

Moving to a Housing-Led system in Central and Eastern Europe: A Feasibility Study

Call for proposals

1. Introduction

World Habitat is issuing a call for proposals to undertake an analysis of the challenges and opportunities in moving to a housing-led system, including Housing First, in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).

Housing First in Central and Eastern Europe

In 2019 FEANTSA and the Abbé Pierre Foundation estimated that 700,000 people were sleeping rough or in temporary or emergency accommodation in the European Union. This amounts to a 70% increase in the space of ten years. The Covid-19 pandemic of the last three years has presented organisations and individuals working in homelessness with great challenges, and the importance of having a secure and safe home has never been clearer. Governments across Europe have spent vast quantities on temporary and emergency housing initiatives, which may have addressed an immediate need but not provided permanent solutions. We know that arrears are increasing across Europe, as is unemployment and a rise in poverty, exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis and rising energy costs globally. As the impact of these challenges are felt, this figure looks set to rise.

Increasingly housing advocates look towards housing-led solutions, including Housing First, as a sustainable way out of homelessness, as well as helping to prevent people from becoming homeless again. Although only a minority of people experiencing homelessness need the intensive support of Housing First, the principles of the model should inform an approach to ending homelessness and a move to a housing-led system.

Evidence from many parts of Europe tell us a housing-led approach works. It also tells us it is also more cost effective than the traditional staircase model which serves to manage rather than end homelessness. However, despite this evidence, alongside learning from countries such as Finland where the housing-led model has been adopted as a national policy, there are barriers and challenges to delivering Housing First across Europe, particularly at scale. World Habitat seeks to fill the gaps in the evidence base of what works in ending homelessness in areas of Europe.

For our partners working in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region, who are operating in areas with chronic housing shortages, where less is known about Housing First, and where the provision of welfare and social care is lacking, these challenges and lack of evidence-based solutions are perhaps most acute. Robust independent evidence, data and recommendations around how the move towards a housing-led system, and in particular how Housing First could be applied and implemented in the region



will also be vital in helping our partners to raise public awareness and gain state support and opportunities for funding for the model.

World Habitat's aim is to be a catalyst to push structural change, garner public and political support and funding in this area. To help achieve that, we are looking for a suitable person or organisation to complete a feasibility study into introducing or expanding a housing-led approach in Central and Eastern Europe, with a focus on the countries of: Romania, Hungary, Croatia and Slovakia.

2. About World Habitat

World Habitat is an international housing foundation working to find, support, share and scale up positive housing solutions. We encourage better housing for people with few housing choices by identifying and promoting great practice in housing, bringing people together to transfer solutions and ideas, and facilitating programmes that lead to positive change. The World Habitat Awards – delivered in partnership with UN Habitat - recognise and highlight innovative, outstanding, and sometimes revolutionary housing ideas, projects, and programmes from across the world.

Across all our programmes (World Habitat Awards, Global Community-Led Housing and Homelessness) World Habitat run exChange events – which range from in person meetings, funded research, capacity building and knowledge exchange activities. These exChange activities are designed and delivered by World Habitat in partnership with stakeholders working in the relevant housing contexts.

You can find out more about World Habitat's work here: www.world-habitat.org.

3. The European End Street Homelessness Campaign (EESH)

The European End Street Homelessness Campaign was inspired by two previous World Habitat Award winners, and World Habitat have provided coordination since its inception in 2015. It was developed to help organisations in cities across Europe address the issue of street homelessness and to challenge cities to start ending it for good. The campaign merges strong community actions with improved data collection and champions the development of secure housing-led solutions, including Housing First, for people who are street homeless.

The campaign has grown from a small pilot of four city campaigns launching in 2016 to a network of ten city-based campaigns. Each campaign is run independently by a lead partner, and ranges from a cross-sector partnership of organisations and local authorities to individual homelessness organisations and NGOs working to end street homelessness and tackle housing inequality.

World Habitat host the campaign, providing a programme of bespoke support directed at partner organisations. This takes the form of online coaching, organised exChange events, peer exchanges trips, online peer to peer learning sessions, access to paid consultancy support, and a dedicated Innovation Fund grant programme.

The campaign currently works with organisations in Barcelona, Bratislava, Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest, Lisbon, Glasgow, Leicester, Westminster and Zagreb. To read more about the campaign please visit our [website](#) and you can read our most recent 2021 Impact Report [here](#).



4. The Central and Eastern European Homelessness ExChange Programme

A separate project within the wider EESHHC is the CEE Homelessness exChange Programme and features partners in Bucharest, Bratislava, Budapest and Zagreb. This feasibility study sits within this work stream.

In the last two years, we have recruited new partners in the CEE region. We recognise this is an area where the challenges are greater, resources fewer and there is less international funding resource. However, after 6 years of the EESHHC, we know that achieving a sustainable pathway towards reducing street homelessness must be achieved through secure housing-led solutions. World Habitat has recognised the need to bring this cohort of partners together and provide additional bespoke support to them.

Our mission is to act as a catalyst for change in CEE and support the adoption of interventions like Housing First in the most challenging housing contexts. We know that ending street homelessness cannot be achieved without a clear drive and focus on delivering permanent housing through housing-led solutions.

Our partners participating in the CEE Homelessness exChange Programme are:

- [Carusel](#) - Bucharest, Romania
- [Stopa Slovensko](#) - Bratislava, Slovakia
- [From Streets to Homes Association](#) – Budapest, Hungary
- [Croatian Network for the Homeless](#) – Zagreb, Croatia

Whilst they operate in different contexts, our partners in CEE share some common ground which inhibit the growth of Housing First, including but not limited to:

- lack of suitable, affordable, permanent housing;
- lack of good policies or laws to help prevent or end homelessness;
- lack of access to or regular commitment of state funding; and
- lack of state support for housing costs and other benefits, etc.

