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SUB-GRANT OPERATIONAL MANUAL

The Civic Engagement for a Functional Judiciary System
and Access to Justice in Albania.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AGs	Applicants' Guidelines
CfP	Call for Proposal
CIR	Common Rules and Procedures for the Implementation of the Union's instruments for External Action
CC	Complaint Committee
CD	Country Director
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
PEC	Proposal Evaluation Committee
PRAG	Procurement and Grants for European Union External Actions – A Practical Guide
SC	Save the Children
SC-CO	Save the Children Country Office
SC-AO	Save the Children Albania Office
SG	Sub-grant

1 INTRODUCTION

The European Commission (EC) re-introduced in May 2007 the option of sub-granting in its grant contracts. Sub-granting is the award of a grant as a restitution of a service in the form of a project implemented by a third party. The main purpose of sub-granting is to allow small non-state actors to contribute to community-based development and access European funds.

Save the Children envisages this financial instrument as an opportunity to foster its mission and cooperation with local partners and entities worldwide, thus deciding to use the sub-granting as an additional *modus operandi* to development. This document aims at providing procedural guidance to all staff concerned. In particular, this manual provides users with comprehensive information on the basic principles and rules related to this kind of intervention, the structure to adopt in terms of management of sub-granting, awarding process and contract preparation. Annexes include the tools necessary to ensure transparency and accuracy all along the awarding phase.

The basis and the rationale for this Operational Manual can be found in the following documents:

- a) Procurement and grants for European Union external actions – A Practical Guide (PRAG)¹
- b) Annex II, General conditions to the Grant Contract signed between the European Commission and Save the Children member;
- c) Special conditions to the Grant Contract signed between the European Commission and the Save the Children member
- d) The Financial Regulations² and its Rules of Application³ Title VI – Grants
- e) Common Rules and Procedures for the Implementation of the Union’s instruments for External Action (CIR)⁴
- f) Save the Children Standard Partnership Agreement v2.2

Twin document to this one is the Applicants’ Guidelines (AGs). AGs are specific for each Call for Proposal and must be published contextually. They shall obligatory detail and specify, as a minimum requirement, all the points mentioned in section 4.2 of this document.

1

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/?header_description=DEVCO+Prag+to+financial+and+contractual+procedures+applicable+to+external+actions+financed+from+the+general+budget+of+the+EU+and+from+the+11th+EDF&header_keywords=ePrag%2C+europa

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02012R0966-20160101&from=EN>

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02012R1268-20160101&from=EN>

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/financial_assistance/ipa/2014/236-2014_cir.pdf

2 BASIC RULES

2.1 The ex-ante control principle

In the framework of the EU instruments for external actions, in the context of this project, Save the Children Italy is the Legal Entity (the ‘Applicant’) that signs the contract with the European Commission for implementing the project that includes a sub-grant component. Therefore, SC Italy is the beneficiary of the action towards the European Commission and is responsible for ensuring high qualitative standards on program results, expenditures (including co-financing and audit) and reporting. Save the Children – Albania Country Office is the Affiliated Entity that bears the operational responsibility of the project implementation, in cooperation with The Centre of Integrated Legal Services and Practices (the ‘Co-Applicant’).

In the context of a sub-granting scheme and within the contents of this Operational Manual, SC-Albania Office (SC-AO) is the legal entity that signs the SG partnership agreement and therefore is the contracting authority towards sub-grantees. SC Italy acts as the authorizing body:

1. Before the Call for Proposal is launched; SC-AO must submit the Applicants’ Guidelines to SC Italy for **approval**. SC Italy is responsible to check if the AGs are consistent with the standard template, with the EU proposal and with the principles laid down in this operational manual. SC-AO is then responsible for publishing info, issuing calls for proposals, receiving proposals, chairing evaluation committees, deciding on the results of calls for proposal, managing complaints and signing the SG partnership agreement.
2. Before signing the contracts; SC-AO shares the final evaluation report with SC Italy that must check if the document has been drafted in accordance with the template laid down in this operational manual including all needed annexes. The final report is then signed by SC Italy focal point.

In case complaints are received after the administrative check or the evaluation, SC Italy can assume a role of counselling before the final reply is given. SC-AO keeps the final responsibility on the process.

2.2 Rule on Nationality

Participation in procedures awarding sub-grants financed under EU external assistance is governed by the rule of nationality and the rule of non-exclusion.

In accordance with Art.8(7) of CIR, the eligibility rules applying to each financing instrument of the EU “may be restricted with regards to the nationality, geographical location or nature of applicants, where such restrictions are required on account of the specific nature and the objectives of the action and where they are necessary for its effective implementation”.

On the basis of this article, SC Italy establishes that for the implementation of sub-granting projects:

- a) Natural persons are not eligible for sub-granting
- b) Legal persons are eligible for sub-granting whether they are effectively established and operating in the country where the action is to be completed. Legal persons may include civil society organisations, such as non-governmental non-profit organisations and

independent political foundations, community-based organisations and private-sector non-profit agencies, institutions and organisations and networks thereof at local and national level. Applicants' Guidelines shall define in details eligibility criteria applicable for each Call for Proposal and relevant documentation needed;

- c) Applicants may use the services of natural/legal person employed or otherwise legally contracted without prejudice to the rule of nationality and only for works for which a specific knowledge is deemed necessary and not available within the organizational know-how. Subcontracting to experts who are external to the organization cannot be the main action of the sub-grant.

