



## Opportunity Announcement

### RADIAN: Model Cities

September 2020



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# I. RADIANT

Elton John AIDS Foundation (“the Foundation”), in partnership with Gilead Sciences, launched the ground breaking initiative “RADIANT” in September 2019, 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 life, prevention and care for people at risk of or living with HIV in the region. 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, including through the EECA Key Populations Fund since 2017. 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.

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 70% since 2010<sup>1</sup>. Each day more than 400 people in EECA acquire HIV and 100 die from AIDS-related illnesses. The most vulnerable populations, including people who inject drugs, men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers, and their sexual partners make up over 95% of new HIV infections<sup>1</sup>. 56% of people living with HIV in EECA are not on treatment<sup>1</sup>.

RADIANT is made up of two elements:

- The RADIANT ‘Model Cities’ programme will invest in targeted interventions that deliver measurable impact in the response to HIV in eligible cities and regions, as examples for other cities and regions in EECA seeking to end their own HIV epidemics;
- The RADIANT ‘Unmet Need’ fund will support local initiatives across EECA that focus on HIV prevention and care, education, community empowerment, and novel partnerships.

From 2020-2025, RADIANT will support local initiatives in up to 25 countries across Eastern Europe and Central Asia: 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, and Uzbekistan.

As of 2020, the RADIANT Model Cities programme is supporting work implemented in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and the RADIANT Unmet Need Fund is supporting projects across Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> UNAIDS (2020). UNAIDS Data 2020. Available at: <https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2020/global-aids-report> [Accessed September 2020].

## II. OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT: Model Cities

### CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES

RADIAN, with this announcement, is accepting Concept Notes for the following initiatives:

#### **Model Cities**

The RADIAN Model Cities programme is looking to support projects that deliver measurable impact in the response to HIV in eligible Russian regions, with a particular focus on the largest city/cities in the region of implementation. Model Cities will be examples for other cities and regions in EECA seeking to end their own HIV epidemics. With this announcement, the Model Cities programme is looking for Concept Notes for evidence-informed projects in the range of \$2,000,000-\$4,000,000 to be implemented in eligible locations (please see Section V of this Opportunity Announcement for the list of eligible locations), lasting between 36 and 48 months, with a strong preference for cost-effective projects that deliver value for money. Further details and application modalities are outlined in this announcement.

### PREVIOUS OPPORTUNITIES

The RADIAN Model Cities Fund previously accepted Concept Notes for projects to be implemented in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and the RADIAN Unmet Need Fund accepted Concept Notes to support local initiatives implementing in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Kosovo, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, or Uzbekistan.

### FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the funding opportunities announced here, there will be additional future funding opportunities through RADIAN in 2021-2023. 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.eltjohnnaidsfoundation.org](http://www.eltjohnnaidsfoundation.org).

### III. NATURE OF PROGRAMMES FUNDED: Model Cities

#### OVERVIEW

In eligible locations (please see Section V of this Opportunity Announcement for a list of eligible locations), RDIAN is looking to fund projects that support regions in developing and/or scaling up evidence-informed, exemplary and innovative approaches that sustainably achieve the following outcomes: reduced new HIV infections, including among the most vulnerable populations; improved cascade outcomes (people living with HIV know their status, receive ART, and maintain viral suppression), including among the most vulnerable populations; and improved wellbeing and reduced stigma and discrimination towards people living with and most at risk of HIV. Solutions must complement rather than duplicate or replace existing HIV and health services. Model Cities will be designed as blueprints for epidemic control in the EECA region.

The Model Cities programme is looking for Concept Notes in the range of \$2,000,000-\$4,000,000 for evidence-informed and holistic projects implemented in eligible regions, with a focus on the region's largest city/cities, lasting between 36 and 48 months, with a strong preference for cost-effective solutions that deliver value for money. The number of regions selected and grants awarded will depend on the quality of applications received.

