

EU Support to REDI Phase II: Advancing Roma Entrepreneurs in the Western Balkans and Türkiye

OPEN CALL for REDI grants aimed at supporting the formal employment of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro

Within the context of the project EU Support to REDI Phase II: Advancing Roma Entrepreneurs in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, founded by the European Union through the European Commission – EU The Directorate-General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood (DG ENEST - formerly known as DG NEAR), REDI Serbia is launching an open call for financial support of formal employment of Roma and Egyptians (RE) in Montenegro.

1. Description of the Call

This grant scheme is designed to stimulate job creation and formal employment of members of the Roma and Egyptian (RE) communities in Montenegro. Each selected business will receive up to **€5,000 in grant support to cover 5 months of formal employment and related accounting costs** for a new employee, with an **additional mandatory month funded (co-financed) by the employer**.

The program is designed to facilitate sustainable employment **for a minimum period of six months**, with a specific focus on integrating Roma and Egyptian individuals into the formal labour market. It is expected that this timeframe will allow the new employee to acquire the necessary skills and demonstrate their value to the employer, thereby increasing the likelihood of continued employment beyond the granting period.

The call places particular emphasis on the employment of women and youth (aged 18–35) from the RE community, and will take this into consideration in the evaluation stage of the process. The grants are aimed only at the new hires and cannot be given to previous employees of the company who are being rehired.

The total amount of the budget allocated in this round of the granting scheme is **up to 30.000 EUR**, which means that up to **6 grants will be distributed**. Grant disbursement will be made in two instalments, distributed in a **60%:40% ratio**. **First tranche will be paid to the Beneficiary no later than 15 working days after the Beneficiary signs the Contract and provides proof of labour registration. Co-financing part of the employer will be paid as salary for month 4 of the employment**, after which the remaining **40% of the grant** will be paid. **Evidence of employment for all six months** will have to be provided, together with proof of salary payments.

This call is open until the **18th of March 2026**.

2. Eligibility criteria

To be eligible under this grant scheme, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- **Formality of business:** The business must be formally registered in the Republic of Montenegro.
- **RE Ownership or Employment:** The business must be owned by a member of the Roma or Egyptian community, **or** the new employee hired must be a member of the RE community.
- **Employment Commitment:** Applicants must commit to employing a RE individual for **at least 6 months**.
- The grant scheme can only be used for new employees; rehiring of past employees of the company is not eligible under this grant scheme.
- **Location:** The business and created position must be based in Montenegro.
- **Exclusions:** Political parties, religious institutions, or businesses involved in illegal or environmentally harmful activities are not eligible for this grant.
- Please note that **special priority** will be given to the employment of RE women and youth (aged 18-35).

3. Application and Selection Process

All applications will undergo an administrative check for eligibility, based on the submitted Grant application and submission of all supporting documents outlined in this call. Eligible applications will be scored by two evaluators based on the criteria below, with the third one introduced in case the difference between the scores is higher than 30%. Based on the evaluation scores, the applicants who pass to the second round of selection will be invited to an interview with the Selection Committee, where they will be asked to present and explain their proposed employment plan in more detail.

Following the evaluation and interview stages, final rankings and funding decisions will be reviewed and approved by REDI's Grants Committee.

3.1. Documentation required for the application:

All interested parties must submit the following:

1. Completed REDI online application form with all supporting documents:

- 1.1. Employment plan with the budget estimation for the cost of employment of the new employee, employer's contribution and related accounting costs (inclusion of accounting costs is optional) (Annex 2.1)
- 1.2. Anti-fraud Declaration (Annex 2.2)
- 1.3. Confirmation of Genuine Employment (Annex 2.3)
- 1.4. Financial Management Declaration (Annex 2.4)
- 1.5. GDPR Declaration (Annex 2.5)

- 1.6. Declaration of Intent to Employ (Annex 2.6)
- 1.7. Roma/Egyptian Self-Declaration of the business owner and/or employee (Annex 2.7)
- 1.8. Whistleblowing and Whistleblower Protection Protocol (Annex 2.8)
- 1.9. Guidelines on Ethical Conduct (Annex 2.10)
- 2. Valid ID of the owner** (Roma/Egyptian self-declaration included if applicable - Annex 2.7).
- 3. Business registration certificate**
- 4. CV of the potential employee (Annex 2.9)**
- 5. Draft Employment Contract**
- 6. Bank Account Details of your Company**
- 7. Certificate issued by the Employment Agency of Montenegro confirming the unemployment status of the candidate.**

5. Contracting

The Contract should be signed within 15 working days after the official announcement of the list of grant recipients. The contract is signed for a minimum period of six months and commences with the first day of the new hire engagement.

Funds approved for the Grant will be disbursed to the Beneficiary in two instalments. Approved funds will be paid to the Beneficiary as follows:

Instalment 1: 60%, which covers the first three months of employment, will be paid to the Beneficiary no later than 15 working days after the Beneficiary signs the Contract and provides proof of labour registration.