2.2.1 Exclusion Criteria⁵

Applicants will be excluded from participation in grant award at any stage of the implementation if a person who is member of the administrative, management or supervisory body or has power of representation, decision or control:

- a) Is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, where its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, where it is in an arrangement with creditors, where its business activities are suspended, or where it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national laws or regulations;
- b) Has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the economic operator is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the law of the country in which it is established;
- c) Has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the economic operator is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes a wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
 - i. fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of selection criteria or in the performance of a contract;
 - ii. entering into agreement with other applicant with the aim of distorting competition;
 - iii. attempting to influence the decision-making process of SC during the award procedure;
 - iv. attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the grant procedure;
- d) Has been established by a final judgment that the economic operator is guilty of any of the following:
 - i. fraud, within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;
 - ii. corruption, as defined in Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, and in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, as well as corruption as defined in the law of the country where SC is located, the

⁵ Please refer to PRAG 2.3.3.1

- country in which the economic operator is established or the country of the performance of the contract;
- iii. participation in a criminal organization, as defined in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;
 - iv. money laundering or terrorist financing, as defined in Article 1 of Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council;
 - v. terrorist-related offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA respectively, or inciting or aiding or abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Framework Decision;
 - vi. child labour or other forms of trafficking in human beings as defined in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- e) Has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a previous grant financed by SC or other donors which has led to its early termination or other contractual penalties or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by internal or external authorized bodies;

In cases referred to in points c) and d) in the absence of a final judgment or a final administrative decision, or in the case referred to in point e), when SC-AO disposes of established facts or other findings, it shall exclude an applicant on the basis of an internal decision taken by the PEC.

If a situation of exclusion arises **after the signature** of the SG Partnership agreement, the Project Manager is summoned and:

1. Will inform the sub-grantee of this situation and will request in writing for additional clarifications and/or evidences that the exclusion condition is not in place any longer. On the contrary it will suspend the agreement and request the sub-grantee to freeze all expenditures according to art. 19 of the SG Partnership Agreement;
2. Will inform the SC Italy
3. Will consult with SC legal department in London in order to take a final decision on the termination of the SG partnership agreement.

Any applicant who participates in a Call for Proposal shall sign and submit a Declaration of vetting together with its application.

2.3 Availability of funds and suspension clause

Before initiating any procedure, funds must be available by SC Italy. A Call for Proposal may exceptionally be launched with a suspension clause after prior agreement between the SC Italy and the European Commission/Albania Delegation and only if there is a real need in terms of timeframe. The suspension clause shall be explicitly stated in the Applicants' Guidelines. For no reason a SG Partnership Agreements can be signed until funds are available.

2.4 Rule of non-profit

Grant awarding must not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action, unless the nature of the project imposes the creation of profit (i.e. micro credit, cash distribution, etc.). The non-profit rule applies to the action and not to the SG beneficiary.

2.5 Transparency

The availability of grants must be publicised widely and in an easily accessible way primarily by publishing calls for proposals with relative Applicants' Guidelines. This manual shall be made public and available for consultancy to third parties using the most suitable means of communication and, as a minimum requirement, SC websites.

2.6 Impartiality, Conflict of interest and Confidentiality

The grant award process must be completely impartial. This means that the proposals must be evaluated by an evaluation committee using published criteria (i.e. the evaluation grid).

SC expressively condemns any distortive act done by its employees and other members of the evaluation committee due to conflict of interest and misconduct. According to European Union, a conflict of interest is when the impartial and objective exercise of the functions of a voting member of the Proposal Evaluation Committee is compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other shared interest with the applicant. If any member has a personal or economic relationship/interest related to any of the applicants (be it organization or any of its members) s/he shall declare such relationship and withdraw from the decision making process. Acts likely to be affected by a conflict of interest may, inter alia, take one of the following forms:

- a) Granting oneself or others unjustified direct or indirect advantages;
- b) Refusing to grant an applicant the rights or advantages to which that applicant is entitled;
- c) Committing undue or wrongful acts or failing to carry out acts that are mandatory.

Members of the PEC must sign the Annex II - Declaration of Impartiality and Confidentiality in which they declare to abide by these principles.

3 SUB-GRANT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Sub-granting entails the launch of Calls for Proposals to award projects to Civil Society Organizations as defined in the Applicants' Guidelines. SC is committed to the provision of high quality and fair evaluation and selection and all procedural passages and the whole process must obey the principles of transparency, proportionality and equal treatment/impartiality. To this purpose SC Italy and SC Albania Country Office agree to abide by the below management structure that has to be formally put in place for any call for proposals in any country where a sub-grant scheme project is implemented.

At any stage of the evaluation, the Delegation of the European Union can request for an own observer to be present.

3.1 The Proposal Evaluation Committee (PEC)

3.1.1 Composition and functions

It is composed of a Chairperson, a Secretary and 4 (four) Evaluators. The PEC is responsible for:

- (a) The administrative check of the applications received. In this case the individual applications are checked according to point 5.3 of this operational manual;
- (b) The evaluation of the proposals, their scoring and ranking according to point 5.4 of this operational manual.

