



Call for Proposals:

GEAR UP! – Small Grants for Local Initiatives in the Field of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and Sustainable Development in Croatia

Project reference: EuropeAid/173998/DH/ACT/Multi

1. Introduction

CROSOL – The Croatian Platform for International Citizen Solidarity invites **civil society organisations (CSOs) and local authorities (LAs)** to submit project proposals under the GEAR UP! project.

This Call for Proposals is part of the European project **GEAR UP! – “Global citizenship Education Actions to stRngthen yoUth engagement through local support to LAs and CSOs, to accelerate Progress towards sustainable development”** (hereinafter: the Project), which aims to strengthen Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and sustainable development through local actions, as well as to empower young people for active participation in society. The Project is implemented under the European Commission’s **DEAR Programme** and includes a **financial support mechanism** for civil society organisations (CSOs) and **local authorities (LAs)**.

Project activities are implemented in **Italy, Spain, Germany, France, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Croatia and Hungary**, as well as in **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia**.

In Croatia, **CROSOL**, as one of the partner organisations of the GEAR UP! consortium, is responsible for implementing the **financial support mechanism for third parties** to support local initiatives.

GEAR UP! will support projects that promote awareness of **global challenges, sustainable development, social and environmental justice, gender equality, and active citizenship**, with a particular emphasis on **youth engagement**.

Eligible applicants are **civil society organisations and/or local authorities** that are registered and operating in the following counties of the Republic of Croatia:

- Krapina-Zagorje County
- Sisak-Moslavina County



- Karlovac County
- Varaždin County
- Koprivnica-Križevci County
- Bjelovar-Bilogora County
- Primorje-Gorski Kotar County
- Lika-Senj County
- Virovitica-Podravina County
- Požega-Slavonia County
- Brod-Posavina County
- Zadar County
- Osijek-Baranja County
- Šibenik-Knin County
- Vukovar-Srijem County
- Split-Dalmatia County
- Istria County
- Dubrovnik-Neretva County
- Međimurje County

This Call is intended for projects that promote **youth engagement, Global Citizenship Education (GCE), and sustainable development.**

2. Objectives and priorities

The GEAR UP! project aims to foster a shared European vision of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) as a key tool for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda. It focuses on raising awareness, particularly among young people, about climate change, sustainable development, and gender equality, while promoting strong and lasting cooperation between Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Local Authorities (LAs).



Specific objectives

Each funding proposal should address **one or more** specific objectives:

The project pursues three specific objectives:

- 1)** Empower Local Authorities and/or Civil Society Organisations in **Croatia** through financial support, enabling them to raise awareness of global challenges, strengthen understanding of local-global interdependencies, and actively participate in decision-making processes.
- 2)** Build the capacities and networks of LAs and CSOs by enhancing skills, facilitating knowledge exchange, and providing resources for effective Global Citizenship Education at regional and European levels.
- 3)** Engage and educate young people (15-30 years old) in Croatia on sustainability and global challenges, through GCE initiatives led by LAs and/or CSOs.

Priorities

Each proposal should address **one or more** priorities.

The thematic priorities of this call are:

1. sustainable development and SDGs
2. youth engagement
3. global citizenship education (with focus on civic engagement)
4. social or environmental justice
5. gender equality, non-discrimination principle and intersectionality
6. awareness and critical understanding of global issues
7. global/local interdependencies (considering culture and international development cooperation)

3. Scope of the Call and Eligible Activities

Examples of eligible activities:

- Awareness-raising campaigns, education and training programmes related to Global Citizenship Education, sustainable development, climate change, gender equality, and youth engagement



- Interactive workshops, round tables, and panel discussions
- Public events, cultural and artistic activities focusing on Global Citizenship Education and the Sustainable Development Goals
- Activities in formal and non-formal education related to Global Citizenship Education
- Production of educational materials and tools (printed, digital, etc.)
- Activities that promote active citizenship and youth participation in decision-making processes

Examples of non-eligible activities:

- Activities that discriminate against any social group
- Political activities that directly support political parties
- Activities involving religious proselytism

Financial framework

The total amount available for financing projects in Croatia is **EUR 165,000**.

Individual grants awarded under this Call may range from **EUR 5,000 to EUR 20,000**, and the awarded funding will cover **100% of the total project budget**.

Number of funded projects

Although the aim is to support a minimum of **12 projects**, the final number of grants awarded will depend on the availability of funds and their distribution among the selected applicants. The Selection Committee reserves the right not to allocate all available funds if the quality of the submitted applications does not meet the required standards. In such cases, any unallocated funds will be transferred to the budget of the subsequent funding cycle.

Number of applications

Each applicant may submit **a maximum of one (1) project proposal as the lead applicant**.

In addition, an applicant may participate **as a partner in no more than one (1) additional project proposal** under this Call.



Project duration

Under the GEAR UP! Call for Proposals, projects with a duration of **6 to 9 months** will be supported.

