

**The call for proposals for project support for Finnish civil society organizations for 2021-2024 is open from 31 January to 31 March 2020.**

As a part of the preliminary budget for 2021, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs issues a call for proposals for development cooperation projects of Finnish CSOs for the period of 2021-2024. According to the preliminary plan, approximately 25 million euros will be granted for the years 2021-24. Granting and using the discretionary government transfer must adhere to the Act on Discretionary Government Transfers (688/2001). The general conditions of granting discretionary government transfers are dictated in §7 of the Act on Discretionary Government Transfers.

Project support may be applied for development cooperation projects that fulfill the application criteria, including projects that are ongoing during 2021-22. The discretionary government transfer is granted for projects eliminating extreme poverty, reducing inequality and realization of human rights, according to Agenda 2030, the priorities of Finnish development policy and the Guidelines for Civil Society in Development Policy (2017). The transfer is temporary support and the goal is to strengthen the civic space and the capacity of civil society in developing countries. The discretionary transfer may only be applied for the implementation phase of the project.

The discretionary government transfer may cover a maximum of 85 percent of the entire project budget. If the primary objective is to support the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities, the transfer may cover 92,5 percent of the budget. The applicant must cover the rest of the project expenses with self-financing.

The applicant organization and the project must fulfill the below minimum requirements (the application will not be evaluated, if the minimum requirements are not fulfilled):

Requirements for the applicant:

- a. Discretionary government transfer may be granted to an organization or foundation that has been registered for at least two years at the time of applying.
- b. The assurance form and the other mandatory appendices must be submitted together with the application form.

Requirements for the project:

- c. The project contributes to at least one priority area of Finnish development policy: strengthening the status and rights of women and girls, education, functioning societies and democracy, strengthening the economies of developing countries and creating jobs, climate change and natural resources.
- d. The applicant organization must provide an account of the required self-financing according to the general conditions for the use of discretionary government transfers and the complementary conditions for project support.
- e. The project is implemented in a developing country/countries determined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD<sup>1</sup>.
- f. The project has a local cooperation partner and the applicant has a memorandum of understanding (required appendix) for the project implementation.
- g. The project must strengthen the local civil society according to the Guidelines of Civil Society in Development Policy (2017).

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<sup>1</sup> [OECD DAC List of ODA Recipients, 2018-2020](#)

- h. The project is at minimum human rights sensitive according to the Guidance Note on Human Rights Based Approach in Finland's Development Cooperation (2015)<sup>2</sup>.

The applications will be assessed according to the following criteria:

0-6 points/criteria:

1. The potential of the project to work towards eliminating extreme poverty, reducing inequality, strengthening the capacity of civil society and realization of human rights according to Agenda 2030, the priorities of Finnish development policy and the Guidelines of Civil Society in Development Policy.
2. The selection, inclusion and ownership of the project's beneficiaries/rights-holders are justified in the context of the project. The project supports the realization of the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities and people and groups facing multiple discrimination.
3. The project plan clearly outlines the permanent, realistic change that it aims to achieve. The project has a logical results chain and indicators to measure results. A baseline has been made or at minimum a plan to conduct one. The project includes a clear and reasonable monitoring and evaluation plan. The project has realistic potential to achieve sustainable results.
4. The schedule and budget of the project are realistic considering the objectives, implementation and the capacity of the applicant organization. The application must include reasoning for the budget lines, especially for the personnel and/or expert expenses. The budget structure clearly shows the role/part of the local partner.
5. The project is based on the objectives of the local partner and supports their strategy and advocacy work. The local partner is a central actor in the project and has responsibilities that are mutually agreed upon. The roles of the applicant organization and local partner guide the project structure in a way that the decision-making and other responsibilities are clear between the project partners.
6. The project has results-driven cooperation with companies, municipalities, educational institutions or other relevant actors with clear objectives, activities and division of roles. Additionally, the project has a clear, participatory approach for duty bearers. The MFA encourages multi-actor cooperation, especially together with companies and the private sector.

