



**ELTON JOHN
AIDS FOUNDATION**

Call for proposals

RENEWAL

June 2023



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LIST OF USED ABBREVIATIONS

EECA – Eastern Europe and Central Asia

STI – sexually transmitted infections

KP – key population groups

PLHIV – people living with HIV

PWUD – people who use drugs

MSM – men who have sex with men

NGO – non-profit organizations

SW – sex workers

TB – tuberculosis

TG – transgender people

HTS – HIV testing services

IDP- internal displaced person

ABOUT THE PROGRAM «RENEWAL»

I. ABOUT THE PROGRAM NAME

The Elton John AIDS Foundation (the Foundation) has initiated the PROGRAM RENEWAL with the aims of:

- restoring war-disrupted connections between key groups of people living with HIV or at risk of infection
- extending prevention, diagnosis, and treatment services,
- maintaining health and dignity,
- protecting human rights, and
- facilitating access to necessary resources.

These social investments can allow Ukraine, in its current moment of crisis from an economic, humanitarian, and social catastrophe, to maintain quality of life, effective prevention, and assistance to people at risk or living with HIV in the country.

According to estimates, at the end of 2022, there were 245,000 HIV-positive people living in the country. With the onset of full-scale war in Ukraine in February 2022, problems arose regarding the provision of surveillance for HIV infection, the logistics of providing services for prevention, testing, treatment of HIV infection, and clinical-laboratory monitoring of the course of HIV/AIDS among people living with HIV (PLHIV), primarily in the south-eastern regions. The negative consequences, as well as the restoration of services to the population in the context of the HIV epidemic, will be uneven due to operational changes related to the intensity of military actions, the effects of destruction of medical infrastructure, population migration, monitoring of HIV-positive IDUs, etc.

Funding is carried out on a grant basis; the evaluation and administration of grants are conducted by the Elton John AIDS Foundation.



CALL FOR PROPOSALS ANNOUNCEMENT

As part of the PROGRAM RENEWAL, the call for concept notes is hereby announced.

The Foundation seeks to support sustainable and evidence-based projects that will address the most significant and pressing needs of key populations and people living with HIV. The projects implemented with the support of the Foundation will contribute to achieving the following objectives of the competition:

1. Increase access to resources that meet the humanitarian and health needs of vulnerable HIV groups or people living with HIV, enabling them to increase HIV service coverage.
2. Restore and expand quality connections between key populations and HIV service providers, thereby facilitating the restoration of access to treatment and testing.
3. Increase the reliability and adequacy of strategic information for all stakeholders to make decisions.

Organizations can apply for project funding for up to 24 months. Projects can only be implemented in Ukraine.

More detailed information, including the maximum budget size and application process, are outlined in this competition announcement.

FEATURES OF FUNDED PROJECTS: «RENEWAL» Call for proposals

The Foundation invites non-governmental organizations to submit concept note(s) for the competition "RENEWAL" to implement projects aimed at meeting significant and urgent needs related to HIV.

What do applicants need to do?

Applicants need to identify the most significant problem(s) related to HIV faced by one or more key population groups most affected by HIV/AIDS, namely: people who use drugs (PWUD), sex workers (SW), men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender people (TG), as well as people living with HIV (PLHIV), military personal (MP), and internal displacement persons (IDPs). Sexual partners of representatives of these population groups are also a priority group.

Applicants need to provide an objective analysis of the situation, project implementation, indicating the scale and relevance of the identified problem(s), as well as the reasons why the identified problem(s) are not adequately addressed within existing government or non-governmental programs.

In their applications, it is necessary to propose scientifically substantiated solutions with measurable results that contribute to achieving the objectives of the competition "RENEWAL":



1. Increase access to resources that meet the humanitarian and health needs of vulnerable HIV groups or people living with HIV, enabling them to increase HIV service coverage.
2. Restore and expand quality connections between key populations and HIV service providers, thereby facilitating the restoration of access to treatment and testing.
3. Increase the reliability and adequacy of strategic information for all stakeholders to make decisions.

Each of the competition objectives is described in more detail below.

Where can projects be implemented?

Projects that will be implemented in Ukraine are eligible for the competition.

Projects can be of local, regional, or national scale.

Projects can be implemented in multiple areas of work described in the program goals section.

The organization applying for the Call of proposals must be registered in Ukraine.

What can be the duration of projects?

Applicants can submit applications for projects lasting from 6 to 24 months.

However, considering the dynamic situation in Ukraine due to the war, operational plans are expected to be reviewed annually or in case of critical changes.

What is the minimum and maximum amount for which applications can be submitted?

The minimum budget for project applications is \$50,000, and the maximum is \$400,000

Do not apply for the maximum grant amount if you do not require that amount to achieve the planned results.

