



# Commonwealth Foundation

## Frequently asked questions

### Eligibility and guidelines

#### 1. Is my organisation eligible to apply?

To be eligible for a grant under this call, the following criteria must be met:

1. The applicant must be a registered not-for-profit civil society organisation (CSO).
2. The applicant must be registered in an eligible Commonwealth Foundation member country (see list of countries [commonwealthfoundation.com/grants](http://commonwealthfoundation.com/grants)), and the proposed project must be implemented in the country of registration. Projects can be implemented in one or more eligible Commonwealth Foundation member countries and can have a national, sub-national, regional, or international remit. In multi-country projects, the Foundation encourages collaboration with partners in each involved country (see further information on partnerships below).
3. The applicant must be able to provide documented experience, over at least two years, of working on participatory governance and advocacy within the proposed area / theme(s).
4. The total grant amount requested must be between £15,000 and £30,000 per year for a maximum of two years.
5. The requested grant amount cannot exceed 70% of the applicant organisation's total annual income.
6. The average of the applicant organisation's total annual income over the past two years must be less than £2m.
7. The project proposal must address at least one of the priority themes and demonstrate appropriate and meaningful integration of gender considerations.

Note that applications not meeting the above eligibility requirements will not be considered.

## **2. What documents must we submit?**

All applicants must submit a completed application form (see below).

Applicants must also provide the following documents:

1. A logic model and activity timeline (completed using the provided template).
2. A copy of the organisation's registration certificate (the official registration document provided by the relevant authorities in the country of registration). Trust deeds will not be accepted in lieu of a registration certificate. When the original registration certificates are not in English, shortlisted applications may be asked to provide a translation.
3. For grants of **£15,000** per annum: a copy of the organisation's most recent audited accounts **or** annual accounts. Note that annual accounts must include a balance sheet, a profit and loss statement and notes about the account. They must be signed off by the organisation's Board or its principal executive officer. Audited or annual accounts must not be older than December 2019.
4. For grants of **£15,001 and above**: a copy of the organisation's most recent audited accounts. Note that audited accounts must include both the accounts and the opinion of the external auditor who has certified them. They should not be older than December 2019.

Additional information on accounts is provided under headings 5, 6 and 7, below. Note that incomplete applications will not be considered.

## **3. What type of projects is the Commonwealth Foundation seeking to fund?**

Under this call, we are looking to support projects that seek to bring civil society to constructively engage with government, participate and contribute to policy and decision making on three themes—health, environment and climate change and freedom of expression. Projects must address one or more of these three themes. Possible areas of focus within the themes can be found in the call guidelines. All projects are required to integrate considerations of gender into their design and implementation.

#### **4. Can we apply for funding in relation to a project that has already started?**

The Foundation appreciates that CSOs interested in applying for a grant may already be doing significant work that falls within the parameters of this grants call and that would benefit from support for its expansion and/or continuation. We are therefore happy to consider supporting initiatives that are not 'new' but an additional component or extension of an existing initiative.

If funding is being sought in relation to an existing initiative, this should be highlighted in the application. In such cases, the applicant should clearly explain why the additional component/work is important and the impact that it will have. For applications under this category that reach the shortlisting stage, the Foundation will likely request additional information on the project including its source of funding and evidence of results secured thus far.

#### **5. What kind of audit report do we need to submit?**

For grants of **£15,001 and above**, applicants are required to submit a copy of the organisation's most recent audited accounts. The audit report must include both the accounts and the opinion of the external auditor who has certified them, and it should not be older than December 2019. Please note that project audits and independently verified accounts will not be accepted in place of the organisation's audited accounts. Audited accounts for an affiliated organisation registered in a different country will not be accepted.

#### **6. What kind of annual accounts do we need to submit?**

For grants of **£15,000**, annual accounts must be submitted with the application. Annual accounts must include balance sheet, a profile and loss statement and notes about the account. Annual accounts should be signed off by the board or the organisation's Executive Director and should not be older than December 2019.

#### **7. Can we submit the audit report/annual accounts after I have submitted the application?**

The audit report/annual accounts must be submitted together with the application form. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

**8. Can an organisation apply for funding for a project that is to be implemented in a country that is not the country of the registration?**

Applicants must be registered in the country where the project will be implemented. Note that partner organisations can be registered or operating in a different country to where the project will be implemented as long as the country of registration and operation are eligible Commonwealth Foundation member countries.

**9. Do applicant organisations need to identify project partners?**

We understand the limits of our own capacity to fund worthwhile initiatives and we encourage applicants to consider carefully how they can leverage partnerships to enhance the scale, depth, and breadth of their work. We use the term 'partner' broadly to refer to informal groups, social movements, even individual artists or advocates whose contribution to the project will increase its impact. Many of our past grantees have successfully worked with partners in implementing their projects. In multi-country projects, experience has shown that partnerships in each country of implementation are an important element of success.

Note that the eligibility criteria set out above apply to the applicant organisation and not to any partners they are proposing to work with. The only exception relates to proposed partners that are registered organisations. In this case, registration certificates should be provided as part of the application when requested.

To promote collaboration, the Foundation will also invite partners to conversations, discussions, and capacity development activities once projects are approved.

**10. Can two or more organisations submit an application?**

Yes, two or more organisations can submit an application for funding. However, one organisation must be nominated as the applicant organisation and the other(s) must be identified as partner(s). The applicant organisation will conclude the grant agreement with the Commonwealth Foundation and will accrue rights and responsibilities under that agreement.

**11. Can an organisation be an applicant in one application and a partner in another? Or a partner in more than one application?**

No, an organisation can only be included on one application per grants call as either applicant or partner.

