

ENGAGEMENT FOR JOINT ACTION – **EJA KOSOVO**

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION FOR ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
GRANTS

Co-financed by:

ABOUT ENGAGEMENT FOR JOINT ACTION – EJA KOSOVO



Engagement for Joint Action (EJA Kosovo) is a KCSF program that supports civil society initiatives through grants and capacity building with the overall aim to contribute meaningfully to the democratic and socio-economic development of Kosovo. Designed as a pooled funding mechanism, EJA Kosovo is currently co-financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Sweden.

Centring citizen engagement and participation in the work of civil society, EJA Kosovo aims to contribute towards two main objectives (a) Increasing civic engagement in public life through participatory advocacy of civil society and (b) Enabling CSOs to strengthen their constituency relations and improve their organizational capacities.

EJA Kosovo is based on the premise that through tailor-made systems of inclusiveness, transparency and accountability on the one hand, and better access and communication with the community, on the other hand, CSOs by involving citizens in their work, can build a stronger and more engaged base of support. This strengthens their constituency and allows them to better represent the needs and concerns of the community. Together with improved internal governance, transparency, and citizen engagement, it will contribute to increased public trust in CSOs, and citizens come to see civil society as a legitimate and effective platform for raising concerns and advocating for change.

INTRODUCTION

The traditional view of policymaking focuses on formal legal and normative processes. However, effective policymaking extends beyond these structures. It encompasses all aspects of society and public life, ensuring that the voices and needs of all citizens are heard and considered. Every Kosovar man and woman, boy and girl, needs to have the opportunity to address their needs, concerns and proposals in the most adequate way to his/her capacities, needs and context. Civil society has an opportunity, but also responsibility to empower citizens and bring their concerns and voice into the limelight of public policies and public discourse

a. EJA Kosovo instruments of support

While recognizing the diversity of civil society and its varied approaches, EJA Kosovo places a special focus on initiatives and individuals that embed participatory practices in their work. This focus is grounded in the belief that civil society can only be truly responsive to the needs of citizens by systematically and intentionally including them in its activities. Such inclusion not only increases impact, transparency, and accountability but also enhances internal governance practices beyond mere paperwork. By building on the existing capacities and experience within civil society, EJA Kosovo aims to narrow the gap between civil society and citizens, thereby enhancing its legitimacy and impact.

To support these aims, EJA Kosovo offers several support mechanisms: Institutional Grants, Organizational Development Grants, Project Grants, Urgent Grants, and an annual Democracy Award. Each instrument is designed to address specific needs within civil society, ensuring that a broad spectrum of initiatives can find the support they need.

b. Organizational Development Grant (ODG)

EJA Kosovo recognizes that there is a potential of NGOs for contribution in many areas. This potential is commonly recognized within NGOs who are well-established, have a clear vision and systematically work to implement their strategy. There are other NGOs who might not be yet at that level, but have a clear direction of their development, including programmatic goals and groups of citizens that they represent or target with their work. However, this potential is not fully utilized as their funding structure does not provide for crucial areas of organizational development that enable them to advance to the next level. Organizational development is hampered if organizations implement short and strict project activities without any possibility for investment in growth, capacity building and upgrade of internal systems. To compensate for organizational

development, these NGOs are often obliged to use limited internal sources or project funding which is not directly intended for that.

By benefiting from EJA Kosovo tailored organizational development support, the targeted organizations will make use of specific funds dedicated to advance their organization rather than specific projects. Specifically, these grants aim to support the development and implementation of internal tools and systems, development of internal policies and documents, use of software and equipment, design of new working methodologies and approaches including those intended to diversify the resource base of the organization, and capacity building of the staff. Similar to other instruments in EJA Kosovo, these grants enable organizations to make use of the newly developed capacities to address in a more consistent and systematic manner the inclusion of citizens in their work and improve internal governance practices.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF CALL REQUIREMENTS

a. Eligibility criteria

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

- Be a domestic non-governmental organization registered as per applicable law in Kosovo (branches of foreign and international NGOs registered in Kosovo are not eligible to apply);
- Be directly responsible for the management of the grant;
- Demonstrate capacity for the management of the proposed grant;
- Have not been beneficiaries of an Institutional Grant from the first phase of EJA Kosovo (2020 - 2023);
- Demonstrate a positive trend of development both with regards to internal capacities and programmatic strategy, as per the goals and objectives of previous support (for previous beneficiaries of any type of grant from KCSF during the period 2015-2023);
- Is not led or managed by Politically Exposed Persons ([PEP](#)).¹
- Accepts and commits to abide to the [Core Values](#) for EJA grantees.²

b. 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.

c. Number of applications

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

¹ For more on limitations related to Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) see the Application Form Template or KCSF website. All applying organizations are required to declare that none of the persons in the leading positions as per the list and definition of Politically Exposed Persons provided in the application form fall under this category.