Apply for the amount that you need (within the maximum funding limit) to achieve the planned results.

Can current or past recipients of grants from the Elton John AIDS Foundation apply?

Yes, current, or past recipients of grants from the Foundation can submit concept notes. Concept notes from current or past recipients will be evaluated based on the same criteria as all other concept notes (described in Section Selection Criteria of Concept Note). We expect that current or past recipients of grants from the Foundation will submit concept note(s) for project implementation that are different from projects previously supported by the Foundation or represent a strategic development of the outcomes of a previous project.

Objective 1: Increase access to resources that meet the humanitarian and health needs of vulnerable HIV-affected groups or people living with HIV, enabling them to expand HIV service coverage.



Under Objective 1, projects should improve one or several specific indicators of the humanitarian situation in Ukraine among representatives of vulnerable groups and assisting organizations. Examples of activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Expanding access to humanitarian resources in Ukraine. Within this task, support can be provided for the development of the capacity of civil society organizations to enhance the effectiveness of providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups.
 - Support may also be given to activities aimed at developing and strengthening temporary shelters for vulnerable groups and populations affected by the war, increasing their ability to provide comprehensive services more effectively and expanding access to active international humanitarian funds operating in Ukraine.
- Providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups to meet critical humanitarian needs. Within this task, direct humanitarian assistance can be provided to vulnerable groups, as well as to staff members of organizations, including psychological, food, hygiene, and other forms of assistance.

Objective 2: Restore and expand quality connections between key populations and HIV service providers, thereby facilitating the restoration of access to treatment and testing " includes the following:

Within Objective 2, projects should contribute to the restoration and expansion of contacts between representatives of key populations and existing HIV-related services, aiming to improve existing systems for more effective delivery of HIV-related services to key population groups and/or PLHIV. Examples of activities may include:

- **Rebuilding connections with medical and social services in the new place of residence for vulnerable groups and resuming interrupted treatment due to temporary internal displacement related to the war.**
 - Development of digital solutions for patient mobility, including data collection on their whereabouts and monitoring changes in their needs to ensure timely and appropriate services.
 - Support for incarcerated or under investigation HIV-positive individuals.
 - Diagnosis and prevention of HIV transmission among military personnel.
 - Elimination of structural barriers that hinder access of key populations and PLHIV to HIV-related services through community mobilization, engaging in dialogue with stakeholders, and participating in accountability mechanisms and decision-making processes at different levels.
- **Projects aimed at strengthening the capacity of organizations created and representing the interests of vulnerable communities to ensure access to the target audience and provide services to vulnerable groups, including:**
 - Establishing systematic and standardized training centres to support and develop civil society organizations in all specified program areas. These centres will provide training and technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of organizations and ensure successful implementation of interventions.



- Development of civil society organizations based on collaboration with key vulnerable population groups.
- **Projects aimed at improving and expanding the mechanism for community-led monitoring (CLM) of government services at the national and regional levels.**
- **Projects aimed at advocating for necessary legislative initiatives to expand access to services for key populations and reduce barriers to accessing services.**
Support for national and regional advocacy for the interests of key population groups involves clearly defining the directions in which advocacy efforts will be focused, not only to avoid possible double funding but also to ensure the effectiveness of investments. It is advisable to concentrate on barriers to accessing HIV-related programs and to link these efforts with the support of legal advocates.
- **Projects aimed at reducing the level of stigma and discrimination among service providers (medical personnel, social service providers, military personnel).**
 - • Development of a paralegal assistance network, including innovative technologies. This includes supporting the expansion of the work of existing legal advocates to new territories and increasing overall coverage.
 - • Assessment and monitoring of levels of stigma and discrimination towards key populations and people living with HIV and implementing measures to reduce them.

Please note that these are sample activities, and the actual interventions and strategies may vary based on the specific context and needs of the project.

Objective 3, "Improve the reliability and adequacy of strategic information for all stakeholders to make decisions," includes the following:

Under task 3, successful project activities, experiences, and project results can be documented and disseminated. This will assist other cities and regions of Ukraine in overcoming the HIV epidemic and implement research that allows for the acquisition of strategically important information for further activities in addressing the HIV epidemic. Examples of activities include, but are not limited to:

- **Projects aimed at collecting and analysing data, including qualitative and quantitative research on the changes caused by the war, to help stakeholders in Ukraine plan and implement projects based on evidence-based data.**
- **Development of mechanisms and platforms for coordination among all partners that enable effective joint activities.**
- **Documentation of project models and outcomes for further use by the professional audience in the form of standard operating procedures, algorithms, service standards, methodological recommendations, guidelines, etc., in order to disseminate and replicate the experience. To replicate positive experiences, the documented models should describe the necessary resources, service delivery methodologies, and expected activity results.**



- **Reproducing successful project models and outcomes in another region (replication) or expanding the project's coverage (scaling up) is another component of Objective 3.** Replication of experience and scaling up of the project can be carried out by the same or different implementing partner within the proposed grant program or through funding from another donor. The proposed activities for replication or scaling up should be initiated before the completion of the proposed project.