The proceedings from the opening session(s) to the conclusion of the work are conducted in camera and are confidential.

3.1.2 Chairperson

- a) It is appointed by the Country Director for each Call for Proposals;
- b) The Chairperson shall be the Program Development and Quality Manager;
- c) Has non-voting rights;
- d) Ensures the Committee impartiality and transparency;
- e) Nominates the Secretary and the 4 (four) members of the Committee (the evaluators);
- f) Represents the PEC in case a clarification is requested by the Complaint Committee;
- g) Leads and is responsible for the decisions taken by the PEC;
- h) Coordinates the work during the opening session(s) (the administrative check) and the whole evaluation process in accordance with procedures sets in this Operational Manual
- i) Calls for PEC meetings, sets the meeting agenda and time schedule, moderates among different evaluations with the objective to find consensus;
- j) Decides whether the evaluation process must be derogated or restarted. This decision must be recorded and reasons must be included in the evaluation report.

3.1.3 Secretary

- a) Is appointed by the Chairperson among SC admin/finance/award staff;
- b) The Secretary shall be the Support Services Manager.
- c) Has non-voting rights;
- d) Is responsible, directly and with the support of the Grants Award Specialist (external to the committee) and Sub-Grant Coordinator (PEC member), under the supervision and

with the support of the Chairperson, for carrying out all administrative tasks connected with the evaluation procedure. These include:

- i. Circulate, collect and archive the ‘Annex II - Declarations of impartiality and confidentiality’ signed by the evaluators;
- ii. Keeping minutes of meetings including record attendance
- iii. Compiling the administrative eligibility report and the final evaluation report;
- iv. Compiling communication letters to applicants (see Annex VII and VIII)
- v. Archive all documentation

3.1.4 Evaluators

- a) They are appointed by the Chairperson amongst SC and Co-Applicant staff;
- b) There will be 2 (two) members from SCiA, the Project Manager and the Sub-grant Coordinator, 1 (one) member from the Co-Applicant and one from SC Italy;
- c) External parties in a monitoring role must in any case abide by this manual;
- d) Chairperson shall decide to include in the committee external assessors if particular technical competencies are required;
- e) Evaluators shall have the technical and administrative capacities to give an informed opinion on the proposals;
- f) Previously to the beginning of the evaluation, they must sign the ‘Annex II - Declaration of impartiality and confidentiality’ that will be kept in the archive and annexed to the Evaluation Final Report. Their name, should remain undisclosed to third parties;
- g) They must attend all meetings except, if not requested, the proposal opening session(s) (i.e. those meetings in which the administrative check is done). Any absence must be recorded and explained in the evaluation report;
- h) All evaluators have equal voting rights;

3.2 The Complaints Committee (CC)

3.2.1 Composition and functions

It is composed of the Save the Children Albania Country Director and the Director of Programmes, -both Senior Management Team (SMT) members who does not take part in the PEC and the PMT. They are formally nominated by the PEC Chairperson-. The CC will seek to ensure that all requests and complaints are treated seriously and constructively. It will also seek to ensure answers will be provided promptly with fairness and consistency, and with due regard to the SC anti-fraud and corruption policy⁶. The Complaints Committee:

- (a) Is responsible for addressing request for clarifications and/or complaints after the launch of a Call for Proposal. The CC can request the support of the chairperson and the members of the evaluation committee in order to produce an exhaustive and thoughtful reply.
- (b) Has the power to re-admit an applicant that has lodge a complaint considered as justified.

All its communications shall be in writing and annexed to the evaluation final report.

On a case-by-case scenario, SC Italy will be informed if any complaint is sent to SC-AO and will provide counselling before the final reply is given. On the contrary, SC Italy shall not be involved if a simple request for clarifications is requested.

⁶ http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/ZERO%20TOLERANCE%20FRAUD%20POLICY%20AND%20PROCEDURES_2016.PDF

3.3 The Project Management Team (PMT)

The project management team refers to all the staff that is fully or partially dedicated to the implementation of the sub-grant scheme in Country. The PMT shall be composed of:

- (a) The Project Manager responsible for the overall coordination of the sub-grant scheme including:
 - Strategic coordination with co-Applicant and sub-grantees
 - Coordination, guidance and management of project staff
 - Assuring donor and internal compliance
 - Supervising/authorizing the transfer of funds and authorize budget variations
 - Supervising monitoring plan and activities
 - Assure achievement of expected results and objectives
 - Conflict resolution
 - Leads if exclusion criteria arise after the signature of the SG Partner Agreement
 - Reporting to donor/SC Italy

- (b) The Sub Grant Coordinator responsible for the operational aspects of the sub-grant scheme including:
 - Operational coordination with co-applicants and sub-grantees CSOs)
 - Preparation of the Call for Proposal and the Applicants' Guidelines
 - Finalization of the award procedure/final negotiation with eligible applicants
 - Preparation of Partnership agreements with sub-grantees
 - Planning of the activity/compliance with action plan
 - Implementation of the monitoring plan including monitoring missions and monitoring mission reports
 - Quality check on sub-grantees expenditures
 - Reporting

- (c) The Finance Officer – responsible for the overall supervision of the financial aspects of the sub-grant scheme:
 - Specific supervision and leading on sub-grant budget
 - Specific supervision and leading on sub-grantees accountancy
 - Checks on sub-grantees financial documentation
 - Preparation of all finance format and templates
 - Training and capacity building in finance aspects towards sub-grantees

- (d) SC Italy staff with ex-ante control responsibility on accuracy of procedures and papers. Specifically on:
 - The Call for Proposal and Applicants' Guidelines
 - The evaluation final report prepared by the PEC
 - Partnership agreements with sub-grantees

Specific job descriptions for each position are in place, but, the above mentioned roles are specific for the management of the sub-grant component.