All funded projects must be fully implemented **no later than 31 December 2026**. Applicants are required to propose a realistic and feasible implementation timeline that enables high-quality delivery of project activities, effective monitoring, and timely reporting. The project duration must be aligned with the proposed objectives and expected results to ensure tangible impact and the sustainability of achieved outcomes.

Extensions of the project duration beyond the prescribed timeframe will not be possible; therefore, beneficiaries must strictly adhere to the approved implementation schedule.

Eligible Costs

Under this Call for Proposals, **direct and indirect costs** related to the implementation of project activities may be financed.

General conditions for eligibility of costs

Eligible costs are costs incurred by the grant beneficiary that meet **all the following criteria**:

- they are incurred during the project implementation period in accordance with the grant agreement.
- they are included in the project budget.
- they are necessary for the implementation of the project for which the financial support is awarded.
- they can be clearly identified and verified and are recorded in the beneficiary's accounting system in accordance with the applicable regulations governing the accounting of non-profit organisations.
- they are proportionate, justified, and in line with the principles of sound financial management, regarding economy and efficiency.
- they are incurred by and invoiced to the project applicant, and exceptionally to a partner, if this is foreseen and specified in the application.



Eligible direct costs

Eligible direct costs are costs that are **directly related to the implementation of specific activities** of the proposed project, including, but not limited to:

- costs of staff or persons engaged in the project, corresponding to actual expenditure on salaries or fees for other income, including taxes and social contributions, as well as other costs related to salaries or fees.
- costs of services, including the rental of equipment and materials (new or used) intended exclusively for the project, as well as other services if they comply with market prices (e.g. translation services, equipment maintenance, refreshments for event participants, rental of conference venues, etc.).
- costs of equipment intended exclusively for the implementation of the project.
- travel and accommodation costs, including transport, per diems, and accommodation costs for staff and other persons involved in the project, if they comply with the applicable rules on the level of such allowances for beneficiaries financed from the state budget.

Eligible indirect costs

Eligible indirect costs are costs that are **not directly linked to the implementation of project activities** but indirectly contribute to the achievement of the project's objectives.

These include, for example, costs related to the organisation's core activities, such as:

- utility costs (energy, water, telephone, internet, rent of premises).
- bank and postal charges.
- office supplies and similar administrative costs.

The total amount of eligible indirect costs **may not exceed 7% of the total amount of funding requested from CROSOL or approved by CROSOL.**

Justification of costs

When completing the budget, **all costs must be clearly justified**, in such a way that for each individual cost item the following is specified:

- the link between the cost and the project activities.



- the quantity and unit price.
- the amount of funding requested from CROSOL.

It is both the obligation and the direct interest of the applicant to ensure a **realistic, justified, and cost-effective project budget**.

Language of application

Applications under this Call must be submitted **exclusively in English**.
Reporting shall also be submitted in English.

Explanation of the language requirement

GEAR UP! is a European Commission project implemented in several EU countries, with the **lead partner being the Region of Marche (Italy)**. As all key project documentation, communication among partners, evaluation processes, as well as programme and financial audits are conducted in English, the application forms must also be prepared in the same language. This ensures **consistent, clear, and efficient processing of data and subsequent reporting by all grant beneficiaries**.

Visibility requirements

All selected projects must comply with **visibility and communication requirements**, including the mandatory use of donor logos on all publications, materials, documents, announcements, and any other visibility and communication activities related to the project.

Monitoring and evaluation

Grant beneficiaries are required to comply with **all MEAL requirements** of the GEAR UP! project, including monitoring activities, evaluation forms, and tools that will be provided at the time of contract signature.

The grant beneficiary commits to carrying out project monitoring and evaluation in accordance with predefined instructions, with the support of the **CROSOL Project Manager**.



4. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for funding under this Call, applicants must meet the following criteria:

Applicants must:

- be a **legal person** – a civil society organisation (CSO), association, foundation, or institution established in accordance with the applicable legislation of the Republic of Croatia, or a **local authority (LA)**;
- operate within one of the eligible counties listed in this Call.
- may also apply as a **consortium of non-profit organisations and/or LAs**, with a clearly designated **Lead Organisation**.
- if the applicant is a CSO, be registered in accordance with Croatian legislation.
- be non-profit in nature.
- not be a beneficiary of a grant (neither as lead applicant, nor as partner, affiliated entity, or contractor) under the European Commission's **DEAR Programme**.
- be legally registered for at least **12 months** prior to the publication date of this Call.
- comply with **EU due diligence requirements**, as defined in the **Declaration on Exclusion**.

Note: Individual applicants (without a formal partnership) are eligible under this Call. However, **partnerships between CSOs and LAs** will be awarded additional points during the evaluation process, as they contribute to strengthening local multi-sectoral action.

All applicants and proposed projects must respect the **fundamental rights and values of the European Union**, including respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights, including the rights of minorities.

Prior to signing the grant agreement, **CROSOL** will carry out a verification of the eligibility and compliance of the applicant organisations with the above-mentioned principles. In cases of reasonable suspicion of a breach of the fundamental values of the European Union, CROSOL reserves the right to conduct additional checks, which may include a review of publicly available information such as websites, social media profiles, publications, and publicly expressed positions of the organisation.

