

## Call for proposals:

### The application round for project support for Finnish CSOs for 2023–2026 is open

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs opens call for proposals for project support for Finnish CSOs' development cooperation projects for 2023–2026. The application period is open from 24 January to 4 March 2022. Provisionally, approximately EUR 21 million will be allocated during this application round for use in 2023–2026. The support is granted from the development cooperation appropriations for Finnish CSOs' development cooperation.

Project support refers to discretionary government grants, which are awarded and used in accordance with the Act on Discretionary Government Transfers (688/2001). Section 7 of the Act on Discretionary Government Transfers includes provisions on the general grounds for awarding discretionary government grants.

In accordance with the [Description of project support](#), project support for Finnish civil society organisations (CSOs) is an important form of civil society's development cooperation and part of the implementation of Finland's development policy. CSOs engaged in development cooperation projects enhance the diversity and impact of Finland's development cooperation in developing countries around the world through their own fields of expertise and practices. According to [the Guidelines for Civil Society in Development Policy \(2017\)](#), strengthening civil societies is both a development policy objective and a means of promoting Finland's other development policy objectives and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2030 Agenda). Project support also promotes Finland's foreign policy objectives, such as those relating to human rights.

Project support can be applied for development cooperation projects that meet the criteria of the call for proposals. Organisations can also apply for a grant to continue projects that have been previously supported. Project support is granted only for the projects' operational phase, including evaluations carried out during the funding period. Project support is granted for a fixed term.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs awards discretionary government grants for use in accordance with the Act on Discretionary Government Transfers, [the general](#)

[conditions for discretionary government grants, the additional conditions for project support and ethical code of conduct](#). Applicants must familiarise themselves with these terms and conditions before applying for a grant. The Ministry may set special conditions in its discretionary government grant decisions. In accordance with the conditions for project support, a discretionary government grant can be used to cover up to 85 per cent of a project's total costs per year. If the main objective of a project is to promote the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities, the discretionary government grant can cover 92.5 per cent of its annual expenses. In accordance with the terms and conditions, the applicant must cover the remaining share of the project costs with self-financing.

The application process does not oblige the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to award discretionary government grants to all applicants or to award the discretionary government grant applied for by the applicant in full. Having received a positive decision, applicants who are awarded a discretionary government grant that is smaller than was applied for must submit documents adapted to the awarded grant to the Ministry afterwards in accordance with the instructions given in the discretionary government grant decision and possible special conditions.

## Applying for a grant

Before submitting an application, the applying organisation must submit a basic information form through the Foreign Ministry's e-services. The user ID required for the application can be obtained from the acknowledgement of receipt of the basic information form, which is why it should be submitted well in advance of the end of the application round (4 March 2022). If necessary, the basic information form may be supplemented after it has been filed.

To apply for a government grant, the applicant must fill in the application form of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and its appendices in accordance with the guidance given in this call for proposals and the filling instructions of the form. Separate application forms are available for a new project and continuation project. Applications must be submitted through the Foreign Ministry's e-services in either Finnish, Swedish or English. The documents mentioned in section "Appendices" of this call for proposals must be appended to the application.

The applicants log in to the Foreign Ministry's e-services via the [suomi.fi service](#). To initiate the basic information form, the application form and any complementary information forms, the applicant must first save the forms and then press the "initiate" button. Instructions on the use of the Foreign Ministry's e-services are available [on the website of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs](#). The

maximum file size of forms initiated in the e-services is 10 MB. If necessary, part of the appendices can be submitted using the complementary information form.

Applications together with their appendices should be at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs no later than at 16.15 (Finnish time/EET) on Friday 4 March 2022. Applications that arrive after the deadline will not be processed.

The mandatory appendices to the application form are:

- Appendix 1. [Additional information on the application](#) (max. 8 pages)
- Appendix 2. Letter(s) of intent with the partner(s).
- Appendix 3. Results matrix
- Appendix 4. Risk matrix
- Appendix 5. Assurance (in Finnish or Swedish)

Only the application form and mandatory appendices are taken into account in the assessment of the applications. With regard to Appendix 1, the Ministry does not take notice of any part exceeding the maximum number of pages announced in the call for proposals. Other documents must not be attached to the application.

The description of the project support instrument, the general terms and conditions, the additional conditions and ethical code of conduct for project support, as well as the application forms and instructions relating to the appendices are available on [the project support page](#). In addition, the guidelines and policies concerning development cooperation conducted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs can be accessed on [the website of the Ministry](#) (in Finnish).

The applicants can submit questions related to the application round to the Unit for Civil Society ([keo-30@formin.fi](mailto:keo-30@formin.fi)) until 14 February 2022 with a heading “Call for applications for project support in 2022”. The answers will be published on the Foreign Ministry’s project support website in two parts: Answers to questions received by 31 January 2022 will be published on 7 February 2022 at the latest and answers to questions received by 14 February 2022 no later than on 18 February 2022.

As a rule, the applications and their appendices are public and will be public after the decisions on discretionary government grants have been made. If necessary, applicants can give reasons for the secrecy of certain sections of their applications. However, the publicity of a document submitted to an authority is assessed on a case-by-case basis under the Act on the Openness of Government activities (621/1999) and other legislation. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs decides on the publicity of documents submitted to it.