**12. Can an organisation apply for more than one grant?**

An organisation can only apply for one grant under this call.

**13. Can an organisation that has been awarded a grant by the Commonwealth Foundation apply for another grant under this call?**

Previous grantees may apply for a grant under this call. However, if an organisation is currently a grants partner with the Foundation, they are ineligible to apply unless the project has come to an end (including all project reports submitted and approved) by the time of submission. Note that the Foundation is seeking to support as many organisations as possible across the Commonwealth and priority will be given to organisations that have not previously received a grant.

**14. We are planning to partner with another organisation whose average total income is more than £2 million. Does that affect eligibility?**

No. Provided the average annual income of the applicant organisation is less than £2 million, the income of a nominated partner is not relevant.

**15. Can a government department or a business be a partner in the project?**

No. However applications are encouraged from CSOs wishing to work constructively with government or even with the private sector.

**16. Can a project funded under this call provide training or other support to government officials?**

The Foundation is seeking to support constructive engagement with Government. However, project funds cannot be used to provide training to government officials. If such training is considered necessary for the project aims, this should be explained and details of how alternative sources of funding will be secured should be provided.

### **17. How do successful grantees monitor and report on their projects?**

Once a grant is awarded, the Foundation will require grantees to develop a monitoring plan for their project. We will work with grantees to develop this plan, using simplified versions of the Results Based Management and Outcome Harvesting methodologies that we utilise for all our work.

Grantees are required to provide yearly an end of project narrative report and a corresponding financial report. Reporting deadlines will be set out in the grant agreement between the Commonwealth Foundation and the grantee.

### **18. Why is my country not included in the list of eligible countries?**

Our internal requirements (which are established by our Member States) restrict this call to countries that are members of the Foundation. Also, if a Member State is in serious arrears to the Foundation in respect of its annual contributions, then CSOs from that State are not eligible to apply. The list of eligible countries for this call can be found at [commonwealthfoundation.com/grants](http://commonwealthfoundation.com/grants).

### **19. Can I use project funds to support my organisation, or must they only be used for project activities?**

The Foundation funds projects. This means that your budget should relate to the costs that will be incurred in implementing the proposed project.

However, we do understand that capacity development is a priority for many CSOs that may be interested in seeking project funding through this call and we are committed to supporting organisations build their capacity to function effectively. To that end, shortlisted applicants will be invited to propose capacity development initiatives as part of their project's budget, costed at up to 5% of the grant amount requested. These funds can be used to cover organisational needs that are broader than the project but that help to enhance organisational effectiveness.

Note there is no need to include capacity development proposals in the first stage application.

### **20. Do you have examples of projects funded in the past?**

Past and current participatory governance projects funded by the Commonwealth Foundation can be found on our website: [commonwealthfoundation.com/projects](http://commonwealthfoundation.com/projects)

While these provide a good overview, applicants should be aware that requirements and focus areas differ from year to year, and it is important to carefully consider the specificities of this call.



# Commonwealth Foundation

## **The application process**

### **1. How do I apply for a grant?**

To apply you will first need to login into your SurveyMonkey Apply account and complete and submit an online application form. Only completed applications that have been submitted using the online application system will be considered.

### **2. Can I submit an application via email or post?**

No. Only applications submitted using the online application system will be considered.

### **3. Who are SurveyMonkey Apply?**

Survey Monkey Apply are the providers of the online platform we are using for grant applications.

### **4. I don't have a SurveyMonkey Apply account; how do I get one?**

You can find out how to register for an [account here](#).

### **5. I've applied for a Commonwealth Foundation grant in the past, do I still need to create an account?**

No, you will already have an account. Please log in using your email address and password. If you have forgotten your password, follow the guidance provided on screen to set a new one.

### **6. Who do I contact if I can't log into my account?**

If you have further issues, please send an email to [cfgrants@commonwealth.int](mailto:cfgrants@commonwealth.int)



**7. Why am I receiving emails from [noreply@mail.smapply.io](mailto:noreply@mail.smapply.io)**

This is the email address from SurveyMonkey Apply, the providers of the grants online application system. All emails relating to the submission of your grant application will be sent from this email address. **Please do not reply to this address as it's not monitored.** Send any queries to [cfgrants@commonwealth.int](mailto:cfgrants@commonwealth.int) and a staff member of the Foundation will get back to you.

**8. What do I do if I have problems with my application?**

Please email the grants team at [cfgrants@commonwealth.int](mailto:cfgrants@commonwealth.int) and a staff member of the Foundation will assist you. We strongly advise that applicants requiring help reach out as soon as possible. Last-minute requests for help may not be responded to in time, and you could miss the deadline. Submission after the deadline is not possible.

**9. How do I know if my application was successfully submitted?**

Please note that filling in the application form does not automatically submit it. Please make sure that after you fill in the application form you go back to the main application screen and click on the submit button to submit your application.

You will receive an email from [noreply@mail.smapply.io](mailto:noreply@mail.smapply.io) acknowledging receipt of your application soon after it is submitted. If you do not receive this acknowledgement email one of three things may have happened:

- a. your application was not successfully submitted
- b. the email was sent to a different email that was provided in the form
- c. your email is in your spam box

Please check out all these options and if you are still experiencing problems contact the grants team at [cfgrants@commonwealth.int](mailto:cfgrants@commonwealth.int)

**10. When will I find out if my application was successful?**

Applications will be assessed from **December 2021 to March 2022**. Shortlisted applicants will be contacted by Foundation staff by the end of March 2022. All unsuccessful applicants will receive a formal notification on the outcome of their application by the end of **July 2022** at the latest.