Selection Criteria of Concept Note

The Foundation will evaluate each concept proposal based on the criteria listed below. Although the evaluation of conceptual and full proposals is based on the same criteria, a higher level of detail is expected from the applicant at the full proposal submission stage. In preparing applications and assessing the competitiveness of their projects, applicants need to consider the following questions. The selection criteria serve as a guide for an objective assessment of each concept proposal. However, the Foundation reserves the right to make the final decision on grant awards to ensure the optimal set of winners and projects.

Selection Criteria for Concept Note:

Alignment with Strategy and Project Impact

- **Alignment:** Is the applicant's project aimed at achieving at least 1 key objective of the competition?
- **Theory of Change:** Is there a clear understanding of what exactly the applicant wants to change and how? Is there a clear strategy for how the project will achieve the stated project outcomes?

Alignment with HIV Response Goals: Can the proposed project bring valuable experience and improve program development in the country as a whole? Is there a clear strategy for collecting and disseminating the experience gained and findings among a wide range of stakeholders?

- **Added Value:** Are additional resources required for a specific type of activity, population group, city, and country? Will the proposed activity complement, not duplicate, existing activity? Does the proposed activity differ significantly from what other entities, such as local authorities, health care facilities, international donors, and NGOs, are already doing?
- **Sustainability:** Can the project's results be institutionalized and/or serve as a starting point for further development, improving the organization and/or services for vulnerable groups?
- **Risks:** How high are the risks of the proposed project? Have appropriate risk mitigation measures been developed?"

Effectiveness

- **Organizational experience:** Does the applicant have a track record of successfully achieving results claimed in previous projects?
- **Competence and relationships:** Does the applicant have high competence and knowledge in the relevant areas? Has the applicant established partnership relationships (for example,



with communities, government bodies, and health organizations) necessary for successful project implementation?

• **Budget Efficiency: The project's budget should be efficient and well-justified, indicating that resources will be used optimally:** Is the project cost-effective in terms of costs required to achieve set goals, compared to similar projects in comparable regions? Is the proposed budget justified, according to which actual expenses are most likely close to the estimated ones?

Eligibility Requirements for Applicants

Before all conceptual and are evaluated for their content, they will be reviewed for compliance with the qualification requirements. The qualification assessment is conducted using a "Meets/Does Not Meet" scale and considers both financial and non-financial aspects. After determining compliance with the qualification requirements, conceptual and full applications will be evaluated based on the criteria presented below.

Criteria for selecting applications for funding:

- **Project implementation location:** Applications are accepted for projects implemented in Ukraine. Applicants must be located in the country of project implementation. Applicants may implement their project in one or multiple cities or regions within the country of project implementation.
- **Organizational legal form of the applicant:** Applications from non-profit, educational, and scientific organizations are encouraged. Applications cannot be submitted on behalf of individuals or government authorities.
- **Consortium:** Applications may be accepted from consortia, which are groups of partner organizations collaborating towards common goals, where each consortium partner brings unique advantages to achieve expected results. The consortium must identify a lead organization as the applicant to submit the concept note(s). Applications from individual organizations are equally encouraged.
- **Registration and bank account:** The applicant must be a registered legal entity in Ukraine and have an active bank account. Initiative groups, i.e., unregistered community groups with a proven track record of achieving results, may also submit applications but solely as part of a consortium with an officially registered organization acting as the financial agent.
- **Project implementation timeline:** All grant funds must be utilized within two years from the date of signing the grant agreement with the applicant or by September 2025, whichever comes earlier.
- **Completeness and language of the application:** All concept note(s) and accompanying documents must be submitted in English or Ukrainian; any other language is considered unacceptable. Only fully completed online applications are eligible for further consideration; applications submitted in an incomplete form are considered non-compliant with the qualification requirements.
- **Number of applications:** Applicants with more than one project idea may submit multiple concept notes. Please note that each project idea must be presented in a separate concept note(s), and applicants may submit a maximum of two concept note(s)s.

HOW TO APPLY A CONCEPT NOTE

Participation in this final grant competition of the PROGRAM RENEWAL consists of two stages: submission of a concept note(s) followed by submission of a full application. Organizations that submit concept notes most closely meeting the qualification requirements and selection criteria will be invited to submit full applications.

At the time of the publication of this Announcement, i.e., at the first stage, we invite you to submit concept notes. The concept note should present a generalized vision of the potential project with a clear statement of how the expected results will be achieved. The detailed application procedure through the grant portal of the Foundation is described in Appendix A to this announcement.

