



## Special grants call: COVID-19

### 1. Introduction and overview

As one of the three intergovernmental pillars of the Commonwealth, the task of the Commonwealth Foundation is to bring the voices of civil society into all aspects of governance: supporting civil society engagement in shaping the policies and influencing decisions that affect people's lives. This support for genuine *participatory governance* that is made possible by stronger civic voices is delivered through grant-making, capacity development and cultural initiatives.

The Foundation's Grants Programme supports innovative project ideas and approaches that seek to strengthen the ability of civic voices to engage with governments to improve governance and development outcomes through their active participation. In lieu of its annual grants call, the Foundation is launching a Special Grants Call in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of the Special Grants Call is to enable the Foundation to deliver support to Commonwealth civil society organisations in response to COVID-19 quickly, efficiently and in a way that both reflects and advances our broader mission. To that end, the focus will be on supporting national initiatives that aim to engage constructively with government in strengthening relevant institutions, policies and practices as communities and countries seek to recover and rebuild. The Foundation is also aware that the pandemic has created novel and urgent priorities for civil society action and engagement: from the emergence of acute vulnerability among certain groups to the need for insight into how new laws and policies are impacting on different groups of people. Proposals should address such priorities through the lens of participatory governance.

The call will be open to eligible civil society organisations from all Commonwealth Member States. Grants of £10,000 - £30,000 will be awarded for a maximum 12-month duration. The call will open on 1 September 2020 at 1pm in order to enable implementation of funded projects to begin in early 2021.

### 3. Example project areas

Applications should relate to one or more aspects of the COVID-19 situation and response. Possible focus areas might include:

1. Research into, and monitoring of government and civil society responses to the pandemic that aim to identify gaps, weaknesses and good practices that could be used to inform current practice / future policy: including the impact of laws and policies in general, or in relation to specific groups such as women; workers in the informal economy; migrants and refugees or specific issues such as, for example, gender-based violence and access to treatment
2. Support to civil society organisations, networks and coalitions to enable more effective engagement with government on development and implementation of policies and plans to address the pandemic in the longer term, or respond to new health emergencies
3. Promotion of civil society engagement with national government, private sector and academic institutions to innovate and develop quality products for vulnerable groups that reduce risks associated with pandemics
4. Facilitating multi-stakeholder discussions or bodies (e.g. taskforce) to review and suggest reforms to policies and programs that can better protect vulnerable populations/informal workers/frontline staff during and post-pandemic
5. Awareness raising and other forms of community engagement aimed at improving social and other protections, especially for vulnerable groups in collaboration with national government
6. Convening / participating in discussions with government aimed at improving transparency and strengthening institutions / policies / practices.

*Applications should ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout the project, and may include the use of creative expression to achieve project aims*

#### **4. Eligibility**

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

1. The applicant and, when applicable, partner(s) are registered not-for-profit civil society organisations (CSOs);
2. The applicant must be registered in an eligible Commonwealth Member State, and the project should take place in the country of registration. Partners must also be registered in a Commonwealth Member state;
3. The application is for funding between £10,000 and £30,000 per annum;
4. The applicant is applying for funding for a maximum of one year;
5. The average of the applicant's total income over the last two years is less than £3m; and
6. The project must address one or more of the project areas listed above.
7. The applicant will provide the following documents as part of the application:
  - a completed logic model using the Commonwealth Foundation template;
  - a completed project plan using the Commonwealth Foundation template;
  - a completed budget using the Commonwealth Foundation template;
  - a copy of the organisation's registration certificate<sup>1</sup> (the official registration document provided by the relevant authorities in the country concerned);

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<sup>1</sup> trust deeds will not be accepted in lieu of a registration certificate.

- a copy of the registration certificate<sup>2</sup> for all partner organisations (the official registration document provided by the relevant authorities in the country concerned);
- a copy of the organisations most recent audited accounts or annual accounts for grant applications from £10,000 up to £14,999: (annual accounts must include a balance sheet, a profit and loss statement, notes about the account; be signed off by the board or the organisation's Executive Director and not be older than December 2018); or
- a copy of the organisation's most recent audited accounts for grants from £15,000 up to £30,000 (audited accounts must include both the accounts and the opinion of the external auditor who has certified them; it should not be older than December 2018).<sup>3</sup>

The Commonwealth Foundation will not fund:

- Projects that are mid-cycle;
- Attendance at training courses, workshops and conferences unless as part of a larger project funded by the grant;
- Academic study or research unless as part of a larger project funded by the grant;
- Publication of books and films, unless they are part of and/or learning tools developed as a result of a larger project funded by a Commonwealth Foundation grant;
- Exchanges between developed countries; and
- Activities that are solely targeted at government officials and/or the private sector.

The Commonwealth Foundation will not consider applications from:

- Government and intergovernmental organisations;
- For-profit organisations; and
- Organisations who are not based in an eligible country.

## **5. Assessment and approval**

All applicants will be required to submit an application form using our online application platform. Applications for a grant will be presented to the Commonwealth Foundation Grants Committee for approval in December 2020. Shortlisted applicants may be contacted by the Commonwealth Foundation grants team before December, and asked to provide further information in support of their application.

Applications will be assessed on the criteria below:

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When the original registration certificates are not in English, we might ask you to provide a translation if you are shortlisted.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 1

<sup>3</sup> independently verified accounts or project audits will not be accepted in lieu of organisational audited accounts

1. The application has a clear problem definition.
2. The application clearly demonstrates that it is demand driven and relevant.
3. The application clearly shows how the planned activities will deliver outputs that lead to the project outcomes.
4. The application clearly shows how it will mainstream gender into the project.
5. The application clearly shows the feasibility of delivering the project within the chosen time frame.
6. The applicant (and partners) has the capacity to deliver the submitted proposal.
7. The project addresses one or more of the project areas listed above.

## **6. How to apply**

To apply applicants will need to complete and submit an online application form using the online application system. **A link to the form will be made available on the Commonwealth Foundation grants page when the call for applications opens.**

Before submitting your application form, please read the following documents which are available on our website:

- a. List of eligible countries
- b. Logic model template
- c. Project plan template
- d. Budget template
- e. Application form questions
- f. How to fill in your application form
- g. Frequently asked questions
- h. Beginning with the end in mind: the value of results chains and logic models
- i. Glossary of terms

Please note that an organisation can only submit one application per grants call. The Commonwealth Foundation will only accept applications that have been submitted using the online application system.

## **7. Timeline**

- The call for applications opens at **1pm BST on 1 September 2020**
- The deadline for submission of the application form is **1pm BST on 18 September 2020**
- Applications will be assessed in **October and November 2020**
- All applicants will receive a formal notification on the outcome of their application by the end of **January 2021** at the latest. If you have not heard from us by **December 2020** please consider your application unsuccessful.

For this grant cycle, projects should start between **January and February 2021**.

## **8. Monitoring and reporting requirements**

- Grantees will be required to develop a monitoring plan for the project
- Grantees are required to provide us with an end of project narrative report and a corresponding financial report within two months of the end of the project. Reporting deadlines will be set out in the grant agreement between the Commonwealth Foundation and the grant applicant.

## **9. Questions**

If you require any further information about the Grants Programme and the application process, please email the grants team on [cfgrants@commonwealth.int](mailto:cfgrants@commonwealth.int) and a member of the grants team will get back to you. A document with **Frequently Asked Questions** will be made available on our website.