4 THE CALL FOR PROPOSAL

4.1 Overview

The Overall objective of the Project is to contribute to the empowerment of civil society in actively participating and influencing the proper functioning of the judiciary system in Albania.

Specifically, the Project aims at strengthening civil society organizations in the effort of increase transparency and accountability of the judiciary system and improve access to justice for vulnerable groups in Albania.

The Project action includes three main activity clusters:

- Capacity development of CSOs focusing on monitoring of the judiciary system and access to justice;
- Sub-Grant fund management (herewith in referred to as the Sub-Grants Scheme) to release funding to CSOs that will implement activities related to the selected thematic areas and
- Networking and advocacy toward Institutions for the proper application of laws and functioning of the judiciary system.

The Project is expected to finance up to 34 sub grants addressing the strengthening of the civil society organizations to increase transparency and accountability of the judiciary system and improve access to justice for vulnerable groups in Albania.

The overall indicative amount made available under this sub grant scheme is **EUR 900,000**.

The sub-grant scheme is being organized in two rounds, detailed in specific Call for Proposals.

Call I successfully finished and produced 10 winning projects, reaching a total amount of EUR 465,000.

The sub-granting scheme for Call 2 will award **100% of eligible cost** of the approved budget for a maximum of **435, 000 EUR** as follow:

Lot 1: Up to 12 Small sub-grants (SSG) (EUR 10,000-15,000);
Lot 2: Up to 12 Mid-size sub-grants (MSG) (EUR 20,000-25,000);

Each applicant may not submit more than one (1) application under each Call for Proposal (Call).

4.2 Applicants' Guidelines

In order to ensure the widest possible participation and the requisite of transparency, a specific Applicants' Guidelines has been produced for each Call for Proposal on the basis of a standard format. AGs are published, as a minimum requirement, in SC and the Co-Applicant websites, as well as national printed media and social media.

The Applicants' Guidelines obligatorily contain:

- (a) The exact total amount to be awarded in the form of sub-granting;
- (b) Minimum and maximum amount that may be allocated to third parties per proposal;

- (c) Objectives and results to be obtained by the sub-grantees;
- (d) The definition of eligible applicants which may receive such financial support and the criteria to give it;
- (e) A non-exhaustive list containing the types of activities which may be eligible for sub-granting;
- (f) The definition of eligible and ineligible costs;
- (g) Indications on how to apply;
- (h) Indications on evaluation and selections of applications;
- (i) An indicative time schedule of the awarding process.

Applicants' Guidelines and its Annexes are a unique document and **are be published in the website homepage as a single file.**

5 THE PROJECT CYCLE OF THE GRANT AWARD

5.1 STEP 1 - Announcement of Call for Proposals and information sessions

SC and the Co-applicant will ensure appropriate promotion and dissemination of information to all interested stakeholders. Information campaign will include but not be limited to: publications in local and/or national newspapers and web publications (SC website, Facebook, twitter, partner website, etc.).

The minimal information that newspaper announcement shall contain is the following:

Save the Children is seeking proposals for the Call II of the Project “Civic Engagement for a Functional Judiciary System and Access to Justice in Albania, financed from European Union under Reference EuropeAid/137239/DD/ACT/AL.

The full Applicants’ Guidelines are available for consultation at <https://albania.savethechildren.net/> and <https://cefjsaja.wordpress.com/>.

Additionally, you can receive them if you send an email at: cefjsaja.albania@savethechildren.org.

The deadline for submission of proposals for Call II is **15th December 2017**, in accordance with the minimum period of 45 calendar days required from the date of publication of this notice.

Information sessions in Tirana, Shkodra and Vlora on this Call for Proposals will be announced on <https://albania.savethechildren.net/> and <https://cefjsaja.wordpress.com/> and shall be held at latest 21 days before the deadline for submission of proposals. Info sessions will cover all aspects of the Call for Proposal and the sub-grant scheme: background and rationale, the roles, the objectives and scopes of the sub-grant scheme; the formats used (project proposal template, budget, simplified logical framework); the principle of eligibility (of applicants and of costs) and other basic rules (chapter 2 of this manual); the SG evaluation process (Chapter 5 of this manual), and all other relevant points. Sufficient question time will be guaranteed.

FAQ

After the info sessions, participants can request for clarifications using the project email: cefjsaja.albania@savethechildren.org . In this case SC will collect all the questions, eventually group them if of similar nature, and make a document with all the replies that will be published on the project’s website <https://cefjsaja.wordpress.com/>. By answering SC staff shall refer as much as possible to the manual and the AG. There should be a time limit for applicants to pose questions and sufficient time should be allowed after SC replies for the applicants to be able to act accordingly.

