

EPIM Rolling Call for Proposals¹

Seizing opportunities to advise European asylum policies and practices

Guidelines for the submission of a concept note

1. Introduction

European asylum politics and legislative schedules move fast, especially in times of emergency. At EU level, for 2020 alone, a joint communication was released on a 'new comprehensive strategy with Africa' with migration at its core and the European Commission is planning the publication of the new Pact on Migration and Asylum later this year. The European Council is planning a review of the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement and recently outlined Justice and Home Affairs priorities until 2024.² Beyond these frameworks, it is their actual implementation and translation (or lack thereof) into national, bilateral, regional and local policies and practices that impact the lives of people who seek international protection. The recent suspensions of the right to asylum in multiple Member States in the framework of Covid-19 protection measures is an example thereof.

Whether in emergency conditions or in regular times, civil society organisations at all levels play a key role as watchdogs, protectors of the rule of law and promoters of alternative policy approaches, based on their experience on the ground. Collaborations among civil society organisations, active at EU, national, bilateral, regional, and/or local levels remain central to ensure compliance with international human rights standards and EU asylum law and counter risks of moving away from EU frameworks and solutions.

Through this call for proposals, EPIM aims to **support (transnational) partnerships of civil society organisations active at EU, national, bilateral, regional and/or local levels**. EPIM aims to support their **efforts to seize (urgent) opportunities to advise asylum policies and practices across Europe**, in light of existing and future EU asylum law, policies, frameworks and human rights standards.

This is a rolling Call for Proposals: eligible civil society organisations are invited to submit concept notes anytime for a maximum budget of 40,000 EUR. Applications will be reviewed on a regular basis and according to the grant review cycle described in section 9. Only shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit full applications.

EPIM and its Thematic on Asylum in Europe

The [European Programme for Integration and Migration \(EPIM\)](#) is a collaborative funding initiative of grant-making foundations, hosted in the Network of European Foundations (NEF) in Brussels. This Call for Proposals is launched under [EPIM's Thematic Fund on Asylum in Europe](#). Through this Fund, EPIM aims to support civil society organisations to ensure that people in need of international protection are able to access European asylum systems that are humane fair, effective and capable of offering protection.

¹ Eligible civil society organisations can apply anytime and applications will be reviewed regularly. See section 9 for more details.

² Council of the EU, Strategic guidelines in the field of Justice and Home Affairs, 31 January 2020.

2. Objectives

Through this Call for Proposals, EPIM aims to support (transnational) partnerships of civil society organisations active at EU, national, bilateral, regional and/or local levels. The support is for their efforts to **seize (urgent) opportunities to advise European asylum policies and practices**. In light of existing and future EU asylum law, policies, frameworks and human rights standards, projects should aim to:

- **promote feasible (evidence-based) alternatives**; and/or
- **put forward thought-provoking ideas**, and/or
- **react to policy proposals and practices** to safeguard the right to asylum and prevent backtracking.

Proposed projects should contribute to ensure that all migrants are able to access European asylum systems that are humane, fair, effective and capable of offering protection.

3. Eligible applicants

- a. Applicants must be **non-profit and non-governmental organisations registered in the European Union or in the United Kingdom**. Non-profit organisations active **at EU, national, bilateral, regional and/or local levels** are eligible for this call for proposals. Non-EU based non-profit organisations can apply as partners.
- b. Applicants should apply in **partnership**. EPIM will only consider applications that are based on a **partnership**: civil society partnerships eligible for this Call for Proposals should at least include 2 civil society organisations. Transnational partnerships (i.e. between organisations based in different countries) are encouraged but not required. The involvement of other types of actors, such as international organisations, academic institutions and/or public bodies is optional and would come in support of the above-mentioned partnership.
- c. **Eligible applicants may submit more than one concept note** under this call for proposals both as lead applicants and/or as project partner. The organisation that leads the application will be considered as the project coordinator.

