



Opportunity Announcement

RADIANT Unmet Need Fund

October 2019



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I. RADIANT

Elton John AIDS Foundation (“the Foundation”), in partnership with Gilead Sciences, has launched the ground breaking initiative “RADIANT”, to meaningfully address new HIV infections and deaths from AIDS related illnesses in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) through focussed action, investment and resourcing to improve the quality of prevention and care for people at risk of or living with HIV in the region.

Over 1.7 million people are living with HIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and new HIV infections in the region have increased by over 50% since 2010. Each day more than 400 people in EECA acquire HIV and 100 die from AIDS. The most vulnerable groups, including people who inject drugs (PWID) and their sexual partners, men who have sex with men, transgender people and other LGBT people, and female sex workers (FSW) and their sexual partners make up over 95% of those living with HIV. 62% of people living with HIV in EECA are not on treatment.

The Elton John AIDS Foundation and Gilead have an established presence in EECA and extensive experience working effectively with key local stakeholders in the region. RADIANT is the next stage in this partnership to reach some of the world’s most vulnerable people to ensure that no one is left behind in the fight to end the HIV epidemic.

Funding is provided through grants which are assessed and administered by the Elton John AIDS Foundation. Gilead has no involvement in the selection and assessment of award applicants and winners.

II. OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT: Model Cities and Unmet Need Fund

RADIAN aims to meaningfully address new HIV infections and deaths from AIDS-related illnesses in Eastern Europe and Central Asia through focussed action, investment and resourcing to improve the quality of prevention and care for people at risk of or living with HIV in the region. Moreover, RADIAN aims to empower communities delivering and advocating for better, stigma-free HIV services, and collate best practices to demonstrate how effective evidence-informed programming in Eastern Europe and Central Asia can bring the region closer to epidemic control.

CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES

RADIAN, with this announcement, is accepting concept notes for the following solutions:

A. Model Cities (Almaty, Kazakhstan):

The RADIAN Model Cities Fund is looking to support programmes centred around existing health system infrastructure that deliver measurable impact in the response to HIV in key EECA cities. Model Cities will be blueprints for creating change and increasing access to HIV services across the EECA region. The first RADIAN Model City will be Almaty, Kazakhstan. With this announcement, the 'Model Cities' Fund is looking for concept notes for evidence-informed solutions to be implemented in Almaty, lasting between 36 and 48 months. \$2,000,000-\$5,000,000 will be available for Model Cities in Almaty, with a strong preference for cost-effective solutions that deliver value for money. Additional Model Cities will be announced in 2020.

B. Unmet Need Fund:

The RADIAN Unmet Need Fund is looking to support initiatives across Eastern Europe and Central Asia that focus on prevention and care, education, community empowerment, and novel partnerships. The Fund is looking for concept notes for evidence-informed solutions in the range of \$500,000-\$1,000,000 lasting up to 36 months, implementing in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Kosovo, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, or Uzbekistan. The Fund welcomes concept notes for multi-country projects.

Further details and application modalities are outlined in this announcement.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the funding opportunities announced here, there will be additional future funding opportunities through RADIANT in 2020-2023. These may consist of funding available for the same and/or other grant types in the same and/or other countries. The Foundation will advertise opportunities on our website, www.ejaf.org.

III. NATURE OF PROGRAMMES FUNDED: Unmet Need Fund

OVERVIEW

Proposed solutions must demonstrate readiness for rapid implementation and be able to show impact within two years. Solutions must be evidence-informed and have strong potential to demonstrably increase access to prevention, care and adherence to treatment among people living with HIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia at scale and to reduce new HIV infections.

For all proposed solutions, a description of how this leads to impact must be included. Solutions proposed may include pilots; however, the solution design must be well informed by related evidence and have a well-founded theory of change. Additionally, solutions proposed may include innovations which improve on previous successes, e.g. improve access, expand service, reach hard-to-reach individuals from key population groups, reduce delivery time, increase linkage to care and adherence, or reduce cost.

NATURE OF PROGRAMMES FUNDED: UNMET NEED FUND

Across Eastern Europe and Central Asia, RADIANT is looking to support community-based organisations in partnership with communities and health systems in scaling up evidence-informed and innovative HIV services, particularly linkage to care, treatment initiation and adherence support, prevention, and harm reduction, as well as community education and advocacy projects. Moreover, RADIANT aims to empower communities delivering and advocating for better, stigma-free HIV services, and collate best practices to demonstrate how effective evidence-informed programming in Eastern Europe and Central Asia can bring the region closer to epidemic control. Where possible, the Fund is looking to support projects that, if successful, can be transitioned to other funders, including national government, domestic funders or large multilaterals.

