. Project applications may be submitted for a selected single thematic area (e.g. for victim identification activities exclusively without implementing activities to strengthen accountability for crimes), or for several thematic areas at once.

1.3.2. Within the framework of the Call for proposals, children are understood to be persons who were minors at the time the crime against them was committed (during the period 2014–2026), who are no older than 29 during the project implementation period.

1.3.3. Families or guardians are considered to be persons performing the functions of child guardianship (caregiver) and legal representatives, as well as (if they do not coincide): parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters.

1.3.4. Upon concluding a project implementation agreement with the selected applicants, the applicants become project implementers and assume liability for the proper implementation of the activities.

2. Indicative Amount of Funds to Be Allocated under the Call

2.1. Total amount allocated to the Call – EUR 600 000.

3. Size of Grants

3.1. Minimum eligible amount – EUR 30 000.

3.2. Maximum eligible amount – EUR 100 000.

3.3. Own contribution is not required.

4. Project Implementation Duration

4.1. From 6 to 12 months.

4.2. Projects of a duration shorter than 6 months or longer than 12 months will be rejected (will be assessed as non-compliant with the Call Guidelines).

5. Eligible Applicants

5.1. Project proposals may be submitted by: non-governmental organisations, research or academic institutions registered in Ukraine and/or EU Member States, with at least 1 year of experience of work with vulnerable social groups (indicating activities demonstrating relevant experience in the Applicant Declaration form, see Annex 1. Applicant Declaration form).

5.2. An applicant may submit only one project proposal under this Call. Applicants shall submit project applications individually (without partners).

5.3. Applicants must comply with environmental legislation and core labour standards under the conventions of the International Labour Organisation (including freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the prohibition of forced and child labour).

5.4. Applicants must also respect the fundamental values of the EU – human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights, including the rights of minorities. In all activities, the protection of children’s rights must be ensured and the principle of the best interests of the child must be followed, ensuring that every decision or action complies with the priorities of the child’s safety, well-being, and dignity.

5.5. Applicants are subject to a zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. Physical or psychological violence, threats, sexual exploitation, harassment, or any form of intimidation is prohibited.

5.6. Applicants must comply with anti-corruption and anti-bribery legislation. If corrupt practices are identified, funding may be suspended or terminated.

5.7. Applicants undertake to ensure, when carrying out public procurement and declaring incurred expenditure, that:

5.7.1. Suppliers, subcontractors, and entities whose capacities are relied upon (where they account for 10 % of the contract value) are not subject to the restrictions laid down in Council Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine, as amended;

5.7.2. Suppliers and subcontractors are not subject to the restrictions laid down in Council Regulation (EU) No 269/2014 of 17 March 2014 concerning restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, as amended.

5.8. The Central Project Management Agency (CPMA) may suspend or terminate cooperation upon identifying breaches of commitments or fraud, and may also refuse to conclude a contract if such cases come to light after the decision to allocate funding.

6. Eligible Activities

6.1. Activities of documentation of crimes against Ukrainian children, submission of data to international and Ukrainian institutions, as well as processing, verification, and systemization of data. Activities strengthening the capacities and capabilities of Ukrainian law enforcement to effectively investigate and hold accountable perpetrators or participants of criminal acts. Activities of identification and tracing of affected children and strengthening the effectiveness of sanctions.

6.2. Facilitation of return and technical assistance, provision of initial psychosocial support to children and their families or guardians who have experienced forced deportation from Ukraine or found themselves in temporarily occupied territories, including, where needed, temporary accommodation, emergency medical assistance, psychological support, document facilitation, transportation, and case supervision activities.

6.3. NOTE: project applications may provide for the implementation of part of the specified activities (it is not mandatory to carry out all the listed eligible activities).

6.4. ATTENTION: Applicants intending to implement activities facilitating return from deportation or temporarily occupied territories are eligible to choose the lump-sum financing method. The method foresees fixed-amount payments dependent on project results achieved. Fixed-amounts will be established in the project contract for individual project implementer, in accordance with the budget proposals submitted by applicants, based on price analysis and data from similar previously implemented projects. You can familiarise yourself in more detail with the conditions for the application of the lump-sum financing method in Section 8 of this Call.