² For more on the Core Values for EJA Grantees see the Application Form Template or KCSF website. All applicants are required to commit to and act in accordance with the Core Values for EJA Grantees in all phases of the application and potential implementation.

d. Timeframe and budget

Organizations will be eligible to apply for funding for a period of minimum **6 months** and maximum up to **24 months**. The maximum budget requested for funding from this call is **EUR 15,000**.

e. Areas of intervention and targeted population

While Organizational Development Grants aim to specifically support activities that are intended for internal development of the organization, the assumption is that by upgrading their internal systems they will improve the quality of their work, and by that contribute to the goals of EJA Kosovo program. Thus, the engagement of organizations benefiting from the Organizational Development Grants is expected to be in line with the following programmatic focus.

EJA Kosovo focuses on civil society's contribution to policy making, emphasizing **constituency integration** in advocacy efforts and creating spaces and practices for citizen engagement. The program aims increased civic participation in public policy processes at all levels, with priority areas including women and marginalized groups' participation, socio-economic and cultural rights improvement, civil society's watchdog role strengthening, youth empowerment in policy processes, and human rights civic education. The program emphasizes watchdog activities, policy implementation monitoring, and addressing controversial topics such as environmental issues and marginalized groups' representation.

EJA Kosovo is committed to supporting initiatives focused on addressing the **rights and needs of marginalized groups**. These include women, people with disabilities, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, Serb ethnic minorities, the LGBTI community, the elderly, and youth.

f. Level of intervention and geographical coverage

Through this call, support will be provided to NGOs throughout Kosovo that seek to bring about transformations at local/municipal and/or national/central level. At least 30 percent of the beneficiaries of Organizational Development Grants will be organizations based and operating outside of Prishtina.

g. Civic engagement

EJA Kosovo emphasizes citizen engagement throughout the work of supported organizations. Applicants for Organizational Development Grants are expected to clearly demonstrate how they will involve citizens in their current strategies and future work.

Target group analysis - Applicants should present a clear analysis of their target group, why their engagement and participation is relevant for the work of the organization and the different ways that they intend to engage them. In the analysis of their target group, applicants are expected to be cognizant of the **differences within their target groups** (such as gender, age, ethnicity, religion, education,

location, socio-economic circumstances, interests and needs) and adapt their proposals and intervention accordingly to address the diverse needs and interests within the group.

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.

For guidance on constituency engagement, please see the short document [Guide for applicants: Constituency Engagement](#) in [KCSF website](#).

Previous EJA Kosovo support - If applicants are beneficiaries of previous support from KCSF in the period 2015-2024 (in an amount greater than 10,000 EUR), they should provide a summary of how they engaged citizens in their work until now, highlighting progress and challenges.

Supported NGOs will have access to mentoring and capacity building on participatory advocacy and community mobilization to assist them to develop a plan for inclusion of citizens based on their previous experience.

h. Internal governance

Internal governance of NGOs is an important aspect in efforts to improve and build the trust of citizens in the civil society sector and to be able to lead by example of good governance, transparency and accountability to the public in general. All applicants must provide information on internal control mechanisms, management and governance structures, decision making process and financial management.

Shortlisted applicants will undergo an in-depth verification during on-site visits by KCSF whereby supporting documents for all of the abovementioned categories need to be presented. If applicants are beneficiaries of previous support from KCSF in the period 2015-2024 (in an amount greater than 10,000 EUR), they should present a summary of internal development activities supported by KCSF, audit findings and recommendations, and KCSF monitoring recommendations, and how each of these has been addressed by the applicant.