4. Eligible project proposals

- a. Applications **must address the objectives outlined for this Call for Proposals** (see section 2).
- b. EPIM will only consider projects that are **advocacy-focused**, i.e. are seeking to bring about a change in existing and/or future policies and practices. Supported activities could include, among others: power mapping and analysis, joint transnational civil society strategising, policy roundtables, bilateral advocacy meetings, legislative lobbying, strategic litigation, and development of advocacy tools. Other activities such as research and evidence collection, capacity development interventions and campaigning could also be considered as long as they are deemed relevant to achieve advocacy outcomes.
- c. Projects should be **implemented in the European Union**. Additionally, projects implemented in **non-EU countries** (e.g. Turkey, UK) could also be considered eligible if of EU relevance.
- d. Projects can target the **EU, national, bilateral, regional and/or local levels** as long as they are **EU-relevant** (see selection criteria in Section 5 for more details).
- e. Applications for standalone trainings or individual academic study/research/travel are not eligible.
- f. Funds cannot be provided for physical capital projects. Instead, funds may support **direct costs of advocacy**, including staff time, travels, meetings with policymakers, communications costs etc.

- g. **English** is the working language of EPIM. Only applications in English will be accepted. Furthermore, the organisation's staff communicating with the EPIM Secretariat and participating in EPIM capacity and network development programmes will be expected to work in English.

5. Selection criteria

- **Clear identification of advocacy opportunity(ies) & EU relevance:**
 - the proposal must clearly identify specific ongoing or upcoming legislative and political agendas and/or concrete changes in practice the project aims to target, at EU, national, bilateral, regional and/or local levels;
 - the applicant should explain why the proposal is timely given the above;
 - the proposal should explain its EU relevance: the project should explain how it relates to existing and future EU asylum law, policies, frameworks and human rights standards. Proposals that mainly focus on the achievement of advocacy outcomes at national/regional/bilateral/local level should demonstrate how these changes can contribute to inform policy change at EU level and/or contribute to ensure compliance with existing EU asylum law and human rights standards.
- **Strategic advocacy and theory of change:**
 - The proposal must clearly explain the relevance of the proposed approach with regard to the opportunity offered by and/or emergency/risk addressed at the EU, national, bilateral, regional and/or local contexts.
 - The proposal must indicate the concrete and realistic changes it will aim for. Outcomes foreseen in the proposal should be realistic and progress towards these objectives should be measurable within the project timeframe.
 - The proposed strategy should be targeted and seek to influence specific decision-makers and/or practitioners. The choice of target country(ies) and levels of intervention (EU, national, regional, bilateral and/or local) must be based on a sound analysis of the opportunities, emergencies and risks to be addressed in the EU, national, bilateral, regional and/or local contexts.

6. Duration of projects

The project begins after the signature of the contract at a date agreed upon with EPIM. Projects should have a **maximum duration of 18 months** and can start anytime.

7. Budget

Concept notes do not need to be accompanied by a budget proposal. Shortlisted applicants for the full application phase will be invited to submit a budget proposal within the **maximum budget of 40,000 EUR**.

8. How to apply

The application process consists of a two-step process:

STEP 1: Applicants are invited to submit Concept Notes.

If you consider applying for this Call for Proposals, please use our online application system to submit a proposal together with supporting documents. To access the application form, please visit the website <https://nef-europe.optimytool.com/en/> and click on the tab 'Submit an Application'.

STEP 2: Shortlisted applicants are invited to submit a full application together with a budget proposal.

9. Review and decision-making

This a rolling Call for Proposals and applications will be **reviewed every 3 months starting from 4 May 2020**.

1. **Eligibility check:** All submitted applications will be reviewed by EPIM for compliance with eligibility criteria. If an application does not include all required information or supporting documents, EPIM can notify the applicant to complete the proposal by submitting the missing documents in due time.
2. **Selection:** Each concept note that meets the eligibility criteria shall be reviewed by the EPIM Secretariat. Following this review, shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit full proposals. Full applications will be reviewed by two independent and impartial experts. The experts shall separately and independently score the project according to selection criteria. EPIM will conduct follow-up interviews with applicants.
3. **Decision:** Funding decisions are the exclusive discretionary competence of the EPIM Selection Committee, which consists of members of the Foundations involved in EPIM's Thematic Fund on Asylum in Europe, based on the recommendations of independent experts and the interview with EPIM.

Applicants will be kept informed at each step of the process and a specific timeframe will be communicated to them regarding the selection and decision-making process, upon receipt of their application. All applicants will be informed about the decision by email. All selected projects will be announced on the EPIM website.

10.Contact

Please refer any questions you might have to Sophie Ngo-Diep at sophie.ngo-diep@epim.info.