

Award Programme

within

“Internet Access Flagship: Rural Empowerment through Digital Inclusion (REDI)”

1. Short description of the Award Programme

Fundacja Solidanoci Międzynarodowej (FSM, Polish Solidarity Fund, previously known as SFPL), and specifically its branch office in Georgia announces an Award Programme within its EU-funded project “Internet Access Flagship: Rural Empowerment through Digital Inclusion (REDI)”.

FSM is looking for partner organizations who will support the project in the implementation of its key activities in the target region of the project: Racha-Lechkhumi. The selected entities will operate in cooperation and under the supervision of FSM.

2. Objectives, thematic priorities and activities to be implemented within the scope of the award:

2.1 The overall aim of the action is to reduce the existing digital division and include those traditionally left behind by improving access to affordable digital infrastructure and developing digital literacy skills in rural areas of the target regions of Imereti, Guria, Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti and Kakheti.

2.2 The specific objectives and thematic priorities of the Award Programme:

Providing support to FSM to implement its aim of making Internet and technology accessible to inhabitants of selected villages of target regions with a minimum effort required (i.e. via WiFi hotspots and Digital Rural Hubs (DRHs) installed in public spaces of the greatest social impact).

2.3 The activities to be implemented within the scope of the Award Programme:

- Support FSM in the process of verification/validation of villages/public spaces selected within target regions (including, but not limited to detailed research/analyses and/or field visits in order to validate available data, etc.).
- Transport, deploy and monitor the operation of the equipment and installed connectivity infrastructure (as needed), in different types of public spaces within target regions.
- Map relevant stakeholders in line with programme’s specific objectives and build communication/working relations with local Internet Service Providers (ISPs), local self-government units (LSGs), local non-governmental organisations (NGOs)/community organisations, and/or other stakeholders in the region.
- Procurement of goods and services needed to arrange the Internet infrastructure and Digital Rural Hubs (DRHs) including all types of logistical/transportation/renovation

- activities that will be needed for deployment and installation of connectivity infrastructure within target regions.
- Implementation of activities aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the project deliverables.
 - Support FSM in running local competitions for SMEs and for other eligible project beneficiaries.
 - Carrying out awareness raising and other types of communication campaigns across different target groups, including the vulnerable ones as needed.

3. Eligibility Criteria

3.1 Following entities are eligible for receiving an Award:

- a) Civil society & Non-governmental organisations;
- b) Not-for-profit Companies;
- d) Grass root local initiatives/ entrepreneurs/ start-ups;
- e) Under special conditions, not registered organisations.

*An award may be granted to more than one Grantee.

Entities shall be excluded from the grant award process if a final judgment, final administrative decision or final disciplinary ruling has been made against them or persons representing them with powers of control or decision-making or against members of their administrative, management or supervisory bodies for any of the following reasons:

- 1) bankruptcy, insolvency or liquidation proceedings or are in a similar situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in international or national legislation or regulations. In the event that such proceedings are a repressive instrument resulting from a specific political situation in the country concerned, then FSM may refrain from excluding the entity from funding;
- 2) breach of obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions;
- 3) the commission of serious professional misconduct, including misrepresentation;
- 4) fraud;
- 5) corruption;
- 6) an act associated with a criminal organisation;
- 7) money laundering or terrorist financing;
- 8) offences of a terrorist nature or offences related to terrorist activities;
- 9) child labour or any other trafficking offence;
- 10) setting up a cover company;
- 11) acting as a front company.
- 12) the use of or participation in discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment.

Exclusion may also occur if there is no final court decision or final administrative decision in the case and it has been proven by means available to the Foundation or the donor.

Entities are excluded from the grant process if restrictions under international law, European Union law or donors' national law have been applied to them or to persons representing them who have control or decision-making powers or to members of their administrative, management or supervisory bodies.

Members of the FSM Supervisory Council, Members of the Managing Board or their immediate family members are excluded from the Grant Award Process. These persons may not be members of the management, control or supervisory bodies of the grant applicants. The closest person is a spouse, a person living in cohabitation, in a relationship of kinship or affinity in a direct line, kinship or affinity in a collateral line to the second degree, and a person in a relationship of adoption, custody or guardianship.

An entity or person is not subject to exclusion if the following circumstances apply to them:

- (a) undertake to make good the damage caused by the offence, misdemeanour or their wrongful conduct, including by making financial reparation;
 - (b) have given a full and truthful explanation of the facts and circumstances surrounding the offence, misconduct or their wrongful conduct and the damage caused by it, actively cooperating with the competent authorities, including law enforcement authorities, or FSM as appropriate;
 - (c) have taken specific technical, organisational and personnel measures appropriate to prevent further offences, misconduct or irregular conduct.
 - (d) promptly inform FSM of any situation considered to be a conflict of interest or likely to lead to a conflict of interest;
- FSM reserves the right to assess whether the measures taken by the Applicant/Grantee are sufficient.