The Fund is looking for concept notes for evidence-informed solutions lasting up to 36 months, implementing in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Kosovo, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, or Uzbekistan. The Fund welcomes concept notes for multi-country projects. The Fund is looking for proposed solutions in the range of \$500,000-\$1,000,000.

The Fund will support two grant types:

- I. Breaking Barriers: Innovating Healthcare Delivery
- II. Building Bridges: Community Innovation & Education

Type I: Breaking Barriers: Innovating Healthcare Delivery

Breaking Barriers grants will address the root causes of the large treatment gap in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Supported solutions will be cost-effective and scalable strategies that reduce barriers for initiation and adherence to ART regimens to maximise numbers of people receiving treatment services.

Examples of approaches funded through a Breaking Barriers grant include (but are not limited to):

Approaches that remove barriers preventing uptake of existing HIV treatment services and improve existing HIV treatment services, e.g.,

- Efforts to improve HIV service design, accessibility and implementation, including needs assessments and patient-centred design interventions that improve clinic processes and make healthcare facilities non-discriminatory, friendlier and more desirable places to visit to initiate and adhere to treatment
- Changes to models of care, including improvement of patient algorithms, introduction of differentiated care, offering of telephone consultations, total quality improvement approaches, and other approaches that increase the capacity of health care settings to offer high-quality HIV treatment services to large numbers of key populations
- Decentralisation of HIV treatment service provision, e.g. HIV care in community, mobile or other (non-HIV) healthcare settings (e.g., pharmacy, primary care), with strong linkage to AIDS centres
- Strategies that systematically identify and reduce administrative barriers to treatment access
- Mechanisms for community feedback to troubleshoot problems with initiating and adhering to treatment, and make services more respectful and appropriate
- Tackling of data safety and security issues to ensure confidentiality
- Strategies that systematically identify and reduce barriers to adherence in care
- Capacity-strengthening of AIDS centres on monitoring and evaluation, documentation and data-tracking systems, as well as measures to change organisational culture within healthcare settings

Interventions that directly protect key populations from stigma, discrimination and violence, as it presents a barrier to initiation and retention to treatment, e.g.,

- Sensitisation of existing health services to make them friendly and accessible for key populations
- Training and sensitisation of health workers and other workers in health settings to reduce stigma and discrimination, and create friendly, welcoming environments where key populations feel comfortable receiving treatment services
- Tackling internal and external stigma and discrimination in broader societal structures
- Incorporation of violence response systems into health services, community groups and other relevant organisations

Type II: Building Bridges: Community Innovation & Education

Building Bridges grants will support cost-effective and scalable strategies for integrating key populations into HIV prevention and treatment services, including harm reduction services, through service delivery,

community education and advocacy projects. Supported solutions are likely to be designed for scale and led by organisations with a track record of providing HIV services for key populations.

Examples of approaches funded through a Building Bridges: Community Innovation & Education grant include (but are not limited to):

The provision of new or improved services for key populations in high-incidence and high-prevalence areas, e.g.,

- Community-led comprehensive HIV services
- Provision of key population-specific health and harm reduction HIV services, including prevention, testing and treatment, in mainstream public health clinics, or in drop-in centres
- Integration of HIV services with other related services (harm reduction, psychosocial support, adherence support) in one physical location etc.
- Provision of adherence support interventions, including support groups, reminders and community ART provision
- Cross-cutting approaches, e.g., community mobilisation or community-based approaches integrated into clinical services
- Special strategies for particularly hard-to-reach individuals from key population groups

Interventions that increase the demand among key populations for HIV prevention, harm reduction, testing and treatment services, e.g.,

- Use of social media and other technology to improve prevention and treatment literacy and to create demand for HIV treatment services
- Peer outreach and behaviour change interventions
- Linkage of key populations to friendly providers
- Strategies to re-engage into care those who have dropped off or lost to follow up

Advocacy and education activities that strengthen community systems, empower communities and mobilise and engage stakeholders to create appropriate HIV prevention, harm reduction, testing and treatment services for key populations, e.g.,

- Training and sensitisation of health workers, police, government authorities to reduce stigma and discrimination
- Community mobilisation for advocacy to create enabling environments and sustainable services
- Strategic planning with local government and other stakeholders (e.g. PEPFAR, Global Fund, UN family)
- Contributions to national policy guidance and operational frameworks
- Community-based monitoring of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of services
- Participation in local, regional or national accountability and decision-making mechanisms

The above are examples, and we also welcome other potential innovative solutions that take under 36 months to implement and achieve the Fund's objectives.

