Guidelines

Grants Programme Purpose

The Commonwealth Foundation's mission is to develop the capacity of Civil Society to act together and learn from each other to engage with the institutions that shape people's lives, as we work towards a more effective, responsive and accountable governance with Civil Society participation.

The Commonwealth Foundation grants programme will contribute to this mission by awarding grants under the two intermediate outcome areas of the Commonwealth Foundation's logic model:

Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to collaborate with each other and engage in participatory governance

Outcome 2: Increased collaboration and learning between CSOs and institutions in governance.

In addition to awarding grants to CSOs, the grants programme will broker knowledge and ideas. It will support innovation, share replicable and sustainable models, and promote good practices across the participatory governance sector.

Grants Programme Objectives

The grants programme has three objectives:

a. To deliver an efficient and effective programme which is responsive to the development needs of CSOs across the Commonwealth.
b. To complement the effectiveness of the Foundation's projects by providing grants to CSOs beyond those supported through the projects.
c. To generate knowledge and understanding of participatory governance and its benefits in promoting effective, responsive and accountable governance within the Commonwealth by supporting models of good practice.

First Call for Applications Opens 3 December 2012

For the announcement of our new grants programme we are inviting CSOs to submit an application addressing either **Dialogue** or **Collaboration** within the broader theme of participatory governance, or a combination of the two areas.

1. **Participatory governance** is about how the state, the market and Civil Society interact to effect change. These interactions involve the inclusion of Civil Society in decision-making processes, enabling citizens to exercise voice and vote and engage in policy formation among others. Citizens are engaged in public venues at a variety of times thus allowing them to be involved in policy formation, selection and oversight.

2. **Dialogue:** One of the cornerstones of participatory governance is dialogue. Dialogue requires facilitation so that people listen, learn and discuss to foster an environment of active, inclusive participation. It enables community members to constructively address issues that affect them in their daily lives. At the same time, public dialogue offers an effective means for policy makers to be informed about community concerns, needs and priorities. It also serves to find ways in which community demands can be addressed meaningfully. Subsumed in participatory governance is participatory communication which promotes a bottom up approach and includes communication for social change and development strategies. It gives importance to resurrecting voices, particularly of those who are marginalised, and facilitates processes that are inclusive, build consensus and promote social cohesion.

3. **Collaboration**: The participation of CSOs in governance processes such as in enhancing service delivery, participatory budgeting, performance management systems of government and peace building/reconciliation processes among others, contributes to more effective, responsive and accountable governance. CSOs bring innovative ideas and solutions, as well as participatory approaches, to solving local problems. Inclusion of citizens in governance forums and consultations brings about new forms of interaction between citizens and government, including other stakeholders in governance.

Eligibility and Guidelines for Submission

To be eligible for a grant, applicant organisations must fulfill the following criteria:

a. Applicant organisation is a registered national or regional CSO.
b. Grant beneficiaries are from a developing Commonwealth Foundation member country.

c. Projects or activities take place in a developing Commonwealth Foundation member country.
d. Grant application addresses one of the four short-term outcome areas.
e. Grant proposal is seeking up to a maximum of three years funding from the Commonwealth Foundation.
f. Grant proposal requests are for a maximum of £30,000 per annum.
g. Grant proposal shows clear evidence of counterpart resourcing. Counterpart resourcing could be co-funding from another source, in kind resources from the organisation or community or funds raised by the organisation to support the project.
h. Grant applicant does not have an existing grant from the Commonwealth Foundation at the time the call for grants is announced. Please note that an applicant organisation must have submitted all reports on existing grants and received notification that the existing grant is closed to be considered eligible. (Please note: Commonwealth Associations who have received core funding from the Commonwealth Foundation for 2012-13 are exempt from this criterion).

The Commonwealth Foundation will not fund:

a. Projects that have already started.
b. Attendance at training courses, workshops and conferences unless as part of a larger project funded by a Commonwealth Foundation grant.
c. Academic study or research unless as part of a larger project funded by a Commonwealth Foundation grant.
d. Publication of books and films, unless they are learning tools developed as a result of a larger project funded by a Commonwealth Foundation grant.
e. Exchanges between developed countries.

The Commonwealth Foundation will not consider applications from:

a. Governmental and intergovernmental organisations.
b. Organisations whose target beneficiaries are not from Commonwealth Foundation member countries.

Assessment

Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

1. Grant proposal has clearly defined and realistic objectives that are demand driven and results based, and has measurable indicators that contribute to the achievement of the Commonwealth Foundation's short-term outcomes.

2. Grant proposal clearly demonstrates a sustainability strategy for the project beyond the duration of the funding received from the Commonwealth Foundation. This could include financial sustainability.
3. Grant proposal responds to the cross-cutting theme on gender.
4. Grant proposal responds to cross-cutting theme on environmental sustainability or cultural respect and understanding.
5. Grant proposal demonstrates innovation.
6. Grant proposal has clearly defined monitoring and evaluation methodology.
7. Grant proposal clearly indicates collaboration with, and the potential for synergy with other development agencies.
8. Organisations have the capacity to deliver the submitted proposal.

Timeline

- The first call for applications opens 3 December 2012.
- Applications will close at 17.00 GMT on 31 January 2013.
- Applications will be assessed between February and April 2013.
- Shortlisted applications will be submitted to our grants committee for approval in April 2013.
- For this grant cycle, projects should not start any earlier than **May 2013.**
- All eligible applicants will be notified of the success of their applications by the end of April 2013 at the very latest.

How to Apply

To apply for a grant please submit an online application form before the deadline (see timeline above). Please also read our guidance on **Filling in Your Application Form,** a copy of our **strategic plan** and our **FAQs** before submitting your application.

Reporting Requirements

Successful grant applicants will be required to report as follows:

- One year grants: A narrative and financial progress report at six months and a completion report at the end of the grant period.
- Multi-year grants: A narrative and financial progress report every six months and a completion report at the end of the grant period.

If you require any further information about the grants programme and the application process, please email the grants team on cfgrants@commonwealth.int and a member of the grants team will get back to you.