

Institutional Support to Afghan Human Rights Organisations Guidelines for Grant Applications

The Project Description

The European Union (EU) awarded funds for an eighteen month grant-making programme to support Afghan human rights organisations with institutional support. With the support of ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat in Brussels, four international organisations with various expertise and capacity formed an Afghanistan Consortium to implement the project together. Members of the Afghanistan Consortium are Frontline Defenders (FLD), Reporters Without Borders (RSF), World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), and Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA). Activities will be implemented by the ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat with the support of implementing partners.

The objective of this programme is to ensure that groups and networks are empowered, resilient and enabled to continue their work. The project aims to significantly contribute to the sustainability of local human rights movements and organisations.

Institutional Support Grants

Institutional support grants are allocated by ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat in consultation with the Afghanistan Consortium member organizations. You may send your applications in this category to afghanistan-ig@protectdefenders.eu per e-mail or can fill in our secure web form online.

Eligibility Criteria

The beneficiaries can include unregistered organisations, networks and organisations based in and outside of Afghanistan, that have limited capacity to approach donors, and to those organisations with limited financial capacity, who are continuing to deliver emergency support to Afghan HRDs. The ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat will give priority to most at-risk HRD groups including women human rights defenders (WHRDs), LGBTI+ defenders, minority rights defenders, disability rights defenders, environmental and indigenous peoples' rights defenders, freedom of expression's rights defenders and less connected HRDs.

ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat will take certain criteria into consideration whilst evaluating each grant application :

- 1. Identity:** a civil society organisation or groups, in particular those that represent or support Afghan HRDs at risk. Those can include
 - registered or unregistered organisations
 - networks or unregistered organisations
 - newly established groups within/ and or outside the country or those working in hybrid models.
- 2. Situation:** The group/ network is at risk because of their human rights work and/or are providing direct support to Afghan civil society actors and HRDs at risk
- 3. Needs:** The applicant needs support to continue doing human rights work. Priority will be given to groups or NGOs that have limited capacity to approach donors and to those organisations with limited financial capacity who are continuing to deliver emergency

support to Afghan HRDs. Lack of access to alternative sources of support will be taken into account but is not a sole determining factor.

The Institutional Support grant-making approach aims at being adaptive to local needs and to a diversity of methods and tactics developed by Afghan HRDs, women rights and media organisations as well as responsive to unanticipated situations as they arise.

Amount

- Grants upto a maximum of EUR 60,000

It is possible to apply for several grants or for various activities in one grant as long as the total amount that one beneficiary receives does not exceed EUR 60,000.

Scope

The scope of activities that are funded by institutional support grants include:

1. Consolidating operational capacities, allowing the beneficiaries to develop new initiatives and/or sustain their work,
2. Leveraging emerging local initiatives, especially ones in isolated areas, whose timeliness with respect to on-the-ground developments is crucial to influence the human rights or HRDs' situation at the local level,
3. Providing a lifeline to local organisations that are threatened by unexpected and/or grave security, financial, legal or administrative situations through core/bridging fund.

Eligible activities

Applications should be driven from needs of the human rights defender(s) and therefore need not have to choose only one type of grant for one application.

Core Funding

Scope of core funding includes activities to develop human rights initiatives and to sustain their work. Proposals can include a wide range of activities such as registration expenses, to build and maintain a stable office (office equipment and furniture, rent, physical office maintenance with its inner and outer parts, security measures and equipment, utilities, repairs etc), staff related costs (such as new recruitment and recruitment for expansion, project related or temporary staff, maintaining existing staff etc), digital or software, information security, website and social media design expenses (such as website/mobile site/smart-phone application purchase and upgrades, multimedia integration and upgrades etc), administrative and operational costs, translation and interpretation, publications and other costs (such as transportation costs in international and domestic levels, audit, evaluation and report producing costs etc) etc.

Funding for Projects/Activities

Scope of the funding includes activities related to advocacy campaigns, community building, trainings, documentation, joint development and implementation of protection plans by human rights organisations and networks, etc.

More specifically, proposals can include advocacy missions and activities to sensitize policy makers, practitioners, professionals, public campaigns and awareness raising about human rights; research and investigation, monitoring human rights violations and data collection activities; media and communication activities; outreach activities (including coalition building work with other human rights defender actors, for increasing the engagement of community members etc); solidarity and collaboration activities (actions that support strengthening human rights defender organizations and initiatives, actions to support communities at risk or on topics prioritized in the specific objective, actions that help strengthen strategic cooperation with allies, support to innovative

projects etc); strategic planning and organizational development activities; fundraising, development and activities.

Proposals can cover one-off events/activities, or a series of activities and projects both at domestic and international level, seminars (internal capacity building, retreats, certificate programs etc); conferences; training and workshops (for the team of the organization, for a target group, in or for cooperation to create a training, for building capacities of local organizations etc); field missions (outreach, networking, research/investigation, exploration etc); publications (leaflets, booklets, posters, flyers, reports, articles etc in paper and blogging, broadcasting, article etc in digital).

A list of eligible costs for the implementation of these activities can be found in the budget template.

Application process

Call for applications will remain open and will be received on a rolling basis until April 2023, or until the complete utilisation of funds, whichever is earlier.

To apply for a grant, applicants should fill in an application form on ProtectDefenders.eu website. The form can be submitted online or via e-mail.

Online Application

You can fill and submit your application using a secure web form on the ProtectDefenders.eu website. The secure web form is available in English and Dari.

E-mail Application

In e-mail applications, application form and budget proposal template should separately be filled and submitted.

You can download the online application form and budget proposal template from the ProtectDefenders.eu webpage. To complete your application, you should fill and submit both of them via e-mail at afghanistan-ig@protectdefenders.eu

Please note that it is possible to communicate with the Secretariat via gpg email or jitsi chat.

Evaluation of Applications

Once the Secretariat of ProtectDefenders.eu receives a complete application, the application will be submitted to the Board of the Afghanistan Consortium which meets every two months to review grant applications. Therefore, depending on when the application is submitted, it will be reviewed in a maximum of two months' time. If the applicant is bound to a strict time frame or a deadline, they can reach out to the ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat via email (afghanistan-ig@protectdefenders.eu) to request a faster review of their applications.

When the application is successful and the applicant is selected to receive a grant, a grant agreement will be signed between the beneficiary and the Secretariat. The grant agreement specifies the project's budget, duration, action plan, narrative and financial reporting requirements as well as applicable legal terms.

Payment Methods

Each validated institutional support grant will be distributed via secure means.

The decision to use one specific method of payment will be made in close consultation with grantees by taking their informed preferences into account and in accordance with risk assessment

by the implementing officer. The payment will be made after the signature of the agreement by secure means and in tranches as determined in the grant agreement.

Reporting Requirements

Grants up to EUR 10,000: beneficiaries will be required to confirm receipt of funds (which can be provided in electronic form, e.g. email/signal message etc.), with a brief report of the usage of funds.

- Grants over EUR 10.000 (up to EUR 60.000): Beneficiaries will be required to prepare and submit a simplified report on the use of the financial support. A template for the report will be provided together with the signed agreement. The report will consist of a narrative section and a financial section. Final reports will be expected from beneficiaries 2 months after reception of financial support, unless specified otherwise in the specific grant agreements.

In case of under-spending of grants due to various reasons, the beneficiary is responsible to return unspent funds to the grant maker.

The time frame of reports are defined in the grant agreement according to the conditions of each grant application such as the type, length and amount of the grant. Proper reporting is decisive in reviewing future grant applications submitted by the same applicant.