



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. By supporting projects in the areas of democratization and the development of the rule of law, we continue to invest into 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 for Regional Partnership 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 2021, 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 relevant under Cluster 1 (Fundamentals) of the EU accession process:

1. Judiciary and fundamental rights
2. Justice, freedom and security
3. Financial control
4. Public procurement
5. Statistics
 - + economic criteria
 - + public administration reform
 - + functioning of democratic institutions

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.
- The minimum amount of MATRA contribution per project is € 150.000; the maximum is € 249.999.
- The project duration should be minimum 2 years and maximum 3 years.

The project proposal needs 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
- Training courses for civil servants or members of the diplomatic corps

The application procedure and contracting

- Applications must be submitted to the Embassy of the Netherlands in Belgrade via email to bel-os@minbuza.nl.
- Applications should be submitted on the standard application forms that are available on the Embassy's website, in English language, as PDF files.
- The application deadline is April 18, 2021 at 23:59hrs.
- The applications will be assessed by April 30, 2021 after which all applicants will be informed about the outcome.
- The approved projects are expected to be contracted during May and June and start the implementation in June or July 2021.

Caveat:

Since the Matra budget is limited, project proposals will not necessarily be approved even if all of the above requirements are met.

QUESTIONS?

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

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Contact person: **Aleksandra Kalinić, Policy Officer for Assistance Programs.**