

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION FOR GRANTS FOR VOLUNTEERISM

INTRODUCTION

The Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF) and Community Building Mitrovica (CBM), through the Kosovo Resource Centre for Civil Society (RC), aim to develop capacities of civil society organizations in Kosovo through, tailor-made trainings, mentoring and coaching, help desk services as well as sharing continuous information in regards to organizational development and civic activism. In addition, the RC provides a granting scheme for volunteerism, offering opportunities to support initiatives of civic activism and volunteering.

Grants for volunteerism are intended to deliver concrete results within a set timeframe. Beneficiaries of these grants may be individuals, unregistered initiatives and non-governmental organizations with the most compelling, creative proposals that have high potential to engage Kosovo citizens in addressing issues of their communities.

1. BACKGROUND

Citizens' engagement and volunteering encourages people to be more active in the public sphere and, at the same time, establishes new connections between different sectors, communities, and neighborhoods.

Voluntary engagement also contributes to increased solidarity and interaction between people, thus creating a safer environment and citizens who are committed to addressing issues of public interest, and generally supporting groups in need and the wider community¹.

Kosovo has a diverse and active civil society that has continuously contributed and has an essential role in country democratization and decision-making processes in last two decades. More specifically, the citizen survey data show that 56.1 % of Kosovo citizens trust the work that civil society does. However, the number of citizens who are engaged and involved in the activities of civil society organizations is 4.1%. The citizen survey data show that only 6.9% of citizens have been engaged as volunteers in CSOs and 4.4% have supported a cause raised by civil society. The figures are relatively similar regarding citizens who participate in the work of CSOs (5.5%) or who provide some financial support to CSOs (6.5%).

¹ Newkirk, J.A., et.al., (2017), 'Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey', CSF Evaluation report, European Commission.

With the aim to increase the potential for greater impact, increase in interpersonal trust and social cohesion, CSOs need to make more efforts for regular communication and involvement of different groups of citizens in their work.

Given the trust that civil society holds, it remains one of the most viable mediums for promoting and developing a culture of community engagement and volunteering for issues of the public good.

a. What are Grants for Volunteerism?

Grants for volunteerism are intended to civic activism initiatives and promoting volunteerism in Kosovo, and achieving concrete results within a set timeframe. Beneficiaries of these grants may be non-governmental organizations, unregistered initiatives and individuals, with the most compelling, creative proposals that have high potential to engage Kosovo citizens in addressing issues of their communities.

2. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF CALL REQUIREMENTS

a. Eligibility criteria

In order to be eligible for application, applicants need to fulfil the following criteria:

- Be individuals (citizens of the Republic of Kosovo), unregistered initiatives or organizations active in Kosovo engaged in any non-profit initiative (branches of foreign and international NGOs registered in Kosovo are not eligible to apply);
- Have annual turnover up to EUR 25,000 for the last three years (applies only for NGOs);
- Be directly responsible for the management of the grant. Partnerships with other NGOs/unregistered initiatives are allowed only if the leading applicant takes full responsibility for project implementation and management.
- Demonstrate capacity for the management of proposed main activities;
- Are not led or managed by Politically Exposed Persons;²
- Accepts and commits to abide to the Core Values for grantees.

b. Individuals and unregistered initiatives

In cases when the applicants are individuals or unregistered initiatives, they shall demonstrate that their engagement is not for profit and is for public benefit rather than private interest. They should also demonstrate that they adequately meet the relevant eligibility criteria. When these applicants are awarded with grants, all grant related payments will be administered by KCSF. Beneficiaries should ensure that all invoices are received on behalf of KCSF and submitted to KCSF on time. All other requirements related to grant administration are applicable as per non-governmental organizations.

² For more on limitations related to Politically Exposed Persons see the Application Form Template.

c. For Non-Governmental Organizations

Applicants shall demonstrate that their engagement is within the area of democratization and eligible program areas. Despite their legal status, not all NGOs are included in the above eligibility criteria, due to the wide scope of the applicable legislation for registration of NGOs in Kosovo. Sports clubs, sports federations, amateur cultural associations or religious organizations that are registered as NGOs are not eligible for KCSF grants. Similarly, NGOs that represent businesses or similar entities with clear financial capacity to cover the costs of their organization or sustain their activities are not eligible for KCSF grants.

d. Number of applications

Applicants can submit one application only in this Call for Proposals.

e. Timeframe and budget

Project duration should not be longer than 12 months.