7. Eligibility of Costs

7.1. Eligible costs:

7.1.1 Costs of procuring services and goods, if they are an integral and necessary part of the project activities;

7.1.2. Wage costs and employer-paid social insurance contributions related to the implementation of project activities;

7.1.3. Costs of carrying out the planned project activities (e.g. experts' remuneration);

7.1.4. Business travel costs (daily allowances, travel, rental of living space, and other costs related to the business trip, calculated in accordance with the procedure established by legislation regulating the reimbursement of business trip expenses);

7.1.5. Service procurement costs corresponding to market prices (accommodation, event organization, catering, transport rental, event equipment rental, etc.);

7.1.6. Costs related to project publicity (articles, dissemination of information on social media, posters, leaflets, etc.);

7.1.7. VAT costs that the project implementer cannot recover;

7.1.8. Other costs necessary for the project, directly related to the implementation of project activities and provided for in the project budget;

7.1.9. Indirect project costs – planned project implementation costs that are not directly related to the implementation of project activities, but are necessary and directly related to direct project costs (office premises rental, transportation, purchase or rental of short-term assets, communications, financial services (payment services), as well as project management costs (actual salary costs of the project manager, coordinator, accountant, other project team members and related costs, if they are calculated and paid for the actual time spent implementing the project, or costs of acquiring project management or financial accounting services), and other costs not provided for in the project expenditure budget, which are necessary for the successful implementation of the project or which create added value for the project). If indirect project costs are substantiated at the time of submitting the application, during project implementation the indirect project costs are paid according to the percentage rate fixed in the Agreement from the amount of declared eligible direct project costs.

7.2. All costs not specified in points 7.1.1–7.1.9. are ineligible for funding, including:

7.2.1. Costs of acquiring long-term assets and costs for other investments, including construction (contract) works, except in cases where this is an integral part of the project;

7.2.2. Costs that are already financed from other funding sources;

7.2.3. Costs that increase the project costs without proportionately increasing its value;

7.2.4. VAT that the project implementer can recover;

7.2.5. Expenses for the acquisition of weapons, other military equipment, nuclear technology not intended for peaceful purposes, luxury goods, services or gifts, and other activities contrary to the interests of Lithuania's foreign policy;

7.2.6. Meal expenses for the applicant's employees if they were paid daily allowances during business trips;

7.2.7. Interest;

7.2.8. Expenses for works, goods and/or services required for project implementation that were purchased from the applicant and/or its employees;

7.2.9. Meal and accommodation expenses of service providers that are included in the service fee (unless otherwise agreed in the service provision contracts);

7.2.10. Expenses incurred and paid not by the project implementer.

7.3. Requirements for Substantiating the Budget Estimate:

The amount of expenses required for the implementation of the activities planned in the project application must, when submitting the project application, be substantiated by the methods listed below (the documents must be submitted together with the Project Budget):

7.3.1. Documents substantiating salary expenses (certificates on the rates normally applied in the institution, certificates on the average salary of a specific employee for 6 months, certificates on the average total salaries of employees in the relevant position (or performing similar functions), or references to publicly available information on the average salary in Lithuania and/or the partner state (institution, organisation), etc.).

7.3.2. To substantiate the planned amount of expenses for goods and/or services and/or works, the following shall be submitted:

7.3.2.1. no fewer than 3 commercial offers (submitted no earlier than 3 months before the application submission deadline; in such case, the average price of the 3 commercial offers shall be indicated in the budget), and where the estimated value of the procurement object is not more than or equal to EUR 15,000.00 excluding VAT – at least 1 commercial offer, or

7.3.2.2. screenshots of no fewer than 3 online store pages indicating the price of the goods, services, or works, or

7.3.2.3. a copy of a signed contract for goods, services, or works, or of an invoice if the purchase was concluded orally, provided that the contract for goods, services, or works was concluded no earlier than 3 years before the application submission deadline, where the goods, services, or works are analogous to those under the applicant's completed procurements.

7.3.3. Taking into account the complexity of the project activities and the uncertainty and variability of part of the possible expenses to be incurred in implementing activities facilitating return from deportation or temporarily occupied territories, and where the application of a lump sum is chosen, up to 15 % of the amount of expenses planned in the project application budget to achieve a specific result may be left unsupported by attached documents.