Implementers should have robust track records of achieving results; strong relationships with relevant stakeholders (e.g. local government, AIDS centres and community groups); proven financial management and monitoring skills; defined plans for evaluation; and health system strengthening skills. (Please see Section VI of this Opportunity Announcement for more details on the Selection Criteria that will be used to evaluate Concept Notes.)

We welcome 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).

#### MODEL CITIES: EXPECTED PROJECT OUTCOMES

Successful Concept Notes will be rooted in the local context, and will propose integrated and targeted approaches that contribute towards achieving and sustaining each of the following outcomes on the regional level in the region of implementation, with a focus on the region's largest city/cities:

- 1. Reduced new HIV infections, including among the most vulnerable populations;**
- 2. Improved cascade outcomes (people living with HIV know their status, receive ART, and maintain viral suppression), including among the most vulnerable populations;**
- 3. Improved wellbeing and reduced stigma and discrimination towards people living with and most at risk of HIV;**
- 4. Project learnings and results are effectively documented and disseminated to help other cities and regions across EECA to end their HIV epidemics.**

Please see Section VI of this Opportunity Announcement for more details on the Selection Criteria that will be used to evaluate Concept Notes.

Concept Notes should propose a comprehensive set of approaches that achieve each of the expected project outcomes. Examples of approaches that can be funded through a Model Cities grant include (but are not limited to):

- Improvements to existing clinical and community HIV services and systems;
- Approaches that strengthen community and/or healthcare systems' capacities;
- Efforts to improve HIV service design and implementation, including community-led monitoring;
- The provision of new or improved services, including services that are community-led and/or specific to particular most vulnerable populations;
- Approaches that remove barriers preventing uptake of existing clinical and community HIV services, including systemic barriers and stigma and discrimination;
- Interventions that increase demand among the most vulnerable populations for HIV services;
- Expanding the number and types of locations where HIV services are available and/or integration of HIV services with other related services (prevention, harm reduction, psychosocial support, adherence support) in one physical location;
- Special strategies for particularly hard-to-reach individuals from the most vulnerable populations and/or people lost to follow up.

The above are only examples. We welcome all innovative and integrated approaches that take less than 48 months to implement and sustainably achieve all the expected project outcomes.

## IV. HOW TO APPLY

### TIMELINE

The application process for this 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 project, with a clear narrative of how this project will achieve the expected outcomes. Compared to the full Application stage, implementation and financial planning can be at a higher level.

An expected timeline is below.

Preliminary timeline (subject to change):

Opportunity announcement	September 2020
Concept Note portal opens at <a href="http://www.eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org/radian">www.eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org/radian</a>	September 2020
Webinar for Applicants (register at <a href="http://www.eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org/radian">www.eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org/radian</a> )	October 21, 2020 10:00 (London) / 12:00(Moscow)
<b>Deadline for Concept Notes</b>	<b>November 20, 2020 by 13:00 GMT</b>
Applications invited (subject to change)	January 2021
Application deadline (subject to change)	March/April 2021
Notification to awardees	May/June 2021
Negotiation and Terms of Agreement	May/June 2021
Implementation start	July 2021

### CONCEPT NOTES

All Concept Notes must be submitted through our application portal on [www.eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org/radian](http://www.eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org/radian) **by November 20, 2020 at 13:00 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, fax, e-mail, or other form will not be accepted. Any exception requests must be sent to the Foundation via [radian@eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org](mailto:radian@eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org) at least one week before the submission deadline (i.e., before November 13, 2020 at 13:00 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

Concept Notes for Model Cities will require the following information:

- **General information about your project:** Organisation or Consortium name; project name; project location; project cost; project duration.
- **Project proposal:** Answers to the following questions:
  - **Context:** What is the state and trajectory of the HIV epidemic and epidemic response today in the region of implementation, and what are the greatest challenges in ending the HIV epidemic there? Which groups are being left behind and why? Please be specific about the situation and challenges faced in the region's largest city/cities, where possible, and please be specific about the HIV epidemic among the region's most vulnerable populations. You should back up your assertions with data where possible, and reference sources for all data cited. This context should help to justify the activities and outcomes proposed in the "Project outcomes" section below. (Up to 400 words)
  - **Regional and city data:** Please provide the following figures, where available:
    - Estimated number of (diagnosed + undiagnosed) PLHIV in the region of implementation
    - Estimated number of (diagnosed + undiagnosed) PLHIV in the largest city in the region of implementation
    - Number of newly registered HIV infections in the region of implementation in 2019
    - Number of newly registered HIV infections in the largest city in the region of implementation in 2019
    - Number of diagnosed PLHIV in the region of implementation
    - Number of diagnosed PLHIV in the largest city in the region of implementation
    - Number of PLHIV receiving antiretroviral therapy in the region of implementation
    - Number of PLHIV receiving antiretroviral therapy in the largest city in the region of implementation
    - Number of PLHIV with suppressed viral loads in the region of implementation
    - Number of PLHIV with suppressed viral loads in the largest city in the region of implementation
      - (Optional) If you would like to do so, you may attach additional epidemiological data about the region of implementation, especially regarding the most vulnerable populations, and/or data about wellbeing and stigma towards people living with and most affected by HIV, that informs your proposed results and activities (attached document may be no longer than 2 pages).
  - **Project outcomes and key activities:** What are the key results you will achieve towards each of the following goals, and what are the activities you will implement to achieve them:
    1. Reduced new HIV infections, especially among the most vulnerable populations;
    2. Improved cascade outcomes, (people living with HIV who know their status, receive ART, and maintain viral suppression), especially among the most vulnerable populations;
    3. Improved wellbeing and reduced stigma and discrimination towards people living with and most at risk of HIV.

Please be specific about the quantitative targets you plan to achieve, the key activities you will implement to achieve them, and any evidence that has informed the proposed programme design. Please also explain how you will measure your results. (Up to 750 words)



- (Optional) You may attach a needs assessment or other baseline, if used to inform project design;
- **Sustainable impact:** How will you ensure the results achieved in your project are sustained? (Up to 300 words)
- **Dissemination of project learnings:** How will you document and disseminate project learnings and results to share with other EECA cities, regions and countries, so that your project can serve as a regional example for how to achieve and sustain results in ending the HIV epidemic? (Up to 200 words)
- **Value-add:** How will you complement and build on existing services and activities rather than duplicating or replacing them? How will this project add value at this particular point in time? (Up to 150 words)
- **COVID-19:** How will COVID-19 effect your proposed activities and how will you mitigate any negative impact? (Up to 150 words)
- **Risks:** What are the key risks to project success and how will you mitigate these? (Up to 150 words)
- **About your organisation and partners:**
  - **Organisational background:** Why are you (and your consortium partners, if relevant) best placed to undertake this work and to help end the AIDS epidemic in the region of implementation? Please be specific about past successes that your organisation (and consortium partners, where relevant) has achieved to help end the AIDS epidemic and/or other similar goals, and experience of fruitful cooperation with local healthcare and other related structures. (Up to 300 words)
  - **Consortium partners and other stakeholders:** Please list consortium partners and other key stakeholders, and their roles in the project. How will the principal grant recipient manage consortium partners to ensure activities achieve results and maintain sound financial management? (Up to 200 words)
- **A letter in support of your proposal from local healthcare-related state structures in the region of implementation**
- **A provisional USD budget**
- **Contact details for individuals from two reputable organisations who can vouch for your work and ability to achieve results**
- **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. Each project idea requires a separate Concept Note and applicants may submit **no more than three Concept Notes**. All Concept Notes must be in English or Russian.

