

JOB ADVERTISEMENT - Finance Officer
ProtectDefenders.eu
Brussels, Belgium

ProtectDefenders.eu, the EU HRD Mechanism

ProtectDefenders.eu is the EU Human Rights Defenders mechanism, established to protect defenders at high risk and facing the most difficult situations worldwide. It is implemented by a consortium of 12 international NGOs with the support of the European Commission. The members of the Consortium are: Front Line Defenders, Reporters Without Borders (RSF), World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Network (ESCR-Net), International Gay and Lesbian Association (ILGA), Urgent Action Fund for Women Human Rights Defenders (UAF), Protection International, Peace Brigades International (PBI), Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF), Forum Asia and East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (EHAHRDP). Front Line Defenders, RSF, OMCT and FIDH form the Board of the Consortium. ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat is the coordination structure of the mechanism and is also in charge of the institutional representation and financial and narrative reporting of the project. The EU HRD mechanism began its operations on 1st October 2015 for a duration of 36 months, this project is now extended with another year, with the possibility for a renewal of 3 years in 2019.

The mission of ProtectDefenders.eu is:

- To operate a permanent and rapid response mechanism to provide emergency support and material assistance to human rights defenders in danger;
- To manage a support programme of temporary relocation for human rights defenders at risk to relocate inside their country, within their region or abroad in case of urgent threat;
- To support and coordinate an exchange platform for organisations and stakeholders working on temporary relocation for human rights defenders including through the EU Temporary Relocation Platform;
- To provide training, support and capacity-building to human rights defenders and local organizations;
- To monitor the situation of human rights defenders and advocate for a protection agenda for Human Rights Defenders at local, regional and international level;
- To promote coordination between organizations dedicated to support for human rights defenders, EU institutions and other relevant actors.

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION:

Under the supervision of the Head of Secretariat and with the assistance of the other Secretariat staff, the Finance Officer maintains an effective and accurate financial reporting system for all the HRD mechanism activities. This includes ensuring that all expenditures are in conformity with the relevant EU guidelines, that records of receipts and other relevant documentation of expenditure are maintained and that the financial reporting to the EU and the relevant audit reports are delivered on time and to the highest professional standards. He/she develops and adapts the necessary tools to successfully administer a consortium budget and provides financial analysis of the project's performance to inform decision-making processes. He/she oversees the coordination of accurate reporting by all organisations participating in the mechanism. Together with the Head of Secretariat, he/she ensures the development and implementation of work and expenditure plans and ensures that programmes are implemented within agreed and approved budgets through undertaking regular budget monitoring of expenditure against budget. He/she ensures that the Head of Secretariat and the Board are provided with accurate financial reports in an ongoing manner. He/she coordinates audit of the project and ensures that continuous monitoring and risk mitigation measures are in place. He/she ensures compliance with relevant legal frameworks in all contractual, financial, labor and taxation matters. He/she provides support on all other administrative and logistical aspects within the Secretariat whenever necessary.

Tasks & General Responsibilities

The Finance Officer will:

Financial Control:

- Coordinate the financial aspects of the multi-state, multi-year, multi-partner program in line with EU requirements and the grant contract.
- Process the disbursement of funds in accordance with the agreed schedule.
- Ensure that financial management systems and records are effective and robust.
- Consolidate cash flows, reporting templates, financial plans and amendments throughout the project life.
- Maintain an adequate filing system for all financial and accounting deliverables to ensure ease of access during internal/external audit.
- Monitor budget burn rates and cash-flow projections.
- Recommend appropriate action on any significant variances (+/-10%) and prepare budget amendments where necessary.
- Prepare the financial accounts for external audit and coordinate audit activities.
- Follow up on timely implementation of the recommendations to remedy significant variances.

Financial Reporting:

- Oversee forward planning and preparation for reporting to EU, adherence with consortium requirements and time-lines, and timely submission of reports by the 12 member organisations.
- Produce integrated financial reports on a timely basis and in line with international accounting standards and EU regulations.
- Finalize yearly accounts and provides any ad-hoc financial reports that may be required.
- Ensure that all consortium members submit accurate timesheets.

Financial and administrative management of Secretariat managed activities:

- Ensure the daily accountancy of the Secretariat
- Follow up the level of expenditures of the Secretariat's budget in close coordination with the Head of Secretariat
- Ensure that all Human Resources procedures under Belgian Law are observed and carry out payment of salaries to the Secretariat staff.
- Ensure financial management of inter-mechanisms meetings, core group meeting, foundation meetings and consortium meetings.

Capacity Building:

- Be available to partners to clarify EU financial rules and check compliance of reporting.
- Put forward recommendations when appropriate.
- If needed, undertake support visit to consortium members.
- Participate in consortium meetings to foster compliance and to address any financial issues.
- Ensure that internal audit recommendations for grant-funded projects are adhered to.
- Share lessons learned with consortium members throughout the project's implementation.

General administrative and logistic support:

- Support in the logistical and administrative organisation of meetings when necessary.
- Ensure supply of stationery and necessary equipment for the Secretariat in coordination with other staff members.
- Perform other administrative tasks if needed.

Ensures timely communication with the Head of Secretariat regarding eventual problems and possible solutions.

Experience/knowledge:

- Masters Degree in Finance or Accounting or professional accounting qualification
- Minimum of five years of experience in a finance/accounting role preferably with an international NGO.
- Demonstrated experience in developing and managing large budgets, with preference for previous experience working in a consortium or a network.
- Demonstrated experience with accounting in Belgium.
- Considerable experience of successfully managing the implementation of complex projects.
- Experience in working on projects funded by major international donors, with preference for previous experience with EU.
- Strong coordination/negotiation skills specifically with the ability to effectively coordinate among partner organisations.
- Understanding of the security and protection of human rights defenders around the world.

Skills:

- Excellent oral and written English and French language skills
- Strong financial management skills
- Ability to work towards tight reporting deadlines
- Strong analytical, interpersonal, communication and organisation skills.

The Finance Officer should have the necessary permit to work in the EU.

The Finance Officer will be based in ProtectDefenders.eu secretariat in Brussels. The gross annual salary for the position is €45,080 (full-time).

Applications comprising a CV with at least two references and a cover letter should be sent by email to recruit@protectdefenders.eu by November 26. Interview will take place on November 29 (in person or by Skype). The successful candidate will be expected to start working in December if possible. The initial contract will be up to End of January 2020. The position is expected to be full-time, although a contract at 80% can be discussed.