IV. HOW TO APPLY

TIMELINE

The application process for the first round of RADIAN grants has two stages, first a Concept Note stage, followed by an Application stage. Applications will be invited from those organisations submitting the most relevant Concept Notes, as defined by the eligibility and selection criteria.

At the point of the release of this opportunity announcement, the first stage, we are inviting Concept Note submissions. Concept Notes should outline a high-level vision for a potential solution, with a clear narrative of how this solution will achieve the Fund’s objectives. Compared to the full Application stage, implementation and financial planning can be at a higher level.

An expected timeline is below.

<u>Preliminary timeline (subject to change):</u>	
Opportunity announcement	October 2019
Concept Note portal opens at www.ejaf.org/radian	October 2019
Deadline for Concept Notes	December 15, 2019, by 11:59 PM GMT
Applications invited (subject to change)	January 2020
Application deadline (subject to change)	March/April 2020
Notification to awardees	May/June 2020
Negotiation and Terms of Agreement	May/June 2020
Implementation start	July 2020

CONCEPT NOTES

All Concept Notes must be submitted through our application portal on www.ejaf.org/radian **by December 15, 2019 at 11:59 PM GMT**. It is the sole responsibility of the Applicant to update or correct information provided through the application portal on the website. Concept Notes submitted via post, facsimile, e-mail, or other form will not be accepted. Any exception requests must be sent to the Foundation via jake.rashbass@ejaf.org at least one week before the submission deadline (i.e., before December 8, 2019 at 11:59 PM GMT for Concept Notes). The Foundation is not responsible for human error, theft, destruction, or damage to Concept Notes or Applications, or other factors beyond its control. Applications will be invited from those organisations submitting the most relevant Concept Notes, as defined by the eligibility and selection criteria.

CONCEPT NOTE REQUIREMENTS FOR UNMET NEED FUND GRANTS

Concept Notes for Unmet Need Fund grants will require the following information:

- **General information about your project:** Organisation or Consortium name; project country(s); project summary; project cost; project duration; target number and type of beneficiaries; implementing partners and their roles.
- **Brief answers to high-level questions:**
 - Please provide a background to your organisation and how you help to create an AIDS free future.
 - Please tell us about your proposed project, what your planned activities are and your intended outcomes. Please also tell us how the success of the project will be measured, and how the project complements rather than duplicates existing HIV or health services.
 - How does this project meet the criteria of the Unmet Need Fund (stated in section VI of this Opportunity Announcement)?
 - Why are you and/or your partners best placed to undertake this work and effect this change?
 - List Partners
- **A provisional USD budget**
- **Two references**
- **Applicant details:** contact details; type of applicant; registration details; organisational income and number of employees; address

Applications from partnerships and/or consortia are encouraged. Applicants with more than one project idea may submit multiple Concept Notes. Please note each idea requires a separate Concept Note and applicants may submit **no more than four Concept Notes**. All Concept Notes must be in English. Minor language errors as one would expect from a non-native speaker are acceptable as long as the proposed project and its aims can be clearly understood.

SUPPORT WITH CONCEPT NOTES

All applicants have the opportunity to request a telephone conversation with representatives from the Foundation to ask clarification questions about this opportunity announcement and the selection criteria used to evaluate applications. All such requests must be made by November 15, 2019, latest, via email, to jake.rashbass@ejaf.org. Requests must include a summary of questions.

APPLICATIONS

Applicants whose Concept Notes are selected to move forward to the Application stage will be notified by the Foundation and will be requested to submit an Application with further details on their solution. Selection of your Concept Note does not obligate you to submit an Application.

Successful Concept Note applicants will be invited to submit an Application. As with the Concept Note, all Applications will be submitted through the website. The Foundation may provide feedback to applicants to help further hone their Applications. The Application will require information such as additional detail on the proposed solution, monitoring & evaluation (M&E) framework, and proposed implementing partners that will receive funding under this grant. A detailed budget will also be required, as well as references and financial documentation. We will provide further information on this in the invitation to apply.

V. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All Concept Notes and Applications will be reviewed for eligibility before they are assessed against the evaluation criteria. The eligibility review is a pass/fail test and covers both non-financial and financial considerations. Once eligible, Concept Note and Application selection will be based on our selection criteria listed below.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility criteria for funding through the RADIANT initiative are summarised in below, with accompanying explanations.

- **Country:** For Model Cities grants, we welcome applications for funding for projects implemented in Almaty, Kazakhstan. For Unmet Need Fund grants, we welcome applications for funding for projects implemented in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Kosovo, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan. Applicants must have presence in the country of implementation or partner with a local organisation with in-country presence.
- **Type of applicant:** We encourage Applications from non-profit, academic and research organisations. Ineligible entities include individuals and governments. No organisation will be allowed to financially profit from implementation of project activities. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. Programme income earned by the recipient must be deducted from the total project or programme allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the share of costs is based. Cost share and/or leverage is not required, but is strongly encouraged. Co-funding from partners is encouraged as this demonstrates a key stake in the project success by project partners, as well as demand for the solution.
- **Registration and Bank Account:** The Applicant must be a registered entity and must have an active organisational bank account.
- **Project Timetable:** Depending on grant type, the proposed grant should be implemented and all funds disbursed within two-four years from the date the grant agreement is signed with the Applicant or by September 30, 2025, whichever is earlier.
- **Completeness and Language:** All Concept Note and Application information and supporting documentation must be submitted in English; any other language will be considered ineligible. Written submissions must be completed in full to be considered eligible for review; incomplete submissions will be considered ineligible.

VI. SELECTION CRITERIA

After eligibility review, the Foundation will score each Concept Note holistically, using the below selection criteria. While the Concept Note and Application will use the same criteria, the level of detail requested from the Applicant at the Application stage will be greater. Applicants should reflect on the below questions when considering their solution's competitiveness and crafting their submission. While selection criteria will be used to objectively assess each Concept Note, the Foundation reserves the right to make final award decisions to ensure an optimal portfolio of awardees and solutions.

SELECTION CRITERIA: UNMET NEED FUND GRANTS

Strategic Alignment and Impact

- **Alignment:** How well does the solution align and advance the goals and objectives of the Unmet Need Fund?
- **RADIAN Strengths:** Do the proposed activities differ substantially from those that other actors, such as the local government and health system, or international donors and NGOs are already undertaking?
- **Theory of Change:** Is there a clear idea of what the applicant is looking to change? Is there a treatment gap and a need for additional activities on linkage and retention in the population and location and/or is there high incidence and a need for additional prevention activities in the population and location? What is the likelihood that the solution achieves what it intends to achieve, through the means it proposes to do so, in the given time frame? Is the solution feasible to implement in the local context?
- **Evidence-informed Impact:** Is there evidence showing that desired impact is likely through the suggested intervention?
- **Proof of Concept:** Is the proposal innovative and likely to improve programming in the wider region?
- **Incremental Value:** Will the proposed project complement rather than duplicate existing activities for the population(s), city/cities and country/countries in question? How significant is the unmet need in the specific area and key populations that the proposed solution is looking to support?

Effectiveness

- **History of Performance:** Does the applicant have a history of delivering promised outcomes?
- **Expertise & Relationships:** Does the applicant possess deep domain expertise, relationships and knowledge in the necessary and relevant areas, including partnerships with communities, government, and healthcare organisations required for success?
- **Organisational & Financial Capacity:** Does the applicant have the resources to deliver outcomes on time and on budget? Does the grantee have strong financial and management systems?
- **Transparency:** Does the applicant have a strong history of transparency and accountability?

- **Cost Effectiveness:** Is the project cost-effective in delivering outcomes relative to similar programmes in comparable regions? Do the proposed activities differ substantially from those that other actors, such as the local government and health system, or international donors and NGOs are already undertaking?
- **Budget:** Is the budget reasonably estimated, with actual costs likely to be close to budgeted costs?
- **M&E Strategy:** Are the right outcomes/metrics identified and ready to be tracked?

Sustainability

- **Sustainability:** Is there a strategy to have impact beyond the life of the grant?

REVIEWERS

A review panel will be created to review all Concept Notes and Applications. In addition to subject matter experts, submissions may be reviewed by a panel with broad expertise and a track record in working with key populations. Some of these reviewers may not be deep domain experts in an applicant's particular field; as such, applicants should describe their solution in clear language without the use of jargon.