

## ENGAGEMENT FOR JOINT ACTION - EJA KOSOVO

### GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION FOR URGENT GRANTS

#### INTRODUCTION

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 to a democratic and inclusive society in Kosovo, on its path towards integration into the European Union. Designed as a pooled funding mechanism, EJA Kosovo is currently co-financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Sweden and Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Centering citizen engagement and participation throughout the work of civil society, EJA Kosovo aims to contribute towards two main objectives where: (a) civil society uses and claims spaces for participation in shaping public affairs and (b) civil society organizations have strengthened ties to their constituents and improved accountability and transparency towards the wider public and their constituents.


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.

The global outbreak of COVID 19 and its effects have exposed systemic socio-economic flaws and inequality in our society while disproportionately affecting the most marginalized communities. The role of civil society is to serve to these groups, but also demand for institutional response for the needs of the hardest hit has been apparent. Similarly, the necessity for strengthening the ties to constituency, build trust and communication with the community and act as a watchdog of institutions have become even more urgent. The already existing inequalities in our society will become even deeper if marginalized groups are not brought in the forefront of the recovery phase. Civil society needs to step up and give voice to those who need it most.

#### EJA Kosovo instruments of support

EJA Kosovo has been designed with the intention to facilitate and adequately support this new approach, through providing both the necessary financial means and capacities for civil society initiatives and individuals interested to contribute to a democratic and inclusive society in Kosovo. Through *institutional grants*, it will support well-established organizations that have a clear strategy to continue their work in respective thematic areas; through *organizational development grants* it will support organizations that have a clear direction of their development but need specific tools and resources to advance their work; through *project grants* it will support specific actions of civil society initiatives and individuals that address concrete issues, both of more systematic nature or limited in scope and duration; through *urgent grants* it will enable instant reactions of civil society initiatives and individuals to unexpected developments of public importance; and through its annual *Democracy Award* it will recognize outstanding contribution to the development of democracy in Kosovo and

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promote role models to be followed. Training and mentoring, as well as networking and alliance building opportunities will be provided in addition to financial support.

### **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 within 10 working days.

**Note:** Urgency of the intervention is a qualifying criteria 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.

## **1. 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](#)).<sup>1</sup>

### 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

EJA Kosovo's support will focus on civil society contribution to the policy making cycle, while increasingly including citizens in their advocacy efforts and creating/exploring venues and spaces for citizen engagement.

EJA Kosovo aims to contribute to increased civic engagement in influencing the priorities, planning, decision making and implementation of public policies at the local and central government, with a particular focus on the following priority areas:

- Higher participation of women and other marginalized groups in budgetary planning
- Improving socio – economic and cultural rights of marginalized groups
- Strengthening advocacy and watchdog role of civil society with a special emphasis on the rights and needs of marginalized groups
- Empowering youth to participate in policy making and implementation
- Civic education for human rights

Watchdog activities, monitoring of drafting and implementation of policies and legislation, contribution to public policies, contribution to controversial topics, improvement of representation of marginalized groups, creation and utilization of public spaces, awareness raising and education in combating gender stereotypes and representation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians would be an illustration of some of the initiatives that will be supported and fit within the larger theory of change of the intervention.

EJA Kosovo will support initiatives that will focus on addressing the rights and needs of marginalized groups, namely women, 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 individuals, unregistered initiatives and NGOs throughout Kosovo that seek to bring about transformations at local/municipal and/or national/central level.

#### h. Constituency

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.

Supported grantees 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. For guidance on constituency engagement, please see the short document Guide for applicants: Constituency Engagement in [KCSF website](#) referring to EJA Kosovo program.

#### i. Cross cutting issues


Gender mainstreaming as a tool towards gender equality will be a crosscutting issue throughout all interventions. As a general rule, all supported civil society initiatives are required to extend their interventions equally, be mindful of the effects of the intervention for men and women, boys and girls, and avoid contributing to harmful stereotypes. All supported organizations are expected to collect and maintain data disaggregated by gender. For guidance on gender mainstreaming, please see the short document Guide for applicants: Gender Mainstreaming in [KCSF website](#) referring to EJA Kosovo program.

## **2. 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.

### **3. 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 [ēja@kcsfoundation.org](mailto:ēja@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.

#### 4. 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:

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

##### b. Evaluation of applications 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%)**

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



Each applicant who has participated in the application process receives a response regarding the evaluation process and the result of their application, including the total score. Unsuccessful applicants may request clarifications. In case they consider their proposal was not evaluated based on merits even after receiving additional clarifications, applicants may submit an official complain. The procedure to request additional clarifications or complain is public on the [KCSF website](#). Information on the selected grantees will be published in [KCSF website](#) after the contracts are signed.