0-2 points/criteria:

7. The project aims to mitigate the effects climate change and/or strengthen adaptation to climate change.
8. The project supports the rights and status of women and girls as well as the realization of gender equality.
9. The risk analysis and risk management plan are sufficient and realistic.
10. The applicant organization has specific expertise in the sector and operating environment of the project, incl. cooperation with other local, Finnish and international actors. The applicant describes relevant, proven results from previous projects.

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<sup>2</sup> [Human Rights Based Approach in Finland's Development Cooperation – Guidance note, 2015](#)

11. The project country status according to the OECD. Particular weight will be given to LDC<sup>3</sup> and/or fragile states<sup>4</sup>.
12. The communications and advocacy plan clearly shows the activity in Finland as well as in the project country.

Extra points: 0, 3 or 6 points

13. The application is a clear and balanced whole *or* it shows an innovative approach to development cooperation. The project has evident capacity to reach its objectives.

In addition to the aforementioned criteria, overall consideration may be used to assess the application. Elements of the overall consideration are possible previous, proven experiences and assessments from activities funded by the MFA, as well as the relation of the supported projects to the objectives of Finnish development policy.

The MFA grants discretionary government transfers to be used according to the Act on Discretionary Government Transfers as well as the general conditions for the use of discretionary government transfers and the complementary conditions for project support. The applicants must be familiar with these conditions before applying. The MFA may also set specific conditions within the decision on the discretionary government transfer.

The applicant organization must submit the application including the required appendices using the MFA application form. The same application form is used for both new and continued projects. The basic information form should be submitted well before the closing of the call (by 10 March 2020), because the e-Service code required for submission is included in the confirmation receipt for the basic information form. Additional information and appendices required in the basic information form may be submitted also after the deadline. Instructions for using the e-Service can be found on the website for e-Service (in Finnish and Swedish). Using the e-Service requires a KATSO-authentication.

The description of the project support instrument, the general conditions for the use of discretionary government transfers and the complementary conditions for project support as well as the application documents, incl. the project application form, basic information form and assurance, can be found on the [Project support-website](#).

Mandatory appendices for the application form are:

- Appendix 1: Description of the project, incl. results matrix and risk matrix (max. 7 pages)
- Appendix 2: Memorandum of Understanding
- Appendix 3: Assurance

In the assessment of the application, only mandatory appendices will be taken into account, and no additional documents may be attached.

The applicant organization may submit questions to KEO-30 (Unit for Civil Society, [keo-30@formin.fi](mailto:keo-30@formin.fi)) until 9 March 2020 with the subject "Project support 2020 questions". The answers will be published on the MFA website in two parts: questions received by 10 February will be answered latest by 14 February, and questions received by 9 March will be answered latest by 13 March.

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<sup>3</sup> [OECD DAC List of ODA Recipients, 2018-2020](#)

<sup>4</sup> [States of Fragility Framework, 2018](#)

The application must be received by the MFA at the latest on 31 March 2020 at 16.15. Applications received after the deadline will not be assessed.

Project support To Do- list:

Questions may be submitted until 9 March 2020. The answers will be published on the MFA website on 14 February and 13 March.

The basic information form should be submitted well before the closing of the call (by 10 March 2020), because the e-Service code required for submission is included in the confirmation receipt for the basic information form.

The application must be received by the MFA at the latest on 31 March 2020 at 16.15. The deadline is final. When submitting the application in the e-Service, make sure that you also press the “Pane vireille”- button.

After submission, the applications are assessed and the final decisions for discretionary government transfers are made at the MFA.

The MFA will send the final decisions including reasoning and possible special conditions to the applicant organizations via e-Service.

Applicant organizations receiving a positive funding decision must submit a commitment form to the MFA within a month of receiving the decision.

Before the first payment the organization must submit:

- a project plan document
- the possible missing documents of the basic information form
- cooperation agreement with the project partner/partners
- possible amended budget

The MFA transfers the discretionary government transfer according to the payment request forms submitted by the organization in one or two installments annually. The payment request form is found on the MFA website.