

EU Election Cross-border Terms of Reference - Slovenia

Expanding Production of Independent Content (EPIC)

29 February 2024

Terms of Reference version: initial

Background

Expanding Production of Independent Content (EPIC) is a regional project led by Internews. It aims to support independent media in producing and disseminating high quality, credible content that covers locally identified issues of importance that are shared across borders in the project countries that have the potential to counter disinformation.

Who may apply

A team of four independent media outlets, one from each EU member country (Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovenia) that is part of the EPIC project. Outlets should belong to publishers that are already receiving EPIC grants (national or cross-border) or be selected by a panel of experts (Slovenia).

What we are looking for

A single, joint journalistic project, proposed together by the four outlets, that provides collaborative coverage of an issue or issues relevant to young audiences in all four countries in the run-up to the [European Parliament elections](#), to be held June 6-9, 2024.

Collaborating outlets are free to propose any theme and specific topics for the series that they jointly determine to be relevant to young people in all four countries and closely related to the major themes and issues of public interest affecting people in these EU member countries. The design of the proposal should ensure that the resulting stories have cross-border relevance, for instance by identifying underlying issues and using angles suited to audiences in all four countries.

Content produced in the EPIC project should make use of innovative approaches, angles, storytelling tools, formats, distribution, and promotion (budget included in grant) to convey, visualize or explain otherwise complex stories or issues and make its content engaging and reach a large audience. Content produced must not promote any party or campaign, rather focus on the people and the issues.

Publishing requirements

Each outlet should contribute at least two pieces of original content to the joint effort, and all content produced should be published by all outlets taking part in the project, either as is or edited/adapted for their own audiences. Translation services will be paid for and made available by the EPIC project.

Grant amount

Grants are up to USD 10,000 for each participating outlet, covering their share of the production costs. Selected applicants will receive financial support in the form of cost-reimbursable subgrants

to produce relevant content. Travel costs will be covered, if the collaborating partners decide to co-produce content in a way that requires travel.

Production schedule, timeline

Content should be produced and published in the run-up to the European elections, in March, April and May, 2024. Publication of some content may take place in June, if it is editorially warranted, observing campaign silence regulations.

Distribution and promotion support

The team of four outlets should have clear distribution and promotional strategies for the content produced or a willingness to work with EPIC's expert(s) to make effective use of their existing channels on social media platforms and/or experiment with new formats, approaches, and/or channels to drive and maximize potential reach and engagement.

Training, mentorship, and editorial support

On request, training, mentorship, and editorial support will also be available at no extra cost to successful applicants.

Application and Selection

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for grants under this TOR in the EPIC project, applicants must

- belong to publishers that are already receiving grants (national or cross-border) as part of the EPIC project (Hungary, Poland, Romania) or have been selected by a panel of experts (Slovenia),
- the publishing organization must be legally registered in Slovenia,
- be active in the Slovenian online media market as a content producer for more than 1 year,
- regularly publish Slovenian language media content that targets a national, local or regional audience,
- adhere to journalistic and ethical standards, fact-checking content and maintaining accuracy, objectivity, transparency, and professionalism,
- self-identify as independent, but also demonstrate and maintain editorial independence from external sources (such as advertisers, sponsors, or other stakeholders),
- media outlets should not be owned or managed by public authorities, local or national governments, political parties, or individuals holding public office or office in political organizations (or their close relatives), while independent journalists and content producers should not have affiliations with any of the above nor conflicts of interest.

Expectations from Applicants

Applicants should

- demonstrate capability and produce high-quality, credible content,

- adapt project content to different platforms (including social networks), /engage audiences, and make use of resources provided by Internews to do so,
- work with EPIC country representatives and the EPIC team throughout project implementation to maximize content quality, distribution, and reach,
- if applicable, attend project meetings and work with mentors on an agreed-upon schedule,
- implement activities in a timely manner, with effective communication.

Content of Applications

Applications will consist of:

- application form with the project proposal and information about the applicant, and
- completed budget, using the budget template.

Applications and budgets should be in Slovenian or English.

Submission of Applications

Applications must be submitted by email to SI-EPIC-Grants-mbx@internews.org .

The subject line must include the words **“Response to EU elections RFA EPIC”**.

The documents constituting the application must be included **as attachments**.

If more than one message is required to transmit the application, each message must be identified as part of a multi-part submission (e.g., “message 1 of 3”).

Application Deadline

Applications must be submitted by **23:59 March 11, 2024 CET**

Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

All applications submitted will be acknowledged within two (2) working days and we will note the documents submitted. The applicant is responsible for ensuring and confirming that the emails comprising the application, as set out in [Content of applications](#) above, are received by the Internews representatives

Award Notification and Contract

Successful applicant(s) will be notified of selection within five (5) working days following the deadline for submission of applications.

The successful applicant(s) must confirm the application and acceptance of the selection within two (2) working days of selection notification or the selection will be withdrawn and offered to the next most qualified applicant.

Internews does not provide detailed reasoning on the results of the selection to unsuccessful applicant(s).

NOTICE OF SELECTION OF THE APPLICATION IS NOT TO BE CONSTRUED AS A CONTRACT OR SUBGRANT AWARD. Once the selection is confirmed, a final subgrant agreement will be negotiated and signed with the successful applicant(s), subject to prime funder approval, environmental clearances, and successful vetting of eligibility.

Selection Process

The application will be evaluated by a panel of experts.

Evaluation criteria

Selection will take into consideration 1) the project proposal, 2) the capability and eligibility of the applicant, and 3) the financial proposal (the budget).

Project/technical proposal

- **Relevance of the project** to the scope and requirements of this TOR,
- **Quality of the pitch**, including its overall design, focus, and scope; its storytelling and use of formats; its approaches, angles, and characters; and its innovativeness, coherence, topics, and expected impact.

Capability and eligibility

- Meeting eligibility criteria and requirements, past records and reference materials, distribution, and promotion plans, and most importantly, a feasible timeline and allocation of resources to implement the project.

Criteria for the Budget Proposal

- Reasonable expenses clearly and directly related to the production of content in the project, as well as a feasible allocation of resources.

Indirect Costs

Selected subrecipients will be eligible for reimbursement of indirect costs if they:

1. Have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement from their cognizant agency, or
2. Accept a *de minimis* indirect cost rate of 10% applied to Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC). MTDC is defined as all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, employee and consultant travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward or subcontract (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards or subcontracts under the award). MTDC excludes equipment*, capital expenditures*, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs*, and the portion of each subaward or subcontract in excess of \$25,000.

* Exact definitions of these terms can be found at [this link](#).

Cost Principles

Proposal budgets will be reviewed in accordance with, and selected subrecipients' costs will be subject to, the cost principles that apply to them to assure reasonableness, allocability, and allowability:

1. Not for Profit organizations: [2CFR200](#) Subpart E, Cost Principles
2. For Profit organizations: [48CFR31.2 Federal Acquisition Regulations](#) (FAR) and [48CFR731.2](#)

Subgrant Administration

The following regulations and provisions, at minimum, will apply to subawards issued as a result of this RFA:

- [2CFR200](#) and [2CFR600](#) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards
- [US Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions](#)