Following the initial assessment, KCSF will work intensively with supported organizations to develop tailor made mentoring to address identified good governance practices, sound financial management and tenets of transparency, the fight against and prevention of corruption and accountability.

i. Cooperation/Networking groups

To foster greater collaboration and joint action between NGOs, EJA Kosovo will provide different platforms and meeting venues where NGOs can meet, exchange and share experiences amongst each other. Cooperation on issues of common interest would be an intended outcome, thus it is expected that supported organizations will be proactive in identifying and contributing to mobilization of other civil society initiatives in their areas of interest.

Thematic events present a platform which will be available to all supported organizations to propose relevant issues in their scope of work and/or issues that do not directly fall within their scope of work but are deemed important, urgent and relevant. Since the objective of EJA Kosovo is to expand civil society activity country wide and contribute in creating the link to citizens, these thematic events are intended to be organized mainly outside of Prishtina.

j. 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.

k. Resource diversification

Resource diversification is a critical component of ensuring the sustainability and independence of civil society organizations. It involves exploring and establishing multiple funding streams and innovative approaches to generate income, reducing reliance on single sources of funding. With foreign donors being consistently the main source of funding for majority of Kosovar NGOs working in the area of democratization, resource diversification aims to contribute to extending the resource base to other sectors, in particular the contributions from the private sector, diaspora, and/or citizens, or income generation activities. Through Organizational Development Grants, applicants can propose activities that initiate or advance their resource diversification activities, such as the development and/or implementation of specific plans, methodologies and approaches for diversifying their resource base, strategies for securing alternative income sources, partnerships, or innovative fundraising models tailored to the organization's context and needs.

ELIGIBILITY OF OPERATIONS AND COSTS

The proposed budget shall be exclusively used for organizational development which includes but is not limited to the development and implementation of internal tools and systems, development of internal policies and documents, use of software and equipment, design of new working methodologies and approaches including those intended to diversify the resource base of the organization, or capacity building of the staff. No salaries will be covered from this grant, except cases when a specific percentage of time of a staff is dedicated solely to managing organizational development activities. No running costs will be covered for this grant, except costs that are specifically dedicated for organizational development activities and/or dedicated staff. In cases when proposed budget includes these two categories, the requested budget for 1) Human resources and 2) Administrative and office costs jointly **shall not exceed 20% of the total amount of the grant.**

a. Ineligible interventions/activities

The following activities will not be supported:

- Any activities which do not directly contribute to organizational development;
- Activities that benefit other organizations or third parties;
- Organizational development activities which are subject to multilevel dependency and approval, thus posing unreasonably high risk for implementation and achieving results;
- 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 EJA grantees;
- Capital Investments;
- Grants composed entirely or mostly of preparatory work and/or studies without direct linkage to organizational development;
- Service type activities, like the ones similar to Technical Assistance, for other entities;
- Awareness raising campaigns without proper follow up;
- Sub granting to third parties;
- Scholarships.

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

- 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 organizational development objectives;
- 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 and other legislation in Kosovo;
- will incur during the implementation period of the grant;
- are indicated in the approved budget;
- are identifiable and traceable.

c. Ineligible costs

The costs presented below are considered ineligible:

- Staff salaries, except cases when a specific percentage of time of a staff is dedicated solely to managing organizational development activities.³
- Administrative costs, other than those solely related to the grant activities and/or staff engaged in the management of organizational development activities;
- Renovations/intervention in the building/office;
- Purchase of equipment that is not necessary for the intended organizational development;
- Customs and import duties;
- Debt or payments for losses;
- Value Added Tax - VAT (for all expenses above EUR 200);

³ If applied, the total amount for two categories together 1) Human resources and 2) Administrative and office costs should not exceed 20% of the total budget.

- Loan and interest repayments;
- Currency exchange fees;
- Equipment depreciation expenditures;
- Purchase of land or immovable property;
- Purchase of vehicle or generator;
- Payment of expenses covered by other donors;
- Credit to third parties.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

a. Submission of applications

All applications for EJA Kosovo grants have to be submitted through the online platform.

Applicants must provide their information, elaborate the idea and submit the necessary documents through the [online application system](#).

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 eja@kcsfoundation.org. 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.