The maximum budget requested for funding from this call should not exceed EUR 5,000.

f. Areas of intervention and targeted population

With this call for proposals, KCSF and CBM will support initiatives that contribute to mobilizing volunteers and promoting volunteer work to foster solidarity, social responsibility and active citizenship.

The following is an illustrative list of areas and initiatives that may be financed under this call.

Volunteering initiatives should be in one or more areas of intervention listed below:

- Youth empowerment;
- Environmental protection;
- Public health;
- Gender mainstreaming;
- Cultural heritage;
- Social inclusion;

Examples of activities may include volunteering initiatives that:

- promote volunteering and engagement of youth in decision-making processes in their respective communities (i.e. proposing a policy change in local government, village council, school council, participation in consultations at local level, provide education on financial literacy etc.);
- engage youth in advocacy and mobilization activities on social inclusion; (i.e. advocacy initiatives addressing public safety issues of the city, village, or neighborhood; organizing round-table discussions for budgetary planning with municipality etc.)

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- include activities that mobilize volunteers in environmental protection beneficial to the wider community; (i.e. recycling activities, promoting and protection of natural sites, public activities to raise awareness on importance of waste sorting etc.)
- include activities that mobilize volunteers on promotion and protection of cultural heritage and cultural diversity of different communities living in Kosovo; (i.e. increasing knowledge of common cultural heritage through site visits, promotion of cultural sites as a tool for increase of tourism etc.)
- include public lectures and debates on the education of young girls and boys on, public health and sexual health (i.e. accessibility to hygiene products, peer-to-peer education for sexual reproduction health, etc.);
- promote gender equality, with special focus on addressing gender stereotypes for boys and girls and fostering gender mainstreaming (i.e. activities that address combating discrimination at all levels; participation and advocacy to promote gender budgeting etc.);
- include activities that mobilize youth in the promotion of communication and cooperation between communities in Kosovo to address common issues (i.e. public debates, workshops, street performances, youth exchange etc.);
- re-envisioning public spaces to promote community participation, including re-usage of public spaces and innovative ideas for social activities (i.e. re-destination of public spaces in neighborhood so it can be used by community such as parks, schools, cultural centers etc.);

Note: All of these examples should serve as an orientation point in designing the proposal. This is not a mandatory requirement to include specific activities as listed above. Applicants are encouraged to bring their originally ideas related to areas above mentioned.

Applications must comprise equal participation of girls and boys, address the rights and needs of diverse girls and boys, people with disabilities, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, and Serb minorities, LGBTI, elderly and youth.

g. Level of intervention and geographical coverage

Through this call, support will be provided to civil society initiatives throughout Kosovo that seek to bring about transformations at local/municipal and/or national/central level. In particular, at least 50 percent of the beneficiaries of grants for volunteerism will be organizations based and operating outside of Pristina.

h. Civic and volunteer engagement

Engagement of citizens throughout the implementation of the supported initiative, as well as volunteer engagement of both implementing parties and targeted citizens are important elements required for these grants.

Applicants are expected to elaborate on how they intend to engage citizens, clearly identify and analyze the group of citizens they will target and engage through this grant, why their engagement and participation are relevant for their initiative and the different ways that they intend to engage them. In doing this, applicants are expected to be cognizant of the differences within the targeted citizens (such as sex, age, ethnicity, religion, education, location, socio-economic circumstances, interests and needs) and adapt their proposals and intervention accordingly.

Applicants are also required to demonstrate that their engagement, as well as the engagement of the targeted citizens and other stakeholders is done on voluntary basis. In very specific cases when payment of certain symbolic fees is absolutely necessary for the achievement of the goal of the project, applicants are required to properly justify such a necessity.

Engagement strategies - Applicants are also expected to analyse the potential of target groups for engagement and elaborate a realistic approach for gradual but systematic increase of their involvement in the work of the organization.

Previous support - If applicants are beneficiaries of previous support from KCSF they should provide a summary of how they engaged citizens in their work until now, highlighting progress and challenges.