5.2 STEP 2 - Submission of proposals

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the instructions given in the Applicants’ Guidelines. On receiving proposals SC will give them a protocol number. If received by hand the receiver must provide a receipt (‘Annex I – Receipt Form’). The receptionist shall be instructed by the Secretary to the PEC on the proper way to fill the form (including assigning proper protocol numbering). The envelopes will remain closed until the opening session.

5.3 STEP 3 - Opening session and administrative check

The Secretary to the Evaluation Committee, under the supervision of the Chairperson and eventually with the support of other members of the committee or external, opens the numbered envelopes and proceeds with the administrative check. This is based on the ‘Annex III – Administrative Check Form’, by which SC certifies that:

- (a) The application complies with the **submission deadline** as detailed in the Applicants’ Guidelines. If the deadline has not been met, the application will automatically be rejected;
- (b) The applicant satisfies the **administrative criteria** (Annex III-Part A). In case of missing documents, the Secretary reports to the Chairperson that will request the incumbent to complete the application within the next 5 working days. If the request is not or partially satisfied, the application will automatically be rejected;
- (c) The application satisfies the **eligibility criteria** (Annex III-Part B). If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on the sole basis and application will not be evaluated further;

After the administrative check the Secretary will prepare a table as per ‘Annex IV – Administrative check summarizing table’, for approval of the PEC as a whole and then prepare the communication letters to applicants to inform them about the outcome of the check using the format in ‘Annex VII – Communication letter to sub-grantees (Administrative check)’. The Chairperson can decide to derogate to the standard procedure. The motivation shall be clearly explained in the Evaluation Final Report.

5.3.1 STEP 4 - Request for clarifications/complaints

Applicants whose application was rejected at the stage of the administrative check, can request for clarifications or lodge a complaint within five (5) working days after the notification of the decision to the Complaint Committee in writing (specific e-mail address shall be written in the Applicants Guidelines). The CC replies within five (5) working days and takes position (confirming or retracting) on the decision of the PEC. All requests for clarification/complaints shall be duly included in the evaluation final report.

5.4 STEP 5 - The evaluation

The Chairperson fixes the **first meeting** of the PEC in which s/he:

- 1) must check that the Declarations of Confidentiality and Impartiality have been signed by each voting member and properly archived by the Secretary
- 2) sets the indicative timetable for individual evaluations and plenary session(s)
- 3) shares the results of the administrative check and distributes the proposals to the evaluators

Voting members evaluate the proposals using the ‘Annex V – Application Evaluation Form’.

5.4.1 The Application Evaluation Form

The evaluation form is made of two separate parts: the first part is for identification of the applicant while the second part must refer exactly to the **Evaluation Grid** published in the AGs. The evaluation grid sticks pragmatically to the paragraphs of the Project Application Form and the evaluator must assign a score from one (1) to five (5) on each topic on the sole basis of what is stated in the project proposal regardless of the reputation of the applicant and any other external, not requested, information. The evaluation grid is divided in four (4) sections: the operational capacity of the applicant, the relevance of the action towards the

objectives and priorities of the call for proposal, the quality of the project proposal and finally the budget/cost effectiveness. Each section contains a box for comments and justifications.

The evaluation of a project proposal is performed in two moments:

1. Initially evaluators evaluate individually each proposal and assign a personal score. The evaluators **must** use the comments/justification box in each section to explain the score they are assigning and/or to recommend budget or action reviews.
2. Next, the PEC, in plenary session and collectively reviews the individual evaluations and prepares a **consolidated Evaluation Form** assigning a final score. The arithmetical average of the individual evaluations is the general rule to apply. In case individual scoring differ considerably, under the coordination of the Chairperson, a debate shall bring consensus. As *extrema ratio*, the arithmetical average will still prevail. The consolidated evaluation form must synthesize the comments on the individual forms and include points eventually discussed in plenary session(s). The discussion shall be reflected in the Evaluation Final Report.

The evaluation form is the same for the two moments.

The definitive ranking is finally brought in a table in the Evaluation Final Report.

5.4.2 The Final Evaluation Report

At the end of the process, in the last meeting, PEC finalizes the Final Evaluation Report as per 'Annex VI – Final Evaluation Report'. The report is a summary of the whole evaluation process and, together with its annexes, provides a comprehensive and detailed description of the decision making process. In the **summarizing table** a single list of the projects evaluated shall be drafted in descending order starting with the highest score downwards according to the final score obtained through the evaluation grid. If the Call for Proposal has been divided in lots, then separate lists shall be prepared according to each lot. Applications are ranked and classified as following:

- **Recommended:** are those applications that received the higher score and that are suitable to be awarded the grant. taking into consideration the availability of funds and the SG scheme output requirements (per lot). Although it is possible to recommend projects for a total amount superior to the budget availability and then reduce the financial requests of single proposals during negotiation phase (see 5.5), it is advisable to remain very close to the limit in excess.
- **In Reserve list:** are those applications that received a sufficient score and that would be suitable to be awarded a grant but for which there is no availability of funds. They will be taken into consideration in the event of other candidates in the recommended list renouncing the grant, or in case of further budget availability. The Reserve list is valid only for the Call for Proposal for which applicants have applied. Applications put on a reserve list cannot be taken into consideration for other Calls for Proposals.
- **Not Recommended:** are those applications that did not received the minimum score established in the Applications' Guidelines and that are considered of too poor quality to be awarded a grant.