Based on the results of this verification, the **GEAR UP! Project Evaluation Committee** may decide to reject the award of financial support to a proposed project, **regardless of the score achieved** in the evaluation process.



Eligible locations

Applicants must be registered and actively operating in one of the eligible Croatian counties (**all counties except the City of Zagreb and Zagreb County**). All project activities must be implemented **within the territory of the Republic of Croatia**, in the eligible counties.

5. Timeline and Application Procedure

Project proposals must be submitted **no later than 20 January 2026 at 12:00 noon (Croatian local time)** to the following email address: crosol@crosol.hr

. Applications received after the specified deadline will not be considered.

The date and time of receipt of the project proposal, including all required forms and annexes, shall be the date and time recorded in the **CROSOL system**, regardless of the date and time when the application was sent by the applicant. CROSOL assumes no responsibility for any delays in the submission of applications caused by technical issues, including but not limited to the size of attachments, server overload, internet connection disruptions, or other technical difficulties.

Applicants are therefore advised **not to postpone the submission of their application until the last day of the deadline**.

Successful applicants will be notified **no later than 2 March 2026**.

Funded projects must be fully implemented **no later than 31 December 2026**.

6. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

All applications received will be assessed by an **Evaluation Committee** composed of representatives of **CROSOL** and, where necessary, external evaluators with no conflict of interest. The maximum number of points is **100**.

Evaluation Area	Description	Max Points
1. Alignment with the objectives of the Call	The extent to which the project is thematically and substantively aligned with the objectives and priorities of the Call (e.g. sustainable development, GCE, youth engagement, gender equality).	20



Evaluation Area	Description	Max Points
2. Project impact	Expected impact on target groups and the community, particularly young people. Includes multiplier effect, outreach, and sustainability of results.	20
3. Project rationale	Clarity of the defined problem or need addressed by the project, justification of the planned activities, and alignment with the local context.	20
4. Organisational and professional capacity	The applicant's capacity to implement the project, including experience, staff expertise, logistical, administrative, and financial capacities.	20
5. Budget and cost-effectiveness	Justification and clarity of the budget; economy, efficiency, and rational use of resources.	10
6. Partnership	Quality and relevance of the partnership, formal or informal cooperation between CSOs and LAs, and its contribution to a multisectoral approach and enhanced project impact.	10
TOTAL		100

If two or more project proposals receive the same total score, priority will be given to the project with the higher score under the criterion **“Alignment with the objectives of the Call.”**

If a tie remains, priority will be given to the project proposal with the higher score under the criterion **“Project impact.”** If this score is also equal, priority will be given to the project proposal that was **received earlier**.

Project proposals that do not achieve a **minimum of 60 points** according to the above evaluation criteria will not be considered for funding.

The **CROSOL Evaluation Committee** will formally approve the final ranking list, determining which projects are accepted and which are rejected, and will award grants to the selected beneficiaries.

Successful applicants will be notified of the results **by email**.

The list of accepted and rejected project proposals will also be published on **CROSOL's GEAR UP website**. **Individual notifications will not be sent** to applicants whose projects are not selected for funding.



7. Additional Information

Grant payment schedule

CROSOL will disburse the approved grant in **three instalments**:

- **40%** after the signing of the grant agreement.
- **30%** after approval of the **interim narrative and financial report**.
- **30%** after the successful submission and approval of the **final report**.

Reporting and payment conditions

CROSOL will require an **interim narrative and financial report** at the mid-point of project implementation, depending on the total duration of the project.

The second instalment will be disbursed **only after CROSOL has approved the interim report**.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Before the disbursement of the final instalment, a **financial audit** will be conducted by an external **GEAR UP auditor**, which constitutes a precondition for the release of the final payment.

Grant beneficiaries are required to submit all necessary supporting documentation to substantiate the declared costs (contracts, invoices, accounting records, etc.). The beneficiaries' internal accounting systems must clearly demonstrate consistency between the declared amounts, accounting records, and the submitted supporting documentation.

Questions related to the Call

All questions related to this Call may be sent to the following email address: crosol@crosol.hr

Questions will be accepted **until 16 January 2026, by the end of the working day (5:00 p.m.)**.



List of Required Documents for Application

Document	Format	Notes
Application Form (application form in English)	Word	Mandatory. Must be fully completed and in accordance with the form requirements.
Budget Form (budget form in English)	Excel	Mandatory. The budget must include the total project amount (in EUR) and be compliant with the financial limits of the Call.
Declaration on Exclusion Criteria	PDF (signed and scanned)	Mandatory for all applicants.
Action Plan	PDF (signed)	Mandatory.
Partnership Form	PDF (signed and scanned)	Mandatory only in the case of a formal partnership (e.g. CSO + LA).
Declaration of Honour	PDF (signed and scanned)	Mandatory.
Certified copy of the organisation's Statute (only for CSO lead applicants and partners)	PDF (scanned)	Required only if the Statute is not publicly available in the Register of Associations.