Supported applicants will have access to mentoring and capacity building on participatory advocacy and community mobilization which will provide assistance in building on their previous experience presented and the plan for inclusion of citizens.

i. Internal governance

Internal governance of NGOs remains an important aspect in efforts to improve and build citizens' trust in the civil society sector and to enable organizations to serve as role models.

All NGO applicants are expected to provide information on internal control mechanisms, management structure, decision-making within the organization, and financial management. Applicants selected for funding will, after signing contracts, undergo an initial capacity assessment by KCSF.

Following this initial assessment, KCSF will work intensively with supported organizations to develop tailored mentoring to address identified needs, good governance practices, sound financial management, and principles of transparency, anti-corruption, and accountability.

j. Networking Groups

In order to foster greater collaboration for joint action between grantees, Kosovo Resource Centre for Civil Society will provide different platforms and meeting venues where grantees can meet, exchange and share experiences amongst each other. Joint organizing and action on issues of common interest would be an intended outcome, thus it is expected that grantees will be proactive in identifying and contributing to

opportunities for cooperating with other volunteer and civil society initiatives in their areas of interest or geographical location.

k. Cross cutting issues

Gender mainstreaming, environmental considerations, and human rights will be crosscutting, and horizontal issues integrated into all interventions. Gender mainstreaming as a tool toward gender equality requires all supported organizations to ensure their interventions equally consider the effects on men and women, boys and girls, and avoid contributing to harmful stereotypes. Environmental considerations necessitate that all interventions are mindful of their environmental impact, promoting sustainability and minimizing negative effects on the environment. Human rights principles shall guide all activities to ensure that they respect, protect, and promote the rights and dignity of all individuals involved, avoiding any form of discrimination or injustice.

3. ELIGIBILITY OF OPERATIONS AND COSTS

a. Ineligible interventions/activities

The following interventions/activities will not be supported:

- Interventions that are directly affiliated with or are supportive of political parties or candidates for political elections;
- Interventions that are contrary to the Core Values for KCSF grantees;
- Capital Investments;
- Grants composed entirely or mostly of preparatory work and/or studies;
- Cross border project activities and interventions;
- Activities to be implemented outside Kosovo (except meetings with partner organizations or networks with the purpose of cooperation and sharing of experiences);
- Service type activities, like the ones similar to Technical Assistance;
- Awareness raising campaigns without proper follow up;
- Interventions which are dependent on multilevel approval from third parties and posing a disproportionately high risk of failure and not achieving results;
- Sub granting to third parties. Small scale financial support to beneficiaries of the work of the organization is allowed only in cases when all expenditures are executed by the implementing organization;
- Scholarships.

Unless they are imperative for the achievement of the intended organizational strategy objectives, in principle, the activities outlined below will not be supported:

- Conferences, round table discussions or other similar events in venues (such as hotels) that are not open and easily accessible to ordinary citizens;

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- Research and feasibility studies, especially as a tool to design the rest of the intervention;
- Study trips outside of Kosovo.

b. Eligible costs

To be considered eligible, costs should meet the following criteria:

- are necessary for the successful implementation and achievement of the indicated intervention results;
- reimbursement of allowances for volunteers engaged;
- are reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management including fair and market-based calculations and cost-efficiency;
- comply with the requirements of applicable tax legislation in Kosovo;
- will incur during the implementation of the grant;
- are indicated in the proposed budget;
- are identifiable and verifiable.

c. Ineligible costs

The costs presented below are considered ineligible:

- Expenses allocated to human resources (salaries and fees) that exceed 10% of the total budget request;
- Fees for experts are not allowed, unless absolutely necessary to achieve the goal of the project and properly justified in the application form;
- Customs and import duties;
- Debt or payments for losses;
- Value Added Tax – VAT;
- Loan and interest repayments;
- Currency exchange fees;
- Equipment depreciation expenditure;
- Purchase of land or immovable property;
- Purchase of vehicle or generator;
- Payment of expenses covered by other donors;
- Credit to third parties.

4. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applicants must provide their information, elaborate the idea and submit the necessary documents through the grants.kcsfoundation.org.