The final evaluation report is signed by all members of the Committee and shared with SC Italy for approval. It is then shared with the European Union Delegation for reference.

Note that:

- (a) PEC may reject a proposal if it has selected another which is of a similar nature but has been awarded a higher score (i.e. two or more proposals having similar objectives, and/or proposing similar activities with the same partners and/or in the same geographical area)

- (b) PEC may decide not to allocate all the available funds if it finds that there are too few proposals of the quality required to receive a grant.
- (c) Any attempt by a candidate or applicant to influence the process in any way (whether by making contact with members of the evaluation committee or otherwise) will result in the immediate exclusion of its proposal from further consideration.
- (d) The Chairperson of the Evaluation Committee decides whether the evaluation process must be restarted or if derogations are needed. That decision must be recorded and reasons must be included in the evaluation final report.

Letters to successful and unsuccessful applicants must be sent within 10 working days of the award decision using the format in ‘Annex VIII – Communication letter to sub-grantees (full evaluation)’.

5.4.3 STEP 6 - Request for clarifications/complaints

Applicants whose application was rejected can request for clarifications or lodge a complaint within five (5) working days after the notification of the decision to the Complaint Committee in writing (specific e-mail address shall be written in the Applicants Guidelines). The CC replies within five (5) working days and take position (confirming or retracting) on the decision of the PEC. All requests for clarification/complaints shall be duly included in the evaluation final report.

5.5 STEP 7 - Final negotiation

In this phase the successful applicants are summoned by the PMT to discuss of eventual request for minor modifications. Requests for adjustments/modifications can include only points highlighted during the evaluation in the appropriate comment/justification box. Even if modifications of the budget and/or the action (including the action plan) are requested, the core of the proposal shall not be altered. Modifications cannot lead in any case to an increase in the amount of the grant. It is in this phase that it is recommended to proceed with the pre-award assessment of the sub-grantees to assess together program/admin/financial capabilities and limits and identify needs for specific trainings and support.

5.6 STEP 8 - Signature of the partnership agreement

The relations between SC and the Sub-grantee are ruled by the ‘Annex IX - Partner Agreement’ and its annexes. The agreement is prepared by the PMT, it is signed by the Director of SC and it takes effect on the date of the last signature.

5.7 STEP 9 - Filing

All documentation related to the evaluation process must be archived in order under the direct responsibility of the secretary of the PEC and the supervision of the chairperson. The folder must include:

1. The call for proposal
2. All applications received
3. All communication between the PEC and CC with applicants
4. The final evaluation report with annexes
5. SG Partnership Agreements

5.8 STEP 10 - Publication

At the end of the process SC will publish on its webpage the list of the CSOs that received the grant. The list shall include the name of the organization, the title of the project, location of implementation and a summary of the narrative objectives/expected results.

6 LIST OF ANNEXES TO THE OPERATIONAL MANUAL

- Annex I. Receipt Form
- Annex II. Declaration of impartiality and confidentiality
- Annex III. Administrative Check Form
- Annex IV. Administrative check summarizing table
- Annex V. Application evaluation form
- Annex VI. Final Evaluation Report

ANNEX I – RECEIPT FORM



This project is funded
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT – HAND DELIVERY

Name and address of the Applicant:

.....

.....

Call for proposals: <reference number & title>

Title of your action: <.....> (one action only per acknowledgement of receipt)

Your application was received on <date and hour> and was assigned the protocol number

<insert protocol number>.

SC-AO SPACE
Name:
Signature:
Date and Hour of receipt:

APPLICANT SPACE
Name:
Signature:

ANNEX II - DECLARATION OF IMPARTIALITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that I agree to participate in the evaluation of the proposals received in the framework of the Call for Proposal “Civic Engagement for a functional judiciary system and access to justice in Albania” launched on/...../..... as a voting member of the Proposal Evaluation Committee.

By making this declaration, I declare that I am aware that a conflict of interests exists where the impartial and objective exercise of the functions of a Proposal Evaluation Committee is compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other shared interest with a recipient.

Therefore:

I hereby declare that, to my knowledge, I have no conflict of interest with the operators who have applied to participate for this grant award.

I confirm that if I discover during the evaluation that such a conflict exists or might exist, I shall declare it immediately to the chairperson of the evaluation committee. In the case that such conflict is confirmed by the chairperson, I agree to cease from participating in the evaluation committee.

I confirm that I have familiarized myself with the information available to date concerning this Call for Proposals, including the provisions of the Operational Manual for the Sub-Grants Scheme relating to the evaluation process.

I shall execute my responsibilities impartially and objectively. I further declare that, to the best of my knowledge, I am not in a situation that could cast doubt on my ability to evaluate the application(s).

I shall maintain the strictest confidentiality in respect of all information acquired as a result of my involvement in the evaluation process of the above-mentioned call, as well as any information relating specifically to the object of this call.

