

ENGAGEMENT FOR JOINT ACTION - EJA KOSOVO

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION FOR MEDIUM PROJECT 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.

Kosovo continues to face significant socio-economic difficulties, with crippling unemployment, economic vulnerability and high corruption. The long-standing distrust in public institutions is marked by a recent positive trend in public perception of the work of public institutions. Women, youth, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, and Serb minorities, people with disabilities, LGBTI and elderly are those who suffer the most from these difficulties. It is the role of civil society to serve to these groups, as well as require institutional response for the needs of most marginalized. Similarly, civil society must strengthen the links to its constituents, build trust and increase communication with the community, and act as a watchdog to the institutions. The global spread of the COVID-19 and the effects of the pandemics, including the recent crisis precipitated by price increases that have affected the standard of living of the majority of the population, have further exposed inequalities in our society, having a disproportionate impact in the most marginalized groups. Already existing inequalities will only be deepened if the marginalized groups are not brought to the forefront during the recovery phase. It is necessary that civil society is mobilized and gives voice to those who need it most now.



1. BACKGROUND

Kosovar citizens are facing a deepened inequality and majority of them are alienated from resources, opportunities, decision-making and political life. Inclusive processes and open institutions are an exception rather than a norm.

Policy making shall be understood beyond formal processes of normative nature, as it includes all aspects of society and public life. In order to address needs of all citizens, policy making needs to be inclusive to all, beyond those who are in power or few others that are well-educated and eloquent in legal and policy writing. 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 different approaches, EJA Kosovo focuses on civil society initiatives and individuals that embed participatory practices in their work because it believes that only by systematically including citizens in their work, civil society is responsive to the needs of citizens. Furthermore, such inclusion goes hand in hand with increasing transparency and accountability of civil society, as well as improvement of internal governance practices beyond papers and reports. Joining efforts through networking and alliance building will maximise the potential for change in a context of scarce human and financial resources. Adding the above to the already existing capacities and experience of civil society, EJA Kosovo aims to narrow the existing gap between civil society and citizens and contribute to increase civil society legitimacy.

a. 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 supports well-established organizations that have a clear strategy to continue their work in respective thematic areas; through *organizational development grants* it supports organizations that have a clear direction of their development but need specific tools and resources to advance their work; through *project grants* it supports 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 enables instant reactions of civil society initiatives and individuals to unexpected developments of public importance; and through its annual *Democracy Award* it recognizes outstanding contribution to the development of democracy in Kosovo and 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.

b. Medium Project Grants (MPG)

Medium project grants aim to support projects implemented by NGOs that provide concrete results in addressing identified issues/problems within a certain period, at local or national level. Unlike small project grants where supported interventions are usually on very specific issues at the local, neighbourhood or village level, medium project grants aim for more systematic interventions at the local or national level. The grantees must demonstrate sufficient capacities to implement the interventions of the respective project.

2. 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 according to the applicable law in Kosovo (branches of foreign and international NGOs registered in Kosovo are not eligible to apply);
- Have an annual turnover of over 25,000 EUR for the last three years (each year);
- Be directly responsible for the management of the grant;
- Demonstrate capacity for the management of the proposed grant;
- Is not led or managed by Politically Exposed Persons ([PEPs](#)).¹

b. For Non-Governmental Organizations

In cases where applicants are NGOs, they 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.

c. Number of applications

Organizations can submit one application only.

Current grantees

Grantees of institutional or organizational development grants of EJA Kosovo cannot be grantees for other grants/instruments of EJA Kosovo program **at the same time**.

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.

d. Timeframe and budget

Organizations will be eligible to apply for funding for a period of minimum 12 months and maximum 16 months.

The maximum budget requested for funding from this call is EUR 40,000.

e. Areas of intervention

While Organizational Development Grants aim specifically activities that are focused in internal development of the organization, the assumption is that by upgrading their systems of work they will improve their contribution in their domain of work that shall be in line with the following 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.

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. In particular, at least 30 percent of the beneficiaries of organizational development grants will be organizations based and operating outside of Prishtina.



g. 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 future work.

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. Applicants will be required to plan explicit approaches in involvement of citizens and target groups in the work of the organization.

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. 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.

Supported NGO's 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, please see the short document prepared by KCSF in [KCSF website](#) referring to EJA Kosovo program.

h. Internal governance

Internal governance of NGOs remains 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.


All applicants are expected to provide information on internal control mechanisms, management structures, governing structures, decision making within the organization and financial management. Shortlisted applicants will undergo a screening during on-site visits by KCSF whereby supporting documents for all of the abovementioned categories need to be presented.

