



Opportunity Announcement

RADIANT: Model Cities Almaty, Kazakhstan

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

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 local 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: Model Cities (Almaty, Kazakhstan)

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: MODEL CITIES (Almaty, Kazakhstan)

In Almaty, Kazakhstan, RADIANT is looking to support programmes centred around existing health system infrastructure that support Almaty in scaling up evidence-informed, exemplary and innovative approaches to ensure 90% of people living with HIV in Almaty know their status, 90% of all people diagnosed with HIV in Almaty receive antiretroviral therapy, and 90% of all people in Almaty receiving antiretroviral therapy have suppressed viral loads, as per UNAIDS targets. Model Cities will be designed as blueprints for epidemic control in the EECA region.

Model Cities will support cost-effective and scalable solutions that maximise numbers of people from key populations in Almaty receiving prevention, harm reduction, testing and treatment services, while minimising losses in the HIV care cascade, including by reducing barriers for initiation and adherence to ART regimens. Solutions should complement rather than duplicate existing HIV and health services in Almaty. Model Cities grants are designed as catalytic funds to improve the access and quality, and thereby the uptake of HIV services in existing health care settings.

The Fund is looking for concept notes for evidence-informed solutions implementing 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. Implementers will have strong financial management, robust monitoring, defined plans for evaluation, and health system strengthening skills, as well as strong partnerships with AIDS centres and community organisations. We encourage applications from consortia. For all proposed consortia, each partner's contribution to

delivering the project should be clearly outlined (please see Section IV of this Opportunity Announcement for more information).

Successful Concept Notes will propose a number of integrated and targeted approaches and show how each approach contributes towards Almaty achieving the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets, reduced new HIV infections and zero discrimination. Please see Section VI of this Opportunity Announcement for more details on the Selection Criteria that will be used to evaluate Concept Notes. Examples of approaches that can be funded through a Model Cities grant include (but are by no means limited to):

Improvements to existing HIV services, e.g.,

- Integration of key population-specific health services into mainstream public health clinics
- Decentralisation of HIV service provision, e.g., provision of testing, prevention, HIV care, or other services in community, mobile or other (non-HIV) healthcare settings (e.g., pharmacy, primary care), with strong linkage to AIDS centres
- Measures that increase uptake of HIV testing for key population groups, increase linkage to care for people newly diagnosed with HIV, or increase adherence to ART e.g., process improvements reducing time lags, process steps, number of patient-clinician interactions and information requirements; increased options for ART disbursements; improvements to clinician-patient interactions and data management; use of technologies such as mobile reminders
- Efforts to improve HIV service design and implementation, including needs assessments and patient-centred design interventions that improve clinic processes and make clinics non-discriminatory, friendlier and more desirable places to visit
- 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 prevention, testing and treatment services to large numbers of key populations
- Improvements to referral and linkages across the prevention, care and treatment continuum

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

- 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 prevention and care services
- Tackling internal and external stigma and discrimination in broader societal structures
- 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
- Mechanisms for community feedback to troubleshoot problems, and make services more respectful and appropriate
- Tackling of data safety and security issues to ensure confidentiality
- Ensuring safety and security of key populations and their access to services

Interventions that increase the demand among key populations for HIV services, e.g.,

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

The provision of new or improved services, e.g.,

- Integration of HIV services with other related services (prevention, harm reduction, psychosocial support, adherence support) in one physical location etc.
- Offering of PrEP, self-testing, and other innovative HIV and harm reduction services.
- Community-led comprehensive HIV and STI services
- Special strategies for particularly hard-to-reach individuals from key population groups

The above are examples, and we also welcome other potential innovative and integrated solutions that take less than 48 months to implement and achieve the Fund's objectives.

IV. HOW TO APPLY

TIMELINE

The application process for the first round of RADIANT 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.

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| <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 MODEL CITIES GRANTS (ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN)

Concept Notes for Model Cities (Almaty, Kazakhstan) will require the following information:

- **General information about your project:** Organisation or Consortium name; project summary; project cost; project duration; target number and type of beneficiaries; implementing partners and their roles.
- **Project proposal:** A 4-6 page proposal in any format, explaining the proposed project and its relevance to the selection criteria stated in section VI of this Opportunity Announcement. In addition to the selection criteria, proposals should answer the following questions:
 - **Clinical service delivery:** How will the project systemically improve AIDS Centre operations and services in Almaty?
 - **Community service delivery:** How will the project provide services to communities outside Almaty AIDS centres, and how will the project link community-based services to AIDS Centre services?
 - **Programme Design:** How will the project ensure activities are evidence-informed, targeted, and incorporate human-centred design? How do the proposed solutions complement rather than duplicate existing HIV or health services?
 - **Monitoring & Evaluating:** How will the project measure programmatic data and results to share learnings and successes?
 - **Partnerships:** Please list any implementing partners, and their role in the project. How will the principal recipient manage contracts with partners to ensure activities achieve results and maintain sound financial management?
 - **Organisational background:** Why are you and/or your partners best placed to undertake this work and help to create an AIDS-free future in Almaty?
- **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. 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 three-five 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: MODEL CITIES (Almaty, Kazakhstan)

Strategic Alignment and Impact

- **Alignment with priorities:** Is the applicant proposing hyper-targeted interventions in Almaty, using data and innovation to optimise the care cascade, increasing prevention, testing, and linkage and adherence to treatment?
- **Theory of Change:** Is there a clear strategy, with detailed interventions on how the programme would have significant impact on the HIV epidemic in Almaty? Is there a framework beyond activities, focussing on organisational development, data management, capacity-building of local actors, and evaluation and learning? What is the likely impact on new infections, people diagnosed with HIV, people initiated on treatment, and AIDS deaths in the city?
- **Evidence-informed Impact:** Does the applicant understand the HIV epidemic in Almaty? Does the approach include efforts to gather data and insights on the epidemic, including a quantitative baseline and through human-centred design approaches? Will data and evidence inform intervention strategies?
- **Proof of Concept:** Is the proposal innovative and likely to create lessons for, and improve programming in the wider region? Is there a clear strategy to produce and disseminate learnings and findings to a wide set of stakeholders?
- **Incremental Value:** Will the proposed activity complement rather than duplicate existing activities? Will funds add most value if spent in this way in Almaty?

Effectiveness

- **History of Performance:** Does the applicant have a history of delivering promised outcomes, especially in Kazakhstan and Central Asia?
- **Expertise & Relationships:** Does the applicant possess deep expertise in complex data-led HIV programming, and in capacity-building? Does the applicant have the necessary relationships with relevant local stakeholders?
- **Organisational & Financial Capacity:** Does the applicant have the resources to deliver a high-budget programme on time and on budget? Does the applicant have strong financial and management systems, and a track record of managing large grants?
- **Transparency:** Does the applicant have a strong history of transparency and accountability?

- **Cost Effectiveness:** Is the proposed programme cost effective in delivering outcomes relative to similar programmes in comparable regions?
- **Budget:** Is the budget reasonably estimated, with actual costs likely to be close to budgeted costs?
- **M&E Strategy:** Is there a rigorous M&E strategy in place, to determine programme impact, improve programme impact and operations over time, and create broadly shareable learnings?

Sustainability

- **Sustainability:** Is there an effective and realistic exit strategy? What will be the programme's lasting effect on the HIV epidemic in Almaty?

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.