The expected timelines are presented below.

Preliminary timelines (subject to clarification):	
Announcement of the competition	June 2023
Opening of the portal for concept note(s) at www.eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org/	June 2023
Information webinar for competition participants	June 2023
Deadline for submission of concept notes	15th of July 2023 r.18:00 (London time)
Selection of Concept Notes and Partners	July - August
Invitation to submit full applications (subject to clarification)	August - September
Notification of winners	As full applications are reviewed by the competition committee - but no later than October 2023
Negotiations on contract terms	September - November 2023
Implementation start	September - November 2023

CONCEPT NOTES

All concept notes should be submitted through our portal at www.eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org by 18:00 (London time) on 15th of July 2023. The applicant bears sole responsibility for updating or correcting information provided through the application portal on the website. The Foundation is not responsible for errors caused by human factors, theft, destruction, or damage to concept or full applications, or other factors beyond the Foundation's control. Organizations whose concept notes meet the qualification requirements and selection criteria will be invited to submit full applications. The Foundation reserves the right to choose a subset of the most eligible concept note(s) if we receive more concepts than we can fund given available resources.



REQUIREMENTS FOR CONCEPT NOTES FOR THE 'NAME' COMPETITION

Concept note(s) for the competition " RENEWAL " should contain the following information:

General information about your project: Organization or consortium name; country(ies) of project implementation; project cost; project geography (country, region, city); expected project start date; expected project end date; project duration. • Answers to the following questions:

Brief summary: What are the main expected outcomes and activities of your project? Briefly describe the final results of your project and the ways to achieve them (150 words). What problem related to HIV among key populations in your city/region/country do you propose to address? Provide objective quantitative justification of the relevance and scale of this problem (or problems). Why is solving this specific problem (or problems) crucial for eradicating the HIV epidemic in your city/region/country? (250 words).

Objective 1: What specific quantitative results will you achieve to improve access to resources that meet the humanitarian and health needs of vulnerable HIV key populations or people living with HIV? List the specific activities you will undertake (describing who will do what and how) to achieve the stated results. What evidence supports the effectiveness of the proposed activity (or activities)? How will you ensure the sustainability of the results after the project is completed? (350 words).

Objective 2: What specific positive changes will you implement to enable more effective provision of HIV-related services for key populations and/or people living with HIV, and/or to restore and enhance quality relationships between key populations and service providers? List the specific activities you will undertake (describing who will do what and how) to achieve the stated results. How will you ensure the sustainability of the results after the project is completed? (350 words)

Objective 3: How will your project contribute to improving the reliability and availability of strategic information for all stakeholders to make informed decisions? What specific models and lessons learned from your project will you document and disseminate? Why are these lessons valuable for the project implementation region? How will these models/lessons help other cities and regions in Ukraine to eliminate the HIV epidemic? (150 words)

Justify how your project will ensure optimal use of funds in addition to existing government-funded and local/international donor-funded programs in your city/region/country. How will you avoid duplicating similar initiatives? Why can't the proposed interventions be financed by other donors present in your country/region/city (national and local government, local private donors, the Global Fund, PEPFAR, and other international donors)? (200 words)

Experience, expertise, and collaboration: Why is your organization (and consortium partners, if applicable) the most suitable for implementing this project? Specify specific measurable results achieved by your organization (and consortium partners, if applicable) that have contributed to the eradication of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and/or addressing similar challenges (300 words).



Partners in the Consortium and Other Stakeholders: Please list the consortium partners (if applicable) and other key stakeholders, clearly indicating their roles in the project. How will the main grant recipient manage the activities of the consortium partners to ensure results and effective financial management? (Up to 150 words)

What are the main risks to the successful implementation of the project, and how do you plan to minimize them? (150 words)

Preliminary budget in USD. You can use any budget format of your choice. The Foundation will evaluate the budget of each concept note(s) in relation to the expected project results.

Names and contact information of two referees from well-known organizations who can confirm your successful experience in achieving results. Please provide the name, organization, position, email address, and phone number of each referee.

Applicant Information: Contact details of the person submitting the application and the main contact person, if different; organization registration details; organization's income, number of employees, and address.

ASSISTANCE IN PREPARING CONCEPTUAL NOTES

All applicants have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions about this announcement and the selection criteria used in evaluating concept notes. All questions should be submitted in writing to the email address: renewal@eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org

APPLICATIONS

Applicants whose conceptual notes are selected to proceed to the next stage of the competition will be notified by the Foundation and invited to submit full applications, providing detailed information about the proposed project. The selection of your concept note(s) does not obligate you to submit a full application. The Foundation reserves the right to provide the applicant with feedback and comments for improving the full application. The Foundation reserves the right to choose a subset of the most eligible concept note(s) if we receive more concepts than we can fund given available resources.