## 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 October 26, 2020, latest, via email, to [radian@eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org](mailto:radian@eltonjohnaidsfoundation.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. 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 project, 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 below:

- **Implementation Location:** For this round of Model Cities grants, projects implementing in one of the following regions, with a focus on the region's largest city, are eligible to submit Concept Notes for funding:
  - Chelyabinsk Oblast, Irkutsk Oblast, Kemerovo Oblast, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Leningrad Oblast (not including City of St Petersburg), Novosibirsk Oblast, Orenburg Oblast, Perm Krai, Samara Oblast, Sverdlovsk Oblast, Tomsk Oblast, Tyumen Oblast.<sup>2</sup>

Applicants must have presence in the region of implementation or partner with a local organisation with in-region presence. The number of regions selected and grants awarded will depend on the quality of applications received.

- **Type of Applicant:** We encourage Applications from non-profit, academic and research organisations. Ineligible entities include individuals and governments. No organisation may financially profit from implementation of project activities. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. Cost share and/or leverage is not required, but is strongly encouraged. Co-funding from project partners is encouraged as this demonstrates a key stake in the project success by project partners, as well as demand for the solution.
- **Letter of Support:** Concept notes should include a letter in support of your proposal from local healthcare-related state structures in the region of implementation.
- **Registration and Bank Account:** The Applicant must be a registered entity and must have an active organisational bank account.
- **Project Timetable:** The proposed grant should be implemented and all funds disbursed within three-four years from the date the grant agreement is signed with the Applicant or by September 2025, whichever is earlier.
- **Completeness and Language:** All Concept Note information and supporting documentation must be submitted in English or Russian; any other language will be considered ineligible. Online submissions must be completed in full to be considered eligible for review; incomplete submissions will be considered ineligible.
- **Eligible Costs:** Model Cities grants are open to supporting all costs that are justified in relation to achieving project goals. Grant funds cannot be used to purchase or procure essential medicines (e.g. antiretroviral therapy) or to pay government employee salaries.

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<sup>2</sup> These were the highest ten regions in the Russian Federation for HIV prevalence and/or incidence in 2019, according to the Federal Scientific and Methodological Center for the Prevention and Control of AIDS. Data available at: <http://www.hivrussia.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/VICH-infektsiya-v-Rossijskoj-Federatsii-na-31.12.2019.pdf> [Accessed September 2020]

## VI. SELECTION CRITERIA

After eligibility review, the Foundation will score each Concept Note 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 project'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

#### Strategic Alignment and Impact

- **Alignment with Model Cities priorities:** Is the applicant proposing hyper-targeted interventions in the project location, using data and innovation to sustainably reduce new HIV infections, improve cascade outcomes, reduce stigma and discrimination, and improve wellbeing for PLHIV and the most vulnerable populations? Is there a particular focus on the largest and city/cities in the region of implementation?
- **Theory of Change:** Is there a clear strategy, with detailed interventions on how the project would have significant impact on the HIV epidemic in the project location? 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, AIDS deaths, stigma and discrimination and wellbeing for PLHIV and the most vulnerable populations in the region?
- **Evidence-informed Impact:** Does the applicant/consortium understand the HIV epidemic in the project location? Does the approach include efforts to gather and use data and insights on the epidemic? Does data and evidence inform intervention strategies?
- **Proof of Concept:** Is the proposal innovative and likely to create lessons for, and improve programming in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia more widely? 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 the project location?

#### Effectiveness

- **History of Performance:** Does the applicant/consortium have a history of delivering promised outcomes, especially in the project location?
- **Expertise & Relationships:** Is the applicant/consortium able to deliver complex data-led programming and build capacities? Does the applicant/consortium have the necessary relationships with relevant local stakeholders?
- **Organisational & Financial Capacity:** Does the applicant/consortium have the resources to deliver a high-budget programme on time and on budget? Does the applicant/consortium have strong financial and management systems, and a track record of managing large grants?
- **Transparency:** Does the applicant/consortium 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:** Will results achieved in the project be sustained beyond the lifetime of the grant? What will be the programme's lasting effect on the HIV epidemic in the project location?

#### **REVIEWERS**

A review panel will 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 the most vulnerable 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.