Instalment 2: 40%, up to 15 working days upon receiving the proof of payment of the employment costs for the first four months of employment (3 financed by REDI and 1 by the employer).

6. Reporting & Monitoring

For the purposes of reporting and monitoring, the selected grantees must **submit interim and final narrative and financial reports**.

The narrative and financial interim reports, whose approval is required as a basis for disbursement of the second tranche of funds, must be submitted two months after signing of the employment contract, within 15 working days time frame.

The final narrative and financial report for the contractual period shall be submitted no later than one month after the Project completion.

REDI is obliged to respond to the submitted narrative and financial report within 10 (ten) working days and to request any necessary additions or amendments.

The **narrative report** should be submitted on the template provided by REDI.

The Beneficiary is required to submit a **financial report** with a detailed cost list and supporting documentation. In that regard, the Beneficiary is obliged to:

- Submit documentation in electronic form via email and hard copies by Post (signed and certified by the authorized person or authority)
- Submit evidence of employment:
 - Employment contract;
 - Registration form with the Staten Pension Fund or Tax administration - M2 form or equivalent;
 - Salary slips and bank statements that confirm the transfer of funds from the employer to the employee;
 - Evidence of payment of accounting costs (if the funds provided by this grant scheme are being used for payment of accounting costs);
- Retain all records, accounting, and supporting documentation related to this Contract for (5) five years after payment of the final tranche by REDI.
- Allow REDI to conduct field visits, spot checks, or audits.
- Be willing to share the success stories for promotional purposes of the programme.

7. Timeline

- Call for Applications – February 19th 2026 – March 18th 2026
- Shortlisting - the first evaluation by two evaluators – March 19th – 30th 2026
- Interviews - by the Selection Committee – March 30th – 3rd April 2026
- Meeting of the REDI's Grants Committee – April 3rd- 10th April 2026
- Announcement of the Grant beneficiaries - April 10th 2026
- Contract signing – April 10th – 30th April 2026
- N.b. - The Beneficiary is obliged to employ a new hire within 20 working days after the Contract is signed.

8. Evaluation

Only applications that have all documents submitted will be reviewed. The following evaluation criteria will be applied to this call:

- a) Impact on economic inclusion of the Roma/Egyptian Community and Employment of priority groups - **40 points maximum**

- Business is owned by Roma/Egyptian **10pts**
- New Employee is Roma/Egyptian **10pts**

(Both can apply; max -20 points)

Priority groups inclusion:

- Roma/Egyptian woman employed: **-10 points**
- Roma/Egyptian youth (18–35) employed: **-10 points**

(Both can apply; max -20 points)

- b) Feasibility & readiness to hire – **40 pts maximum**

- Potential candidate already identified and short CV attached - **10pts**
- Employment of the individual registered with the National Employment Agency as unemployed - **10 pts**

- Job role and duties clearly defined **10pts**
- Draft employment contract attached **10pts**

c) Sustainability evidence – **20 points maximum**

Objective, document-based ladder (the **highest** level met):

- **0 points** No evidence of employment continuing beyond the 6 months.
- **5 points** - for 1 additional month beyond 6 months (Signed **retention intent** to keep the employee (by indicating additional months of employment in Annex 2.1 & 3.1. Employment plan and Budget estimation and employment contract)
- **10 points** - for 2-3 additional months of employment beyond the initial 6 months (Signed **retention intent** to keep the employee (by indicating additional months of employment in Annex 2.1 & 3.1. Employment plan and Budget estimation and employment contract)
- **15 points** - for 3-6 additional months of employment beyond the initial 6 months (Signed **retention intent** to keep the employee (by indicating additional months of employment in Annex 2.1 & 3.1. Employment plan and Budget estimation)
- **20 points** - for permanent employment contract (draft employment contract attached)

Minimum technical threshold: 50/100 points. Ties broken by: (1) Points on women/youth employment, (2) more guaranteed months of employment.

9. Monthly salary amount for new hires

The gross monthly salary envisaged under this grant scheme is €1,000 per new employee, for a period of six months. However, the grant allows flexibility depending on the nature of the job position:

- If the position offers a gross monthly salary lower than €1,000, the total grant amount of €5,000 may be used to extend the employment period beyond six months, until the full amount is exhausted.
- If the position offers a gross monthly salary higher than €1,000, REDI will still contribute a maximum of €5,000 over six months, and the employer will be responsible for covering any additional salary costs.

10. Contact details

All documents for the application and follow-up reports **must be submitted in electronic format (scanned versions of signed and stamped copies) to the email address: rediserbia@redi-ngo.eu and in hard-copy to the address: Inicijativa za razvoj romskog preduzetništva, Svetozara Markovića 7/4, Medijana, Niš 18000, Srbija.**

All questions related to this call can be sent to: rediserbia@redi-ngo.eu.