## Preliminary criteria for the call for proposals for project support in 2022

The elements of the assessment of applications consist of minimum requirements, qualitative assessment criteria and overall consideration. Applications that do not fulfil the minimum requirements will not proceed to the qualitative assessment phase.

### Minimum requirements concerning the applicant:

a. A discretionary government grant can be awarded to an association or foundation registered in Finland which has been registered for at least two years by the date of the opening of the application process.

### Minimum requirements for the project and the application:

b. The application contains all the aforementioned mandatory appendices.

c. The project promotes at least one of [Finland's four development policy priorities](#): strengthening the status and rights of women and girls; strengthening the economic base of developing countries and creating jobs; education and peaceful democratic societies; climate change and natural resources.

d. The application presents the required share of self-financing in accordance with the general conditions for the use of discretionary government grants and the additional conditions for project support.

e. The project is carried out in a developing country/developing countries, listed among [ODA recipients by the OECD Development Assistance Committee DAC](#).

f. The project has a local partner with whom the applicant has concluded a letter of intent for the implementation of the project.

g. The project strengthens the local civil society in accordance with [the Guidelines for Civil Society in Development Policy \(2017\)](#).

h. The project is at minimum human rights sensitive as defined in the [Human rights-based approach to development – general guidelines \(2015\)](#) of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

i. In the application, the applicant has indicated its readiness to fulfil the do no harm principle, stated as the minimum level of the cross-cutting objectives in the Finnish development policy and cooperation (gender equality, non-

discrimination, disability inclusion, climate resilience, low-emission development). (See the [Guideline for the Cross-Cutting Objectives in the Finnish Development Policy and Cooperation](#), pages 3 and 5).

The applications will be assessed against the following qualitative criteria:

1. The selection, participation and ownership of the beneficiaries – both rights holders and duty bearers – are clearly indicated. The project takes into account clearly and concretely the realisation of the rights of the key groups of the project, such as women and girls, people in vulnerable positions, persons with disabilities and persons and groups subject to multiple discrimination.
2. The application clearly indicates the realistic change that the project aims to achieve. The project has a logical results chain and indicators that measure the achievement of project objectives. The application includes a plan, with means and schedule, for determining the baseline for project objectives. The project includes a clear and appropriate monitoring and evaluation plan. The project covers communications about the results both in Finland and in the target country.
3. The application explains the partner's key role in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the project. The project is based on the objectives of the local partner and it supports the partner's strategy and advocacy work. Decision-making and other roles and responsibilities between the partner in the target country and the Finnish organisation are clearly indicated in the application.
4. The application includes a realistic and comprehensive analysis of the sustainability of the results and factors affecting them. The analysis must indicate both factors that support and factors that deteriorate the project's sustainability as well as assumptions affecting its sustainability.
5. The applicant and/or its partners have special expertise in the project's field of activity and operating environment. In the application, the applicant takes into account the special characteristics of the operating environment, including risks, as well as actors and national targets and strategies relevant to the objectives and the sector of the project.
6. The project's risk analysis and risk management plan are comprehensive and realistic from the point of view of the project's implementation. The application identifies the external and internal risks relevant to the project and recognises their likelihood and impact. The application indicates the roles and responsibilities of the applicant and the local partner as well as how risks are prevented and provisions are made for corrective measures. Risk management

takes into account the Ministry's Ethical Code of Conduct (including corruption and sexual harassment and abuse).

7. The project schedule, budget and human resources are realistic in terms of its objectives and implementation and the capacity of the applicant and its local partner(s). The application includes the grounds for budget items, particularly personnel and/or expert costs. The cost structure clearly indicates the roles/responsibilities of the local partner.

## Overall consideration

In addition to the above-mentioned minimum requirements and qualitative criteria, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will exercise its overall consideration in relation to the available appropriations and the implementation of the projects when assessing individual applications and projects for which grants are awarded. As a whole, attention will also be paid to the implementation of projects in [countries classified by the OECD as the least developed countries](#) (LDCs) and/or [fragile states](#).

With regard to individual applications, the elements of overall consideration are, on the one hand, the coherence of application and, on the other hand, the relevance and added value of the project proposed for funding in relation to:

- Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals
- Implementation of the Paris Agreement
- Finland's development policy objectives
- Guidelines for Civil Society in Development Policy
- Description, terms and restrictions of project support
- Other activities supported by Finland's development cooperation funding, and
- Finland's country programmes.

As part of the overall consideration, due attention will be paid to relevant stakeholder and multi-actor cooperation that brings added value to the objectives of the project in Finland and the target country. This may mean, for example, cooperation with the private sector, other organisations, municipalities or educational institutions.

In its overall consideration, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will also use its previous verifiable experiences and assessments on the applicant and the applicant's previous use of government grants.

## Checklist for project support

Questions can be submitted until 14 February 2022. The answers will be published on the Foreign Ministry's website 7 and 18 February 2022.

The basic information form should be submitted well in advance before the application round closes, i.e. 4 March 2022, because the user ID required for the application can be obtained from the acknowledgement of receipt of the basic information form.

The application must be at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs no later than 4 March 2022 at 16.15. This is an absolute deadline. When you download your application to the e-services, make sure that you also click the “initiate” button.

After this, the applications are processed and decisions on discretionary government grants are made at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.