We strongly encourage applicants to submit their applications well before the deadline to avoid any last-minute technical difficulties due to heavy internet traffic or a fault with the internet connection (including electricity failure, etc.), or heavy internet traffic in the online application system that could lead to difficulties in submission. KCSF cannot be held responsible for any delay due to such difficulties.

b. Deadline for application submission

The deadline for submitting applications is **31 January 2025 at 23:59**. Applications received after the deadline shall not be taken into consideration.

c. Contact

For questions related to the application process you can contact us at eja@kcsfoundation.org no later than **10 January 2025**. All questions and answers will be published in the Q&A section of KCSF website no later than **15 January 2025**.

Please use only this email for communication with KCSF regarding the application process.

Applicants should not contact or try to influence in any way anyone involved in the assessment of their application, including KCSF staff or members of the Grants and Evaluation Team, as this may result in the application being rejected, or in case of award the contract being terminated.

MANDATORY DOCUMENTS AT APPLICATION STAGE

In addition to the organizational development grant application form, applicants must upload the following documents to the online application system, and pledge to adhere to the Declaration on Politically Exposed Persons and the Declaration on Core Values:

- 1 NGO Registration Certificate issued by the NGO Department;
- 2 Declaration on Politically Exposed Persons (PEP) (accepted as per EJA Kosovo template);
- 3 Declaration on Core Values for EJA grantees (accepted as per EJA Kosovo template);
- 4 Proposed Budget for organizational development (as per EJA Kosovo template);
- 5 Activity Plan for the organizational development activities (as per EJA Kosovo template);
- 6 Logical Framework for the organizational development activities (as per EJA Kosovo template).

MANDATORY DOCUMENTS AFTER SHORTLISTING

For those applicants that will be shortlisted, the below documents that shall be submitted as separate documents after notification for the shortlisting:

- 1 Statute of the organization (signed version identical to the Statute as submitted to the NGO Department);
- 2 In case the applicant is a foundation or an institute, the list of Governing Board members;
- 3 In case the applicant is an association, the name of the Head of Assembly of Members and the list of Assembly members. Also, if the association has any intermediary boards or other bodies, a list of members of such body;
- 4 Annual financial statements of the organization for the last two (2) years (2022 and 2023);⁴
- 5 Auditor's reports for the last two (2) years (2022 and 2023), if the applying organization is legally obliged to possess an audit report, or if the organization has it regardless of the legal obligations).

⁴ Annual financial statements should on the minimum show the balance sheet and income and expenses statement. Audit reports should cover two financial statements of the organization. For recently established organizations, only if applicable.

EVALUATION AND NOTIFICATION

Evaluation of applications for an Organizational Development Grant will be done in two phases:

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

a. Administrative compliance (verification of formal criteria)

During this phase all applications are assessed if the following has been in compliance with the call:

- 1 All administrative and technical requirements,
- 2 Eligibility criteria for organizations,
- 3 Mandatory documents,
- 4 Requested amount, and
- 5 Grant duration.

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

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

b. Evaluation of applications and final decision

Applications that pass the administrative compliance will be evaluated by Grants Evaluation Team (GET members) consisting of five external experts with relevant expertise and knowledge.

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

- 1 **Quality and relevance of the organization's programmatic goals and direction (15%)**
- 2 **Quality of organizational development activities and their relevance with regards to the organization's programmatic goals and direction (40%)**
- 3 **Involvement of citizens/target groups in the work of the organization (15%)**
- 4 **Cross – cutting issues (10 %)**
- 5 **Level of organizational capacity (10%)**
- 6 **Cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget (10%).**

The maximum evaluation per application is 100 points.

The evaluation of proposals by GET will be conducted in two stages:

- ➊ Review of submitted documents, and
- ➋ Public interviews.

After the initial evaluation of the submitted application and all other mandatory documents, the applicants that receive at least **61 points** (out of 100), as well as **half of available points** (50%) in each of the six categories presented above are shortlisted.

KCSF will organize site visits to all shortlisted applicants, except for those organizations which have undergone a similar visit by the KCSF during last year and which shall be asked for a written confirmation that there are no significant changes to the last visit findings.

Prior to the site visit shortlisted applicants will be requested to submit additional documents and information related to internal governance.