Following the initial screening, 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, anti-corruption and accountability.

i. Joint Action/Alliance Building

In order to foster greater collaboration for joint action between NGOs, EJA Kosovo will provide different platforms and meeting venues where NGOs 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 supported organizations will be proactive in identifying and contributing to opportunities for 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 as a tool towards gender equality will be a crosscutting issue throughout all interventions. As a general rule, all supported organizations 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 sex. For guidance on gender mainstreaming, please see the short document prepared by KCSF in [KCSF website](#) referring to EJA Kosovo program.

3. ELIGIBILITY OF OPERATIONS AND COSTS

a. Ineligible activities

The following activities will not be supported:

- Activities that are dedicated to or mainly contribute to the generation of individual revenues, whether these are for members of marginalized groups;
- Activities that provide social care, family, health, or similar services, whether these are for members of marginalized groups;
- All 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;
- Capital Investments;
- Scholarships.

In principle, the activities outlined below are not encouraged:

- Activities in venues (such as hotels) that are not open and easily accessible to ordinary citizens, unless they are necessary for the achievement of the intended grant results;
- Capacity building out of Kosovo, with exception of cases where such a training is crucial for the development of the organization and cannot be obtained in Kosovo, as well as it is properly justified;
- Study trips out of Kosovo, with exception of cases where such an activity is crucial for the development of the organization and such an information or capacities cannot be obtained without a direct visit abroad, as well as it is properly justified;

b. Eligible costs

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

- are necessary for the successful implementation and achievement project's 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 and other 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:

- Customs and import duties;
- Debt or payments for losses;
- Value Added Tax - VAT (for all expenses 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.

4. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

a. Mandatory Documents

In addition to the application form, the applicants shall submit the below documents:

1. NGO Registration Certificate issued by the NGO Department;
2. Fiscal Number Certificate (in cases when this number is not on the Registration Certificate);
3. Statute of the organization (signed version identical to the Statute as submitted to the NGO Department);
4. Declaration on Politically Exposed Persons (PEP) (as per EJA Kosovo template);
5. Logical framework (as per EJA template);
6. Proposed budget (as per EJA template);
7. Activity plan (as per EJA template);
8. In case of co-funding, the co-funding proof.

All application documents can be downloaded from the website www.kcsfoundation.org.

b. Submission of applications

Completed applications can only be submitted electronically through email at eja@kcsfoundation.org.

The e-mail must include the completed application form and all mandatory documents specified in section 4.a. Applicants will be required to verify that their application is complete using the checklist presented in the application form. KCSF will confirm the receipt of the application by replying to the applicant with a confirmation email.

c. Deadline for application submission

The deadline for submitting applications is **07/04/2022, at 23:59**

d. Contact

For questions related to the preparation of the documents for the application you can contact us at ejainfo@kcsfoundation.org no later than **28.03.2022**. All questions and answers will be published in the Q&A section of KCSF website no later than **31.03.2022**.

Applicants are strongly advised to check out the Q&A section published in the website.

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

5. 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. Deadline for submitting the application;
2. All administrative and technical requirements indicated in the application form;
3. Mandatory documents, including the eligibility of organizations;
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. GET members will evaluate the proposals in two stages 1) through review of documents and 2) public interviews.

The GET members will evaluate applications based on the following criteria and weight:

- 1. Quality of the application (relevance and logic of intervention) (30%);**
- 2. Level of involvement of the citizens/target groups in the work of the organization (40%);**
- 3. Level of organisational capacity and internal governance (10%);**
- 4. Relevance of previous experience (10%);**
- 5. 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 five categories presented above are shortlisted.

All these organizations will be invited for public interviews. The 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 conducting the interviews, the Grants Evaluation Team recommends the list of applicants to be supported. 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 list of applicants recommended for a grant will be reviewed against available funds and the geographical quota whereby at least 30% of the beneficiaries will be 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.

The provided budget for this call is 240,000.00 EUR. 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.

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.

Prior to signature, successful applicants will be assisted by KCSF to finalize their dossier. During this stage all conditions set by the GET must be met. KCSF also reserves the right to comment and propose slight changes which do not affect the application or approved activities, but which contribute to a more successful implementation of the grant.

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.



6. IMPORTANT TENTATIVE DATES

Process	Tentative date
Launch of the Call for Medium Project Grants:	07/03/2022
Information session:	*Details will be published at www.kcsfoundation.org and KCSF FB Page
Deadline for requesting clarifications/questions:	28/03/2022
Last date on which answers are published:	31/03/2022
Deadline for submission of applications:	07/04/2022
Information on administrative compliance:	14/04/2022
Information on shortlisted applicants:	April/May 2022
Public interviews with shortlisted applicants:	May 2022
Final decision:	May/June 2022
Contract signature:	June 2022
Grants start:	June 2022