

## GUIDELINES

# Call for Concept Papers: Opportunity Fund

## Roma Initiatives Office

The Roma Initiatives Office (RIO) invites Roma and pro-Roma organizations, non-formal groups, networks, or individuals from Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Spain to apply for urgent action grants of up to \$15,000, provided that they meet certain conditions. We support timely actions and opportunities that promote structural change for the benefit of Roma or respond to anti-Roma events and trends.

### BACKGROUND

The Opportunity Fund is part of RIO's Paruvipe portfolio—paruvipe means “change” in the Romani language—which supports advocacy aimed at influencing public decision-making, service delivery, and state responses to acts of hate and violence. Our work within Paruvipe is about seizing short-term opportunities, extending our partnership with pro-Roma civil society, and experimenting with new models for influencing national governments. Through this call for concept papers, RIO is seeking proposals for innovative and creative actions that will forge new interest-based alliances, build mass constituencies, and employ effective communication tactics.

The Opportunity Fund is a new grant-making approach of the Roma Initiatives Office and we expect this call for concept papers to be revised as we gain experience and receive feedback from the field.

### PURPOSE

The Opportunity Fund supports urgent, action-focused grants of up to \$15,000 to provide immediate support for seizing opportunities as they arise or making timely responses to crisis situations. While we support the strategic advancement of Roma with a long-term view, this fund will provide short-term support to the field at times when an unforeseen social or political event requires fast action or the adaptation of approaches.

While there are no specific priority areas for support, the Opportunity Fund will support short-term actions (up to 4 months) in two main categories. To receive a grant under this call, a proposal must fall under at least one of these categories:

1. Seizing a window of opportunity for achieving change, including precedent-setting, at the legal, policy, or institutional level. Actions could also aim to protect good policies or legal frameworks that are under attack.

2. Responses to hate, violence, or politically volatile environments. This could include responses to hate speech.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Actions should fulfill all of the following criteria in order to be eligible for funding:

- **Unexpected and time-sensitive** – The action is a response to a specific event, social situation, or an opportunity that could not have been predicted and that requires immediate reaction.
- **Strategic and policy-relevant** – While we do not expect policy change to happen within a short time, the proposed action must be designed with a perspective for change in policies, practices, or public discourse in the long-term. The action should be based on a strategy that would allow for adjustments according to new needs or shifts in the context.
- **Roma-centered** – While it is not necessary for the applicant organization to be a Roma NGO,<sup>1</sup> applicants must demonstrate Roma leadership or partnership on an equal footing in all phases of the action. Roma should also benefit from the policy change targeted with the action.
- **Location** – The action must respond to an opportunity or crisis taking place in one of the eligible countries: Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Spain.

The following are not eligible for support from the Opportunity Fund:

- Direct humanitarian help and services
- Costs of activities that can be planned over a longer period of time (such as conferences) or are long-term (more than 4 months)
- Safety measures (evacuations, legal representation, protection, etc.)
- Awareness-raising campaigns without clear policy targets
- Conferences, training, travel, and scholarships
- Individual help or personal need
- Covering shortfalls in the budgets of long-term projects

## HOW TO APPLY

Applicants should submit concept papers in English. Applications are accepted by:

- **Online application**  
Please submit your concept paper, which should not exceed two pages, through the [Open Society Foundations Grant Portal](#).
- **Video application**  
You can also choose to explain your action by filming a video and submitting it through the [Grant Portal](#). Please note that the video should not exceed 25MB.

While there is no prescribed format for concept papers or videos, the following should be included:

1. Description of the context, event, situation, or opportunity that has prompted your proposed action—what has happened unexpectedly?
2. Brief description of the proposed action
3. Explanation of why an urgent response is needed and how the proposed action is strategic and policy-relevant
4. Requested budget in USD. Please provide an itemized budget.

---

<sup>1</sup> RIO defines a Roma NGO as an organization in which at least 50% of the membership (in the case of associations), the governance body, and the senior management openly declare their Roma ethnic origin.

---

**Applications may be submitted at any time during the year.**

### **SELECTION PROCESS**

Applicants should expect to be notified of RIO's decision within a week following the date of submission.