For instructions on registering and using the online application system, please refer to the information that is available on the online application system [website](#).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding registration or grant application, please email us at rc-kosovo@kcsfoundation.org

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All questions and answers regarding the application will be published in the Q&A (questions and answers) section of the KCSF website. Applicants are advised to check this section regularly.

a. Deadline for application submission

Applications for grants for volunteerism are open until **October 12 2026, 16:00**.

5.EVALUATION AND NOTIFICATION

Evaluation of applications for a project grant will be done in two phases:

- 1) Administrative control (verification of formal criteria) and
- 2) Content evaluation (based on pre-defined evaluation categories and criteria).

Administrative control (verification of formal criteria)

During this phase all applications are assessed if the following has been respected/submitted:

1. All administrative and technical requirements indicated in the application form;
2. Mandatory documents, including the eligibility of applicants;
3. Budget size;
4. Grant duration.

Applications that do not meet the specified criteria will be automatically rejected.

The results of the administrative control will be communicated to each applicant in written form.

b. Evaluation of applications and final decision

Applications that pass the administrative control will be evaluated by a Grants Evaluation Team (GET) consisting of three external experts with relevant expertise and knowledge. GET will evaluate the proposals in two stages 1) through review of documents and 2) public interviews.

The Grants Evaluation Team will evaluate applications based on the following criteria:

- Relevance of the project and logic of intervention (30%)
- Citizen engagement and volunteer engagement in the project (50%)
- Relevance of previous experience (10%)
- Cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget (10%)

The maximum evaluation per application is 100 points.

After the initial evaluation of the submitted application and all other mandatory documents, the applicants that receive at least **51 points** (out of 100), as well as half of available points (**50%**) in each of the four categories presented above are shortlisted.

All shortlisted applicants will be invited for public interview. The interview of shortlisted applicants will be public and consists of a brief presentation of the grant proposal and a Q&A session with the Grants Evaluation Team members.

After conducting the interviews, the Grants Evaluation Team compiles the list of applicants who are recommended to be awarded for a project grant. To be considered for funding, **applicants need to receive at least 71 points in total, as well as half the available points (50%) in each of the four categories presented above.** The list of applicants recommended for a grant will be reviewed against the geographical quota whereby at least 50% of the beneficiaries will be organizations based and operating outside of Pristina.

The list of recommended applicants for funding is sent to donors, who have the right to veto in case any application is considered against the values promoted by the donor or are overlapping with other similar interventions.

The list of applicants recommended for funding will be finalized only after the donors have exhausted their veto power, as well as the fulfillment of any eventual conditions that may have been set during the preliminary evaluation process.

a. Notification of the decision and complaint mechanism

Decisions for financing taken by the Grants and Evaluation Team and not vetoed by the donors are final. Once this process is completed, KCSF will inform the unsuccessful applicants with the results of their application, including the total score, points per category and final ranking. Further information may be provided by KCSF only upon request, in the form of a summary of anonymized comments from members of the Grants and Evaluation Team.

A formal complaint may be submitted only in cases when unsuccessful applicants have solid grounds to believe that a specific document submitted by them has been left out from the evaluation process, resulting in significantly lower score in a particular category or overall. The formal complaint shall be submitted based on the formal complaint template published in KCSF's website.

The Executive Director of KCSF will establish an internal committee to assess whether the claimed omission has occurred in reality, based on both submitted evidence from the unsuccessful applicant and traceable information from the evaluation system of KCSF. In case the internal committee confirms that the omission has occurred in reality, the omitted document will be included in the dossier and the application will be re-evaluated by the GET, and the new score resulting from the re-evaluation will be including in the final rank of applicants.

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5. IMPORTANT TENTATIVE DATES

Process	Tentative dates
Launch of the Call for Grants for Volunteerism	September 8 th , 2026
Information session/s:	Details at www.kcsfoundation.org ; www.rc-kosovo.org ; KCSF FB page ; and CBM FB page
Last date to publish answers	October 7 th , 2026
Deadline for application	October 12th, 2026
Information on administrative control	October 20 th , 2026
Information on shortlisted applicants	November 2026
Interviews with shortlisted applicants	November 2026
Final decision	December 2026
Contract signature	January 2027
Start of the implementation of the grant	February 2027

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