



# Commonwealth Foundation

## Guidelines for grant applicants

### 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 awards grants for projects that contribute to effective, responsive and accountable governance with civil society participation. In addition to awarding grants to civil society organisations (CSOs)<sup>1</sup>, 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.

Participatory governance is about how the state, the market and civil society interact to effect change. These interactions involve the inclusion of civil society organisations in decision-making processes, enabling citizens to exercise voice and vote, and engage in policy formation.

### Grants programme objectives

The grants programme has three objectives:

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

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<sup>1</sup> Civil society organisations (CSOs) are registered entities, who work within the law, but outside of the state. Civil society organisations are diverse and include: volunteer organisations, indigenous peoples' organisations, non-governmental organisations, social enterprises, community-based organisations, labour unions, faith-based organisations, charitable and philanthropic organisations, professional associations and foundations and parts of media and academia.

## **Our grants**

Grants will be awarded to CSOs in support of participatory governance. Your project will need to address one of the following five focus areas:

### **1. Creative expression**

You are an organisation that works in the field of creative expression and you wish to:

- make unique creative contributions to public discourse, and/or
- strengthen local creative sectors to support the work of writers and other storytellers in civil society

### **2. Capacity development**

You are a civil society organisation engaging in policy advocacy that wishes to have a stronger voice and message to effect change. You could be part of advocacy network, coalition or working group and you wish to:

- enhance your effectiveness to engage constructively with the institutions in governance and/or the private sector at grass roots, national or regional level
- strengthen the links with, and participation of your members and constituents in advocacy processes at grass roots, national or regional level

### **3. Constructive engagement**

You are a civil society organisation working to participate effectively in a constructive engagement process with institutions in governance and/or the private sector. You could be working on issues at grass roots, national or regional level with a view to:

- developing policy and influencing decision making
- advocating for policy implementation or policy change

### **4. Learning and sharing**

You are a civil society organisation working on a policy/advocacy issue who wishes to adapt a model of good and fit practice from another organisation, to help deliver your organisation's work.

### **5. The SAMOA Pathway**

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have special significance in the Commonwealth. Of the 53 Commonwealth nations, 25 are SIDS. The Commonwealth Foundation is awarding grants to CSOs that wish to engage in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in their country. The SAMOA Pathway represents ambitious commitments made by 115 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) leaders at the Third International Conference on SIDS. To find out more about the SAMOA Pathway click [here](#)

To apply for a grant under The SAMOA Pathway focus area you must be a CSO from an eligible<sup>2</sup> small island developing state in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean or Pacific. You will be working in one or more of the SAMOA Pathway following priority areas: **climate change, water and sanitation, food security & nutrition, ocean & seas, gender equality, health and non-communicable diseases, decent work for all and sustainable energy**. You wish to undertake one or more of the following:

- monitoring your government's implementation of commitments in the above priority areas
- undertaking research on the above priority areas to develop an evidence-based advocacy strategy
- developing advocacy positions to encourage your government to meet its commitments in the above priority areas
- developing a constructive engagement process between civil society and government to support government's implementation of its commitments in the above priority areas

### **Eligibility**

**To be eligible for a grant, the following criteria must be met:**

- The applicant is a registered national or regional civil society organisation (CSO)<sup>3</sup>.
- The applicant is seeking £30,000 per year or less.
- The applicant is applying for funding for one to three years
- The average of the applicant's total income over the last two years is less than £3m
- The project must address one of the five focus areas
- The project will take place in an eligible Commonwealth Foundation member country
- The project has not yet started<sup>4</sup>
- The application includes counterpart resourcing<sup>5</sup> of a minimum of 10% of the total project budget. Applicants will be required to provide a

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<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the list of countries, eligible for a Commonwealth Foundation grant.

Applications will only be considered from an eligible small island developing state

<sup>3</sup> CSOs may apply for a grant in partnership with another CSO. All CSOs involved in implementing a Commonwealth Foundation grant must be registered organisations and included as partners in the application.

<sup>4</sup> Applications must be for a completely new project, or for a new phase of an ongoing project. Grants cannot be used to co-fund projects that are mid-cycle.

<sup>5</sup> Counterpart resourcing could be: co-funding from another organisation, funds from the applicant or partner organisation(s), or in-kind resources from applicant, partner organisation(s) (e.g. salaries of staff dedicated to the project) or the local community.

