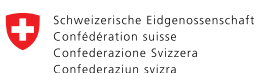


ENGAGEMENT FOR JOINT ACTION - **EJA KOSOVO**

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION FOR URGENT GRANTS

Co-financed by:



Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



ABOUT 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 will embed the practice of involving citizens in their work, develop an emotional linkage thus directly contribute to strengthening of their constituency. Combined with improved internal governance and increased transparency and accountability, it is expected to increase trust in CSOs as an adequate platform to voice citizens' concerns.

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.

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.

a. Urgent Grants

Urgent Grants offer the opportunity for quick and timely interventions by civil society to respond to identified issues that contribute towards the objectives of EJA Kosovo. Beneficiaries of these grants may be individuals, unregistered initiatives or non-governmental organizations. It enables various actors to identify opportunities for contribution and quick reaction for which there is no sufficient time to apply and react through other instruments and regular calls such as project grants.

The interventions that qualify for support have to justify the need for quick reaction and in what ways would the intervention be jeopardized in the absence of an immediate reaction.

The call for Urgent Grants will be ongoing and submitted applications will be evaluated as soon as possible, usually within 10 working days.

Note: Urgency of the intervention is a qualifying criteria for the further evaluation of the content of the application and before submitting an application for urgent grants make sure to check the call for small project grants and decide which instrument is a better fit for your proposed intervention.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF CALL REQUIREMENTS

a. Eligibility criteria

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

- Be Individuals, 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);
- Be directly responsible for the management of the grant. Partnerships with other NGOs/unregistered initiatives are allowed based on principle that leading applicant takes full responsibility for project implementation and management.
- Demonstrate capacity for the management of proposed activities;
- Are not led or managed by Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs).¹
- Accepts and commits to abide to the Core Values for EJA grantees²;

b. For individuals and unregistered initiatives

In cases when applicants are individuals or unregistered initiatives, they need to 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.

¹ For more on limitations related to Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) see the Application Form Template. 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 about the Core Values for EJA grants, see the application form. All applying organizations are obliged to accept and commit to adhere to the Core Values for EJA grants

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 of NGOs are included in the above eligibility criteria. Due to the wide scope of the applicable legislation in Kosovo for registration of NGOs, sports clubs, sports federations, amateur cultural associations or religious organizations that are registered as NGOs are not targeted for KCSF grants. Similarly, NGOs that represent businesses or similar entities which have obvious financial capacities to cover the costs of their organization or sustain their activities are not targeted for KCSF grants.

d. Number of applications

Applicants can submit one application only.

e. Timeframe and budget

Applicants will be eligible to apply for funding for a period of **up to 12 months**. The maximum budget requested for funding from this call **should not exceed EUR 3,000**.

f. Areas of intervention and targeted population

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.

g. Level of intervention and geographical coverage

Through this call, support will be provided to individuals, unregistered initiatives and NGOs throughout Kosovo that seek to bring about transformations at local/municipal and/or national/central level.

h. Civic engagement

Engagement of citizens throughout the work of the organization is an important aspect of the supported interventions under EJA Kosovo. Thus, applicants are expected to clearly elaborate how they intend to engage citizens in their current and future work.

Applicants should present a clear analysis of their target group, why their engagement and participation is relevant for their work 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 of their target groups (such as gender, age, ethnicity, religion, education, location, socio-economic circumstances, interests and needs) and adapt their proposals and intervention accordingly.

For guidance on civic engagement, please see the short document Guide for applicants: Constituency Engagement in online application system.

i. 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.

For guidance on cross-cutting issues, please see the brief guidance documents for applicants on the relevant topics in the online application system.

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;
- Capital Investments;
- Grants composed entirely or mostly of preparatory work and/or studies;
- Cross border projects and proposals for activities to be implemented outside Kosovo;
- Service type activities such as Technical Assistance;
- Awareness raising campaigns without proper follow up;
- Interventions which are subject to multilevel dependency and approval, thus posing high risk for achieving results;
- Sub granting to third parties. Small scale financial support to beneficiaries is allowed only in cases when all expenditures are executed by the implementing organization;
- Scholarships.

Unless they are imperative for the achievement of the proposed intervention, 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;
- 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;
- 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 approved budget;
- are identifiable and traceable.

c. Ineligible costs

The costs presented below are considered ineligible:

- Salaries;
- Customs and import duties;
- Debt or payments for losses;
- Value Added Tax - VAT (for all invoices above EUR 200);;
- 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

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 [website](#).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding registration or grant application, please email us at aja@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, published on the website.

EVALUATION AND NOTIFICATION

Evaluation of applications for an urgent grant will be done in two phases:

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

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.

a. Administrative control (verification of formal criteria)

In this phase, the submitted applications are checked by KCSF if the following formal criteria have been fulfilled:

- 1 The correct form of application for Urgent Grants is used (EJA template);
- 2 All administrative and technical requirements indicated in the application form;
- 3 Budget (max EUR 3,000);
- 4 Grant duration;
- 5 If all mandatory documents are submitted.

b. Evaluation of the content and final decision

The urgent grants are designed to serve the needs of civil society to act fast and respond to situations that demand quick action. Considering the need for a quick reaction the evaluation of Urgent Grants is conducted by KCSF to provide a commensurate response to the goal of the grant. The internal Grant Evaluation Team (GET) for urgent grants is composed of three members from KCSF senior staff.

The maximum score per application is 100 points evaluated based on the following categories:

- 1 Quality and relevance of the project and logic of intervention (50%)
- 2 Involvement of citizens/target groups (30%)
- 3 Adequacy of capacities for the implementation of the project (10%)
- 4 Cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget (10%)

The maximum score for the application is 100 points.

Initially KCSF evaluates whether the proposal fulfils the **urgency criteria**. If the evaluation is positive, GET proceeds to evaluate the entire proposal whereas in cases when the proposal does not pass the urgency criteria the application is not evaluated. 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 four evaluation categories presented above.

Donors have a veto right on list of applicants recommended for award that are considered against the values promoted by the donor or are overlapping with other similar interventions.

Successful applicants, prior to contracting, will be assisted by KCSF in a mentoring session to finalize their dossier.

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 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.