7.3.4. NOTE: substantiation of the expenses planned in the project budget is used only for the purpose of assessing the expenses planned in the project application. During project implementation, actual expenses substantiated by documents proving that the expenses were incurred and paid must be declared (not applicable where the lump sum financing method is chosen).

8. Lump-Sum Financing (applicable only to project proposals intended to implement activities facilitating return from deportation or temporarily occupied territories)

8.1. A lump sum is a fixed amount determined during the application assessment and specified in the project contract, allocated to achieve a specific agreed result (e.g. return one child to Ukraine, etc.). Applicants who choose lump-sum financing shall indicate this need when submitting the application. Lump-sum financing cannot be applied if the need is communicated at later stages.

8.2. The lump sum will be paid to the project implementer for the activity results achieved as established in the contract, upon submission of appropriate evidence of the results achieved, without submitting documents proving the actual costs incurred or their payment.

8.3. Procedure for determining the lump sum:

In order to determine the lump sum, the applicant shall submit a detailed budget, in which costs are broken down by activities and their results. Costs may be based on historical data from implementing similar projects, or by providing price justification from publicly available sources and service provider offers. The planned costs to be incurred must comply with the cost eligibility criteria specified in point 7. Costs must be justified, proportionate, and necessary for the proposed activity. To ensure that the budget is justified and not excessive, costs are assessed taking into account the activities planned for implementation and the results sought.

8.4. In accordance with point 7.3.3 of this Call, the sum of the planned costs to achieve a specific result, unsupported by supporting documents (up to 15%), shall be indicated in a separate line in the project application budget as “Unforeseen and Variable Costs”.

9. Instructions for Submission and Evaluation information

9.1. The project application must present the following information concisely and clearly: project objectives; final beneficiaries, project outputs, described activities, target group(s); how the project helps implement the selected thematic area or areas of the Call, the relevance of the project (what needs of the beneficiary/target group will be addressed); the project’s added value; the main location where the activities will be implemented; a detailed analysis of the problems to be solved and the ways to solve them; sustainability of the activities, project duration in months, the amount requested for funding, and the total project value. Funding will be granted and applicants will be invited to conclude project implementation contracts only if they have successfully passed the evaluation and received the highest number of points.

9.2. Project applications may be submitted in Lithuanian or English. Lithuanian applicants shall submit project applications in Lithuanian, while applicants from other countries shall submit them in Lithuanian or English. Annexes to the project application in other languages must be translated into Lithuanian or English. In case of suspicions regarding inaccuracies in the translation, CPMA has the right to require the submission of a translation of the document certified by the translator’s signature and, where applicable, the stamp of the translation office, or to require that the signature of the person who performed the translation be notarised. Applications and annexes are accepted only if submitted in the application system: <https://cpva.submittable.com/submit>. The exact link will be published on the CPMA website. Annexes to the application that must be submitted together with the application: Annex 1: signed Applicant Declaration form; Annex 2. Logical Framework; Annex 3. Budget; Annex 4. Declaration on VAT eligibility; Annex 5. Project Implementation Plan.

9.3. ATTENTION: a summary of received project applications will be made public (information made public: applicant, project title, amount of funds requested). Evaluation results will also be made public (information made public: applicant, project title, approved amount of funding, average score awarded (points), decision on the allocation of funds (decision in principle or fund resources allocated). By submitting a project application, you agree to the publication of such information.

Before submitting project applications, we invite you to assess whether the publication of such information poses security risks to the organisation's activities, the safety of employees or beneficiaries, and to take the aforementioned risks into account when formulating the project title.

9.4. Applicants are strongly advised not to wait until the last day to submit the project application; communication disruptions (including power supply disruptions, etc.) will not be considered a justifiable reason to extend the deadline for submitting the project application or to submit it by means other than those specified in the Call guidelines.

9.5. ATTENTION: applicants submitting proposals intended to facilitate return from deportation or temporarily occupied territories who opt for the lump-sum financing method, shall indicate such need when submitting the application. Lump-sum financing cannot be applied if the need is communicated at later stages.

9.6. Upon conclusion of the project contract, the following payment procedure is envisaged:

9.6.1. 45 % advance payment of the requested project funding amount, paid upon signing the project funding agreement;

9.6.2. up to 50 % interim payment of the total project amount, paid after the interim report approved by CPVA, provided that more than 70 % of the previously received amounts have been recognised as incurred and eligible for financing. Once 70 % or more of the advance amount has been used, the report may be submitted earlier;

9.6.3. the final payment is paid after approval of the final report and is calculated as the difference between the eligible project costs incurred and approved for financing and the payments already paid by CPMA.