The visit by KCSF staff will focus on internal governance and financial management, as well as confirmation of addressing recommendations for previous grantees of KCSF. After the visit and any additional follow-up confirmation, a report is prepared by KCSF for each short-listed organization, with the following categories of assessments:

- **Very good**, in cases when all or almost all elements are assessed appropriate to the size and nature of work and the organization (or the nature of recommendations), without any significant issue to be addressed and low risk of failure if awarded the grant.
- **Sufficient**, in cases when most elements are assessed appropriate to the size and nature of work and the organization (or the nature of recommendations), however with some important elements to be addressed during implementation to lower the risk of failure if awarded the grant.
- **Insufficient**, in cases when a significant portion of elements are assessed not appropriate to the size and nature of work and the organization (or the nature of recommendations), with a very high risk of failure if awarded the grant, thus unacceptable level to be awarded the grant.

Short-listed organizations that will be assessed to have an insufficient level of internal governance, financial management, and addressing of previous recommendations, will not be invited for public interviews.

The public interview will consist of a brief presentation of the grant proposal (5 minutes) followed by Q&A session (10 minutes) with the GET members.

After completing the interviews, the Grants Evaluation Team recommends the list of applicants to be awarded for organizational development grant. In order to be considered for funding, applicants need to receive at least **71 points** in total, as well as the **half of available points** (50%) in each of the six evaluation categories presented above.

The final selection of applicants recommended for financing will depend on the availability of funds and must meet the geographical quota, with at least 30% of beneficiaries being organizations based and operating outside of Prishtina.

Applications with the highest final score, within the total budget provided for this call, will be recommended for funding.

Donors possess the right to veto any applicants on the recommended list if they are considered to conflict with the values promoted by the donor or if they overlap with other similar interventions financed by the respective donor. The donor veto is final and cannot be appealed.

The provided budget for this call is 75,000.00 EUR and the number of grants planned to be awarded is 5. However, depending on the fulfilment of the set criteria and the quality of the applications, KCSF reserves the right not to distribute all available funds.

KCSF will support successful applicants to finalize the dossier during the contract preparation stage and the inception phase. During this stage, all conditions set by the GET must be met. KCSF also reserves the right to suggest minor adjustments that do not alter the fundamental aspects of the application or approved activities but may enhance the successful implementation of the organizational development grant.

c. 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 must be submitted using the official complaint template published on the KCSF website **within two working days** of the notification from KCSF.

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.

ROLE OF KCSF

EJA Kosovo is a program of KCSF that is currently co-financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Sweden. KCSF is responsible for the design and implementation of the program, in close cooperation with the funding donors on strategic and main operational issues.

The evaluation of individual applications is conducted by the Grants and Evaluation Team composed of external evaluators, with KCSF having a supporting role consisting on the following elements: defining the evaluation criteria, designing the evaluation system, randomly selecting the members of the GET from the pool of external evaluators contracted by KCSF, undertaking the administrative control of submitted applications, organizing site-visits to the short-listed applicants for verification of documents and practices of internal governance, assessing the level of internal governance based on the submitted documents and results of the site-visits, assessing the level of follow-up and compliance with formal requirements from previous grants with KCSF and/or audit recommendations, as well as methodology guidance for and monitoring of the members of the GET on adequate implementation of the evaluation system and methodology.

Following final decisions for financing taken by the Grants and Evaluation Team and completion of the veto process by donors, KCSF takes the following steps: prepares the grant contract, supports the grantee in finalizing the implementation documents (final budget, logical framework, activity plan) and capacity building and networking plan, regularly monitors the implementation of the grant, receives and approves periodic reports from grantees based on the reporting guidelines and templates, contracts auditing companies to conduct external audits of the grant, organizes and/or facilitates capacity building and networking activities for grantees, and communicates with grantees on various issues relevant to successful implementation of the grant.

IMPORTANT TENTATIVE DATES

Process	Tentative date
Launch of the Call for Organizational Development Grants	18/12/2024
Information session:	Details will be published at www.kcsfoundation.org and KCSF FB page
Deadline for requesting clarifications/ questions	10/01/2025
Last date on which answers are published	15/01/2025
Deadline for submission of applications	31/01/2025 at 23:59
Information on administrative compliance	10/02/2025
Information on shortlisted applicants	March 2025
Visits from KCSF to shortlisted applicants	End of March – beginning of April 2025
Public interviews with shortlisted applicants	April 2025
Final decision	April 2025
Contract signature	May 2025
Grants start	June 2025