



Call for applications

The Netherlands' Fund for Regional Partnerships – MATRA

Introduction

The Embassy of the Netherlands is happy to announce the call for applications under the auspices of our MATRA program. The push for the rule of law is as relevant as ever. By supporting projects in the areas of democratization and the development of the rule of law, we continue to invest in partners for the future in Serbia and Montenegro and further strengthen the bilateral relations between our respective countries.

The core of a democratic society is a sound and balanced relationship between government and citizens. In this respect, a resilient civil society and a modern institutional environment with sufficient capacity are a necessary condition. An independent legal system to which both government and citizens are accountable is also indispensable to make that relationship legitimate and stable. Free and independent media that report in the public interest have an important role to play in creating the societal atmosphere where such relationship can develop.

The Netherlands fund MATRA ('**MA**atschappelijke **TR**ansformatie' is Dutch for 'societal transformation') is a program aimed at supporting activities in the areas of democracy, the rule of law and human rights, in order to contribute to a sustainable and stable relationship between government and its citizens. The projects that we support through MATRA, in Serbia and Montenegro, are complementary to the EU policy.

Thematic scope: Corruption/ Undue influence/ Independence of institutions and media

MATRA projects work towards removing the obstacles that diminish the democratic processes and erode the trust between government and citizens.

In 2024, the Embassy seeks to support projects of the civil society that will primarily focus on combating corruption and undue influence, and enhance independence of institutions and media. These are fields in which progress is necessary, as outlined in the annual reports of European Commission, and priorities set by governments of Serbia and Montenegro.

In order to do so, the projects should contribute in the areas of Cluster 1 (Fundamentals) of the EU accession process, that are most relevant to the objectives of the MATRA programme:

1. Judiciary and fundamental rights
2. Justice, freedom and security
3. Financial control
4. Public procurement

Funding criteria

- Applications for project financing must be relevant to the overall aim of the program and should exclusively concern the MATRA themes mentioned above.

- Project financing is available for local civil society organizations in Serbia and in Montenegro. A project can be implemented in one of the two countries or in both.
- Organizations with ongoing MATRA projects that carry through to 2025 are not eligible for financial support under this call.
- The minimum amount of MATRA contribution per project is € 100.000; the maximum is € 300.000.
- The project duration should be minimum 2 years and maximum 3 years.

The application procedure

- The application procedure is divided into two stages.
- In the first stage, applicants are asked to send a video presentation of their project idea, not longer than 3 minutes. This pitch needs to make clear what the problem/issue is, why the project is necessary, what makes it unique and what is the expected impact of the project. Start the video by stating the organization's name, project title and a rough budget estimate. The presentation should be given in English language.
- In order to submit the video presentation you first need to register by sending an email to matra.belgrado@gmail.com . You will then receive further instructions for uploading the video. All videos should be uploaded by January 26, 2024 at 16:00 hrs.
- The video applications will be assessed by February 2, 2024, by when selected organizations will be contacted and asked to submit a fully developed project proposal within three weeks' time.
- After careful assessment of submitted project proposals, the embassy will make the final decision on projects that will be supported. Organizations can expect to be informed of the final decision by March 8, 2024 the latest.
- Since the MATRA budget is limited, project proposals will not necessarily be approved even if all of the requirements are met.

The full project proposals will need to make clear:

- What the link is with recommendations of the EU progress report under Cluster 1.
- How the problem, objective and envisaged results are presented and linked to the overall aim of the MATRA program and the EU accession policy.
- The 'societal transformation' potential of the proposed project, i.e. what is the theory of change behind the project intervention and how the results are meant to contribute to democratic changes in the society.
- Communication strategy: the project needs to encompass a clear and effective communication strategy and campaign. Outreach to – and engagement with - the broader public in order to contribute to the 'societal transformation' is a precondition for financing (professional communication about the project can be financed under the project).
- Coherence between proposed activities and budget.
- Extent of the implementing organization's and partner's own contribution (financial or in kind).
- Management capacity of the implementing organisation.
- Risk assessment and mitigation plan.

Not eligible for funding under the MATRA program:

- Humanitarian aid
- Commercial activities
- Projects with a predominantly academic focus, i.e. feasibility studies, research, etc.
- Projects that exclusively or largely include the delivery of goods or materials
- Infrastructural or construction projects

- Bursaries
- Projects with predominant focus on training courses for civil servants or members of the diplomatic corps

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the Embassy:

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