4. The amount of the potential award

Each grant shall be implemented throughout the course of its commencement, until June 30, 2027.

The maximum amount of the potential award for the entire project life cycle equals €100 000 per each grant.

5. Requested documents

The following documents must be submitted by the applicant before the expiration of the deadline:

- **Filled -out and signed Application Form sent in a PDF format;** (Download [here](#))
- **Filled-out and signed Service Provider Fiscal Statement sent in a PDF format;** (Download [here](#))
- **Filled-out Action Plan and Timeline presented in Excel format provided by FSM;** (Download [here](#))

- Filled-out detailed Budget linked to the activities and the timeline, presented in Excel format provided by FSM; (Download [here](#))
- Two Reference letters (signed and sent in a PDF format) or at least two reference contacts from previous donor(s) and/or partner(s);
- Optional documentation requested under the application form sent in a PDF format.

6. The deadline(s) for submitting the applications

Application along with other relevant/requested documents must be submitted in requested formats no later than November 20, 2024 24:00 Tbilisi time to the email address: redi@solidarityfund.pl

The subject line should specify “REDI Grant Award”.

7. Steps of the award procedure:

- Applicants must submit the application, along with all the requested/relevant documentation, before the expiration of the deadline. (Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered)
- Applications will go through a **formal** and **substantive** evaluation process. Applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements will be excluded through the formal evaluation process. The rest of the applicants will be substantively evaluated and assessed based on the following requirements:

Formal evaluation criteria:

- Submission of a duly filled-out and signed application form;
- Submission of a filled-out Action Plan and Timeline presented in Excel format provided by FSM;
**A detailed Action Plan and Timeline for each year will be requested at the contractual stage.*
- Submission of filled-out detailed Budget linked to the activities and the timeline, presented in Excel format provided by FSM;
- Submission of two Reference letters (signed and sent in a PDF format) or at least two reference contacts from previous donor(s) and/or partner(s);
- Submission of a filled-out and signed Service Provider Fiscal Statement.

Substantive evaluation criteria:

- Action Plan and Timeline based on the activities indicated in point 2.3 of the given announcement – max. 30 points;
- A budget needed for the implementation of the submitted Action Plan. The budget must not exceed the amount of the potential Award – max. 30 points;
- Interview (accuracy in applicant's overall understanding of the Award Programme's main objectives and thematic priorities; flexibility to work with project and organisational rules, procedures and peculiarities; verification of the points assigned based on the submitted documents) – max. 20 points

Optional Criteria:

- Experience of working in Racha-Lechkhumi confirmed through the EU and/or other international donor project(s) implemented within the last 5 years – max. 10 points;
- Experience of working in the telecommunications/electronic communications field confirmed through the EU and/or other international donor project(s) implemented within the last 5 years – max. 10 points;
- Experience of working with the local communities confirmed through the EU and/or other international donor project(s) implemented within the last 5 years – max. 10 points;
- An audit report from an international or a reputable local auditor – max. 10 points.

Total number of available points: 120

*Only shortlisted applicants will be invited to the interview process.

- The grantee will be obligated to provide FSM with quarterly and annual reports (both narrative and financial). Moreover, FSM will have the right to execute on-the-spot checks for monitoring purposes. The detailed monitoring and reporting procedures will be indicated in the template of the Grant Agreement.
- The grantee must be compliant with FSM's cybersecurity policy. In case following the policy entails additional costs, it can be covered through the budget presented by the grantee as part of the application process.
- Sub-awards are available within the given Award Programme but must be executed in cooperation and upon written agreement of FSM.

8. Q&A sessions

The potential Applicants will have the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers about the Grant-awarding Process through a 1-hour online Q&A session on November 5th from 11 to 12 PM Tbilisi time. To join the meeting, click [here](#).

Moreover, in case you have any questions, please direct them to to the following email address: redi@solidarityfund.pl

9. Grant Agreement and its Attachments

- A Grant Agreement will be signed with the most advantageous Grantee based on the given template (at the contractual stage, annexes of the contract shall be prepared and agreed between the parties additionally). (Download the Grant Agreement template [here](#))
- Grantee shall be responsible for systematic reporting based on narrative and financial templates. (Download financial report template [here](#); download quarterly narrative report template [here](#); download annual report template [here](#))

10. Appeal process

The applicants will be given 7 working days following the publication of the results to initiate the appeal process by submitting their request to the following email address: redi@solidarityfund.pl