I undertake neither to disclose such information to any person who is not already authorized to have access to such information, or to discuss it with any person in any public place or where others could overhear it. I furthermore undertake to use this information only in the context, and for the purposes of, the evaluation of this specific call.

After the conclusion of the evaluation I undertake not to retain copies of any written information, as well as any templates or models used in the course of my duties. I undertake to maintain this duty of confidentiality after the conclusion of my term as a member of this evaluation committee

I understand that any unauthorized disclosure by me will result in the termination of my role as a member of this evaluation committee and may also render me liable to legal action.

Name of the PEC member: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ANNEX III – ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK FORM

(For exclusive use of the Secretary of the PEC. This form must be attached to the application)

Reference number:	R 2 -
Applicant name:	
Applicant number:	R2-0.
Lot number:	
Title of action:	

	Yes	No
The submission deadline has been met.*		
Part A (administrative) **		
1. The correct grant application form has been used		
2. The simplified logical framework has been completed and enclosed		
3. The budget is presented in the format requested and stated in EUR/ALL		
4. One original copy (signed) of documents 1, 2, 3 and 6 is included		
5. An electronic version of the proposal (USB/CD-Rom) is enclosed		
6. The Declaration of Vetting has been filled and signed.		
7. Court Extract (with the Court Seal, within the Call period) mentioning the registration and status of the CSO		
8. A document issued by the Department of Taxes certifying that the organization has no pending financial obligations, such as social, health or tax obligations – issued within the Call period		
9. Bank Proof (Vërtetim bankar) with the bank account, and IBAN in the name of the organization		
10. MANDATORY ONLY FOR APPLICATIONS TO MEDIUM GRANTS - CV of the organization, signed by its legal representative, including all the past and present projects (funding source and contacts, timeframe, region of coverage and partnerships); licenses issued by the respective agencies, in case the proposed action offers activities which need specific licensed experts, such as psychological or legal services; OPTIONAL FOR APPLICATIONS TO SMALL GRANTS		
Part B (eligibility)*		
11. The proposal has been typed and is in English		
12. The amount requested is within the minimum and maximum allowed by the call for proposal		

13. The applicant is a legal person		
14. The duration of the action is within the limits of the call for proposal		
15. The action will be implemented in a region of Albania		

<u>DECISION:</u>		
A. The PEC has decided to evaluate the full application, which passed the administrative check.		
B. The PEC has requested integration of missing documents		
C. The PEC has rejected the application		

Signature of the Secretary _____

Signature of the Chairperson _____

*according to 5.3 ‘Opening session and administrative check’ point a) and c), if any of the answers to these questions is NO, then decision to be taken is C

** according to 5.3 ‘Opening session and administrative check’, point b), if any of the answers to Part A is NO, then decision to be taken is B

ANNEX IV – ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK SUMMARIZING TABLE

(For exclusive use of the Secretary of the PEC)

Title of the project:

Reference number: Deadline for submission:

[Number of the Round]: Language to be used:

[Number of Lot]: Min. and Max amount allowed:

Date/period of administrative check: Duration limits of the action:

Country/Region eligible:

Legal status: legal person

Nr.	Name of the organization	Title of the action	Protocol number	Request for additional documentation	Documentation received	Missing documentation	Vetting	Decision	Points of no compliance as per manual to be shared with Applicant (incl. Part B of the Checklist for Applicants)
1			<R2-0..>	<List missing documentation as per applicant checklist and physical evidence>	<List documentation received>	<List documentation still missing>	<cleared/ not cleared>	<Accepted/ Rejected>	
2									
...			...						

	Name	Signature
Chairperson		
Secretary		
Evaluator		
Evaluator		
Evaluator		

N.B. Attach all clarification correspondence with applicants

ANNEX V - APPLICATION EVALUATION FORM

(For exclusive use of the voting members of the PEC)

Date: __/__/2__

Grid completed by: <insert evaluator name or 'PEC' in case it is the consolidated form>

I. IDENTIFICATION DATA

Reference number:	<insert the reference number as in the first page of the Call for Proposal Applicants' Guidelines>
Applicant name:	
Applicant number:	R2-01, R2-02, etc.
[Lot number:]	
Title of action:	
Region(s) or country targeted:	
Amount requested	EUR _____
Duration:	___ months

II. EVALUATION GRID

Scoring guidelines: 1= very poor; 2= poor; 3= adequate; 4= good; 5= very good

The evaluation grid sticks pragmatically to the paragraphs of the Project Application Form. The evaluator must assign a score on each topic on the sole basis of what is stated in the proposal regardless of the reputation of the applicant and any other external, not requested, information.

Each section contains a box for comments. These comments serve to explain the reasons behind the score assigned and to address the issues covered by that section. Comments **must** be made on each section. Extra space may be used for comments if required.

Please remember that only the points raised formally in the "Comments & Justification" field can be part of the negotiation with awarded applicant.

1. Operational capacity	Score	Total	Comments & Justification
1.1. Does the applicant have sufficient knowledge of the issues to be addressed?	1-5*2	/10	
1.2. Does the applicant have sufficient management capacity? (Including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action?)	1-5*2	/10	

If the total score for this section is less than 12 points, the application will be rejected.

