

ANNUAL PROGRAMME REPORT
FM14-21

Portugal

PT-ACTIVECITIZENS Civil Society

2019

Fund operated by:



A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of the Active Citizens Fund is to strengthen the civil society and active citizenship and to empower vulnerable groups in Portugal. The Programme Implementation Agreement (PIA) was signed on 9 July 2018.

The Programme has a total budget of 11 million euros, for the period 2018-24, and is organised around four Outcomes:

1. Strengthened democratic culture and civic awareness;
2. Increased support for human rights;
3. Vulnerable groups are empowered;
4. Enhanced capacity and sustainability of civil society.

As a result of the 2018 calls launched under the four Outcomes, 51 projects were contracted as well as the predefined project Education for Citizenship. The total grant amount to these projects was € 3 256 314. The 3 Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives were contracted for a maximum total grant of € 15 881.

The pre-defined project “Education for Citizenship” was contracted in 2019 and the project begun on the 1st of March. In September, the 3 NGO / Associations of schools began their work in three pilot and diverse territories: a problem area in greater Lisboa, an average urban area and a rural area. This innovative project is progressing well and is expected to influence the public policy on citizenship education.

The launch event of the 2019 calls took place on May 2nd, in Lisboa, followed by 9 workshops in several cities of the country.

Three calls were launched in 2019: 1) Human Rights Platform (opened between March 26th and June 24th); 2) Outcome 1 - opened between May 2nd and July 15th for small projects (under € 30 000 and maximum duration of 18 months); 3) Outcome 4 - opened between May 2nd and 18th July for large projects (under € 120 000 and 30 months).

The open calls covered two outcomes of the Programme and 35 out of the 45 received applications were deemed admissible under the Programme rules. 16 projects have been approved, involving a total grant amount of € 732 347. Regarding the call for the Human Rights Platform, with an appropriation of € 149 850, as no worthy project was selected, a second edition was opened on September 5th, and a decision shall be taken in February 2020.

68 projects were therefore approved till the end of 2019, representing 45% of the total number of projects planned to be supported till the end of the Programme. Only 6 small projects have already been closed and as a result 6 Portuguese NGOs dispose now of a participative assessment of their needs and an action plan to make the organisations stronger and more sustainable. Building capacities was also the goal of the workshops

organised by the Programme for NGOs over the year, related with management, public procurement and project evaluation.

Bilateral cooperation was promoted over 2019 with several initiatives taking place, like a bilateral matching event in Lisboa in early May. As a result 3 small initiatives have been approved under the dedicated call for bilateral cooperation and so far 15 entities from the Donor Countries are involved as formal partners in projects approved under the various 2018 and 2019 calls.

The European Wergeland Center is a good example of bilateral cooperation as this Norwegian entity is assisting in advising and monitoring the implementation of the “Education for Citizenship” project.

The stand-alone website for the Active Citizens Fund in Portugal (activecitizensfund.pt) has been the most effective way of continuously ensuring visibility for donors, with a monthly average of 2 800 visitors in 2019. The media partnership established with a national broadcast radio has also produced exclusive content in the second half of 2019 that strongly contributes to the visibility of the work carried out by the Programme and its supported projects, with weekly promos on air and news widely shared on social media. Podcasts and digital articles have been permanently available on the website of the ACF in Portugal.

In spite of the measures taken during 2019 to make the outreach to under-served geographic areas and target groups more effective, a low demand was observed from smaller and weaker NGOs regarding the facilities already at their disposal. As a lesson learned the Programme is now envisaging to adopt individual coaching as a new tool to help those entities to prepare better applications to the calls.

The overall risk score of the Programme was reduced from 1.82 to 1.41. Risks related to events that have already occurred, namely those related to the pre-defined project and the Human Rights Platform were eliminated. Risks related to outcome indicators that require baselines were updated. Risks related to unspent funds and to public procurement procedures were added.