9.6.4. An individual payment schedule may be applied to projects with a duration of up to 6 months.

9.7. Project proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation procedure below:

9.7.1. Administrative compliance evaluation is carried out (whether all required and properly completed documents have been submitted). If the Applicant fails to submit the mandatory annexes to the project application, they may be requested to submit them within a period of not less than 2 working days and not more than 5 working days. In the event of substantial deficiencies (the Applicant not meeting the eligibility requirements, requesting more funding than the eligible amount, the planned project duration being longer than set out in the guidelines, etc.), the project application is no longer evaluated further and is rejected.

9.7.2. Upon determining that the Project Application complies with the technical requirements, the Project Application is evaluated by a designated evaluation working group. The maximum number of points that may be awarded to a Project Application is 100 points; points are awarded by assessing the project application's compliance with the criteria specified in the table below. The total number of points obtained by the project application is calculated by adding up the evaluations for all criteria. Project applications that do not obtain the minimum passing score (40 points) will be rejected and will not be included in the ranking of applications.

9.7.3. Applications that have obtained the passing or a higher score will be included in the ranking of applications (from the highest-scoring to the lowest-scoring) according to the overall score. Funding will be allocated to the highest-scoring applications in descending order until the funds allocated for the Call are fully utilised.

Evaluation criteria	Maximum possible score to be awarded
1. Applicant's capacities	15
1.1. Does the applicant have project implementation experience?	5
1.2. Does the applicant have the competencies required to implement the activities (the ability to meet the needs of the target group)?	5
1.3. Does the applicant have sufficient internal capacity? (including the required personnel, equipment, and the ability to manage the project budget)	5
2. Project relevance	30
2.1. Compliance. Does the proposed project comply with the objective and thematic areas of the Call?	15
2.2. Relevance to the needs of the specific sector (including interaction with other initiatives and avoidance of duplication)	15
3. Project logic	20
3.1. Does the application provide an analysis of the problems to be addressed? Is it clear how the project will seek to solve them? Is the target group clearly defined (there may be several groups), and does the target group correspond to the project objective and the expected results?	5
3.2. Logical framework: Is the logical framework form comprehensive? Are appropriate indicators provided to assess the results?	5
3.3. Does the application maintain a consistent internal project logic, whereby the anticipated results correspond to the project goal and objectives, are a consequence of the project activities, the project activities create the preconditions for implementing the project objectives, and the latter for achieving the established project goal and addressing the needs of the target group?	5
3.4. The application provides a consistent activity implementation plan corresponding to the indicated project activities. It is assessed whether the project implementation plan is: 1) clear, 2) consistent, 3) detailed, 4) it is clearly indicated who is responsible for the implementation of the activities.	5
4. Budget and efficiency of the action	20
4.1. Budget: The submitted budget is consistent, corresponds to the project structure and the planned activities	5
4.2. The costs set out in the project budget for the implementation of activities are eligible for funding and are necessary to achieve the objectives and results.	10

4.3. The estimated costs comply with the principle of economy and are justified	5
5. Identified project risks and measures for their management	5
6. Sustainability of activities	10
6.1. Is it likely that the activity will ensure long-term benefits for the target groups and beneficiaries?	5
6.2. Multiplier effect and sustainability. Is it likely that the project will have a multiplier effect, including opportunities to upscale the project, share good practices? Is it likely that the project's impact or activities will continue after the funding ends?	5

Points	Value
1	Very poor
2	Poor
3	Satisfactory
4	Good
5	Very good

10. Deadlines for Submission of Documents, Provision of Information, and Evaluation of Documents

10.1. Period allocated for questions regarding the procedure of submitting documents: from the publication of the Call until 25 June 2026. Questions may be asked by phone (phone number +370 656 59004) or by email at g.motuzaitė-pastore@cpva.lt. Questions may be asked in Lithuanian or English.

10.2. Project applications with all required annexes must be submitted by 25 June 2026 at 17:00 Lithuanian time.

10.3. The evaluation results are expected to be announced approximately in one month.