

# *ANNUAL PROGRAMME REPORT*

## *FM14-21*

Portugal

PT-ACTIVECITIZENS Civil Society

2023

## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Approaching the closure of the current EEA Grants cycle, 2023 was a year of strategic continuity, renewed leadership, and reinforced proximity in the Active Citizens Fund (ACF) in Portugal.

In 2023, the current cycle of the ACF culminated in 182 supported projects, with a global allocation of 10.6 million euros, corresponding to 108.3% of the Programme's allocation. In response to the successive votes of confidence received, in 2023, the Programme reached a financial execution record, exceeding 2.27 million euros in payments to projects, reaching 86.95% of financial execution and closing 88 projects.

After seeing its allocation reinforced by the EEA Grants Financial Mechanism Office and receiving approval to support projects through overbooking, in 2023, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF) Board of Trustees decided to support 6 additional projects.

In 2023, the Programme has supported more than 250 NGOs and engaged more than 11 thousand people in civil society organisation activities. The Programme is also closer to its targets, with 14 of its output and 5 of its outcome targets already met, and on its way to reaching most of the remainder.

With a new Director joining the ACF in October 2023, there was a reinforced focus on the proximity to partners and beneficiaries, reflected in close cooperation with the Norwegian Embassy and the National Focal Point through communication activities, cooperation on reporting and shared training (by the FMO and NFP); close cooperation within the partnership and within the CGF with increased collaboration in communication efforts and increased regularity of meetings; and close monitoring of the organisations it supports, by being more present and closer to the field.

These additional efforts by the ACF staff, reflecting an extreme dedication and motivation, have already resulted in the dissemination of supported projects through the production of videos and media reports through our partners, in an in-house article on the Foundation's main page on one of the supported projects and a better understanding and feel for the projects.

Ultimately, this reinforcement of the ACF's proximity will allow a more qualitative and meaningful measurement of the programme's impact, both on the NGO's and the citizens themselves. Indeed, as this cycle is getting closer to the end, preparations have begun for the closure of the current funding period and the celebration of 30 years of EEA Grants in Portugal with the involvement of all partners. Towards that aim, the external evaluation team of the Programme's results and impact was selected at the end of the year.

In 2023, the emblematic Human Rights Platform project, which started in 2020, ended with the official launch of this new structure at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's headquarters, and after a 3-month extension, the call for bilateral cooperation initiatives, which had been open permanently since July 11, 2018, also ended in September of 2023.