2. Relevance of the action	Score	Total	Comments & Justification
2.1 How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the country or region?	1-5*2	/10	
2.2 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call for Proposals?	1-5*2	/10	
2.3 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are the final beneficiaries and/or target groups? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	1-5	/5	

3. Quality of the project proposal	Score	Total	Comments & Justification
3.1 Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the expected results?	1-5*2	/10	
3.2 Are the project indicators SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound)?	1-5	/5	
3.3 Is the action plan clear and feasible?	1-5	/5	
3.4 Is the visibility of the action clearly explained and appropriate?	1-5	/5	
3.5 What is the degree of sustainability of the expected results?	1-5	/5	
3.6 Is the implementation methodology clearly explained?	1-5	/5	

4. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	Score	Total	Comments & Justification
4.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	1-5*2	/10	
4.2 Is the ratio between the inputs/resources and the expected results satisfactory?	1-5*2	/ 10	

5. Total score and recommendations	Score
1 Operational capacity	/ 20
2 Relevance of the action	/ 25
3 Quality of the project proposal	/ 35
4 Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	/ 20
TOTAL :	/ 100

[Check if the total amount is below the minimum score allowed for this Call for Proposal]

[To be used only for consolidated PEC forms]

<input type="checkbox"/> Recommended	<input type="checkbox"/> Provisionally selected	<input type="checkbox"/> Not recommended
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ANNEX VI – EVALUATION FINAL REPORT



This project is funded
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Save the Children

The Civic Engagement for a Functional Judiciary System and Access to Justice in Albania.

The Sub-Grant Scheme - Round # 2

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Contents

1. Timetable
2. Administrative and eligibility check
3. Evaluation
4. Summarizing table

Annexes

- Annex I. Declarations of impartiality and confidentiality
- Annex II. Administrative check summarizing table
- Annex III. [Clarification correspondence with applicants]
- Annex IV. Minutes of meetings
- Annex V. Individual/PEC evaluation forms

1. TIMETABLE

	Date	Time	Purpose of the meeting	Attendance
Meeting 1				
Meeting 2				
Etc.				

2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND ELIGIBILITY CHECK

The evaluation committee made a first administrative and eligibility check based on Annex III – Administrative check form. Total number of applications received was <insert Nr.>. Out of them:

- (a) <insert Nr.> applications passed the check and were allowed the next phase of the evaluation.
- (b) <insert Nr.> applications were rejected automatically because they were submitted after the deadline (cf. 5.3 (a)); [If relevant, list the excluded applications]
- (c) <insert Nr.> applications were rejected automatically because they were missing one or more of the points stated in Annex III – Administrative check form Part B (cf. 5.3(c)) [If relevant, list the excluded applications]
- (d) <insert Nr.> applications were missing one or more documents listed in Annex III – Administrative check form Part A and were thus requested integration (cf. 5.3(b)). Of these:
 - i. <insert Nr.> supplied requested documentation within the time limit and were therefore allowed the next phase of evaluation
 - ii. <insert Nr.> did not supply requested documentation or supplied incomplete or insufficient documentation or supplied it past the time limit and were therefore rejected

Detailed results are showed in table annexed to this document (Annex IV). Applicants were notified in writing.

2.1. REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATIONS/COMPLAINTS

A total of <insert Nr.> applicants requested for clarifications or lodged a complaint within the set deadline (cf.5.3.1). The Complaints Committee (CC) has analysed the request/complaint and took position on the decision of the PEC. Of these:

- i. The decisions of the PEC were confirmed for <insert Nr.> applications and the applicants were finally not admitted to the next phase of the evaluation
- ii. The decisions of the PEC were retracted for <insert Nr.> applications and the applicants were admitted to the following phase of the evaluation

Applicants concerned were notified in writing. Finally, the total number of applications that were allowed the next phase of the evaluation is <insert Nr.>

3. EVALUATION

The evaluation committee assessed <insert Nr.> applications using the ‘Annex V - Application evaluation form’ to give their personal scoring. The evaluation committee then discussed them and the final result and ranking is displayed in the table below in a descending order starting with the project that has received the highest score. The minimum score allowed to be considered eligible for a grant was established to be <insert Nr.>

<Please include here a narrative of all relevant discussions that took place in the plenary sessions of the PEC>

The total budget available for this call for proposal is EUR <insert value> [if relevant detail for lots]

The first <insert Nr.> project proposals have been recommended for grant award for a total budget request of EUR <insert value>. The PEC reserves to negotiate the budget with the applicant in order to cut <insert percentage> approximately.

4. SUMMARIZING TABLE

Title of the Action:.....

Call for proposal/Round:.....

Lot:.....

Nr.	Name of Applicant	Title of the project	Prot. Nr.	Final score	Grant amount requested in Euro	Time span in months	Decision (cf. 5.4.2)	Thematic Area/ Priority	Comments/Justifications

Number of applications recommended: <...>.

Total amount requested for the selected applications: EUR <...>

Total amount available: EUR <...>.

Total budget cut requested: <...%...>

Signatures

	Name	Signature
Chairperson		
Secretary		
Evaluator		
Evaluator		
Evaluator		

Approved by Save the Children Italy:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____