Through the CEE Homelessness exChange Programme World Habitat is a credible voice and enabler of progress in ending homelessness across the region. We use our global platform to raise awareness of the challenges, the best practice and housing solutions of our partners operating in the region.

We want to support the implementation of Housing-Led approaches across the region with independent data and evidence of what works to end street homelessness, and what steps might need to be taken to reach this goal.

5. Methodology

World Habitat require an experienced person/s to work on a freelance basis to carry out the following research using a mixed qualitative and quantitative methodology to understand the barriers to implementing a housing-led approach in Central and Eastern Europe, and offer key recommendations for practitioners, policy makers and funders.

This study should seek to engage with the following groups in CEE cities:

- Support workers and key stakeholders delivering support to people experiencing homelessness in EESHHC partner organisations and their networks
- Policy makers, local government officials and mayoral officials



- Local and Europe-wide funders
- People with lived experience of homelessness

In addition to this, this research should seek to engage with a wider network of experts and interested stakeholders, including but not limited to:

- Housing First Europe Hub
- Housing Europe
- Habitat for Humanity

Urgent climate action is a task for all of us. World Habitat has made a commitment to be a net zero charity by 2030 and has taken steps to reduce its emissions. World Habitat will support proposals with methodologies that limit carbon emissions (particularly those associated with flight travel) and make maximum use of online facilitation and conferencing tools.

To learn more about our commitment to sustainability please see: <https://world-habitat.org/about-world-habitat/what-we-do/our-commitment-to-sustainability/>

6. Research questions

This work should seek to analyse the challenges and opportunities in moving to a housing-led system, including Housing First, in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) with a particular focus on Romania, Hungary, Croatia and Slovakia.

The work should seek to answer research questions in the following areas:

6.1 Barriers to change

- What are the key barriers to moving to a housing-led system in the CEE region, and in particular, in Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Croatia?
- What are the views of service delivery organisations and municipalities about a move away from the shelter/hostel system in these four countries?
- What are the training needs of frontline staff and direct provision services managers which would support the implementation of a housing-led approach in these four countries?

6.2 Opportunities and implementation

- What existing policies and practice support a systemic change to a housing-led approach in the region?
- What changes to local and national policy frameworks in Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, and Croatia are needed to best support the successful implementation of a housing-led approach?
- What are the opportunities in these four countries in increasing permanent self-contained housing for use in Housing First?
- What opportunities for funding might there be on a European level to support housing-led solutions in the region?
- What are the potential cost savings of a housing-led system across the four countries compared to the costs of the current system?



- Who could be potential strategic allies at an EU Level, National and Regional levels to drive implementation of a Housing-led system in Romania, Hungary, Croatia, and Slovakia?

6. Outputs

The outputs for this research will be:

- a research report, including all relevant findings including targeted recommendations and an executive summary;
- four short policy briefings (max 4 sides A4) based on research findings for practitioners, policy makers and funders in Romania, Hungary, Croatia and Slovakia; and
- presentation and discussion of report findings and recommendations at meetings with EESHG representatives and World Habitat.

It is important that the findings and recommendations of this research are presented in a way that is easily understood by a wide audience, including staff at World Habitat and policy makers at city, national and European levels. Outputs should be delivered in English – and World Habitat will separately fund translations in regional languages where necessary.

7. Timetable

- **Call for proposals issued** – Monday 12th December 2022
- **Deadline for proposals** – Monday 23rd January 2023 (World Habitat may undertake interviews shortly after this via video conference call)
- **Expected award date** – Monday 6th February 2023
- **Contract period** – Monday 6th February – Monday 5th June 2023
- **Final outputs due** – Monday 5th June 2023

We recognise that this is a challenging timetable and are prepared to consider reasonable alternatives dependent on your proposal and methodology.

8. Budget

The overall budget for the delivery of the project will be a **maximum of £15,000 inclusive of VAT, all expenditure, and costs**. Figures should be quoted inclusive of VAT and all expenses, but please clarify if VAT is included within your costings, and what expenses are envisaged. You will not be entitled to claim any costs or expense that may be incurred in preparing your proposal, whether it is successful or not.

9. Your proposal

Please submit your proposal in maximum 4 sides of A4. Your proposal should include:

- A description of your expertise and background, including details of all key individuals who will work on this contract if you are successful
- A narrative description of how you will meet the brief, and why World Habitat should commission you to conduct this work



- Examples/descriptions of relevant work you have carried out
- An outline of the methodologies you would plan to use
- Information on how you will guarantee ethics and safeguarding in your work
- Timetable of work between 6th February– 5th June 2023
- Budget breakdown, including:
 - apportionment of days and associated costs for the project (If you will have different staff working on this project, please indicate their associated costs);
 - information about your costs per hour/day/week, so that we can see how you would construct your costs for any potential additional work; and,
 - any other relevant costs.

In assessing proposals, World Habitat will consider the following issues:

- **Expertise and experience** – evidence of your capacity to fulfil the brief to a high standard.
- **Creativity and quality of proposal** – demonstration of your understanding of the task at hand and how you will deliver it to achieve maximum results.
- **Cost** – the final decision will not be taken on cost considerations alone, but value for money will be a consideration.

10. Ownership

World Habitat commissions this work in pursuit of its strategic and business objectives. Intellectual property and copyright in any materials produced under this contract rests with World Habitat.

11. Queries and where to send your proposal

If you have questions please contact Ella Hancock, Programme Manager (Homelessness) at World Habitat: ella.hancock@world-habitat.org.

Please email proposals and attachments by the deadline to ella.hancock@world-habitat.org. Please note we cannot accept late proposals.