For counterpart resourcing to be considered eligible, they must be confirmed resources that are already available, otherwise you must provide details of any applications that have been made and are awaiting approval.

For in-kind contributions to be accepted as counterpart resourcing, they must:

- be deemed necessary for the implementation of the project
- be verifiable, quantifiable and clearly reflected in the project's budget

detailed budget at full application stage where counterpart resourcing must be clearly reflected.

- The applicant does not have an existing grant from the Commonwealth Foundation at the time the application window is opened. Please note that in order for a recent grantee to be eligible they must have submitted all reports on existing grants and received notification that the existing grant is closed.
- The applicant will provide the following documents as part of the application:
  1. a completed logic model using the Commonwealth Foundation template (Annex 4)
  2. a copy of the organisation's registration certificate (the official registration document provided by the relevant authorities in the country concerned)
  3. a copy of the organisation's most recent audited accounts (it must include both the accounts and the opinion of the external auditor who has certified them)
  4. a copy of the registration certificate for all partner organisations

**The Commonwealth Foundation will not fund:**

- Attendance at training courses, workshops and conferences unless as part of a larger project funded by a Commonwealth Foundation grant
- Academic study or research unless as part of a larger project funded by a Commonwealth Foundation grant
- Publication of books and films, unless they are learning tools developed as a result of a larger project funded by a Commonwealth Foundation grant
- Exchanges between developed countries
- Activities that are solely for the benefit of government officials and/or the private sector

**The Commonwealth Foundation will not consider applications from:**

- Government and intergovernmental organisations
- Organisations whose target beneficiaries are not from eligible Commonwealth Foundation member countries

**Assessment**

The application for a grant is a two-stage process: preliminary application stage and full application stage.

**Preliminary applications will be assessed on the following criteria:**

1. The application has a clear problem definition.

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If contributions in kind are included as counterpart resourcing, applicants must also provide details of how they have been quantified and calculated.

2. The application clearly demonstrates that is demand driven and relevant.
3. The project must address one of the five focus areas
4. The application clearly shows how the planned activities will deliver outputs that lead to the project outcomes.
5. The organisation(s) has the capacity to deliver the submitted proposal.

Organisations that are shortlisted will be invited to submit a full application. In addition to the criteria above, **the following criteria will be assessed at full application stage:**

1. The application clearly illustrates a strategy to sustain the positive outcomes from the project beyond the duration of the funding received from the Commonwealth Foundation
2. There is a clear learning and knowledge management strategy for the project
3. The Foundation's cross-cutting theme<sup>6</sup> "gender equality" is addressed in the project design
4. The application demonstrates innovation

### **How to apply**

To apply applicants will need to complete an online application form. **A link to the form will be made available on the Commonwealth Foundation [grants page](#) when the call for applications opens.**

Before submitting your application form, please read the following annexes available on our website:

- **Annex 1** - List of eligible Commonwealth Foundation member countries
- **Annex 2** - Preliminary application form questions
- **Annex 3** - Beginning with the end in mind: the value of results chains and logic models
- **Annex 4** - Logic model template

These documents will also be available in the application form under the page "resources".

Please note that an organisation can only submit one application per grants call.

### **Timeline**

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<sup>6</sup> For further information on addressing the Commonwealth Foundation's cross-cutting outcomes in the project design, please see the [Commonwealth Foundation's Cross-Cutting Outcomes Mainstreaming Toolkit](#).

- The call for applications opens at 12.00 GMT on **1 December 2015**
- The deadline for submission of the preliminary application form is 17.00 GMT on **5 January 2016**
- Preliminary applications will be assessed in **January and February 2016**
- Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full application in March 2015
- The deadline for submission of full applications is **29 March 2016**
- All applicants will receive a formal notification on the outcome of their application by the end of **July 2016** at the latest

For this grant cycle, projects should start between and **October and December 2016**.

### **Reporting requirements**

Grantees are required to provide reports on project progress providing us with interim narrative project reports, an end of project report and corresponding financial reports. Reporting deadlines are dependent on the length of the grant awarded and will be set once a grant is awarded.

### **Questions**

If you require any further information about the Grants Programme and the application process, please email the grants team on [cfgrants@commonwealth.int](mailto:cfgrants@commonwealth.int) and a member of the grants team will get back to you.