

UNDEF



The United Nations
Democracy Fund

United Nations Democracy Fund
Project Proposal Guidelines
Eighth Round

15 November – 31 December 2013

Summary

The present guidelines describe the application procedure for the Eighth Round of UNDEF grants. Their purpose is to provide guidance to prospective applicants in the preparation of their project proposals and thus to help the Fund select and support the best proposals in conformity with the guidance of its Advisory Board. These Guidelines therefore establish:

- The procedure to submit a project proposal
- Awards-making process, including proposed schedule
- Eligibility criteria for beneficiaries
- Examples of UNDEF projects
- Assessment criteria
- Different types of geographical coverage (global, regional and local (country) projects)
- Project management arrangements
- Budgetary considerations
- Monitoring and evaluation requirements;
- The commitment to assistance and transparency of the UNDEF Office to applicants in this process
- An outline of the Online Project Proposal System (OPPS)

Applicants are also encouraged to review UNDEF feedback to applicants and UNDEF Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the UNDEF website before submitting a project proposal: <http://www.un.org/democracyfund/>

1. Background of UNDEF

At the 2005 World Summit held at the United Nations in New York, Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to promote democracy and human rights, by welcoming “the establishment of a Democracy Fund at the United Nations¹” (herein referred to as ‘UNDEF’).

UNDEF’s primary purpose is to strengthen the voice of civil society and ensure the participation of all groups in democratic practices. The Fund complements current UN efforts to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide and funds projects that enhance democratic dialogue and support for constitutional processes, civil society empowerment, including the empowerment of women, civic education and voter registration, citizen’s access to information, participation rights and the rule of law in support of civil society and transparency and integrity.

UNDEF is a Trust Fund established through voluntary contributions from Member States, under the authority of the Secretary-General. UNDEF is guided by its Advisory Board, which includes representatives of Member States, eminent academics and global civil society leaders. Thus, participation in the activities of UNDEF bestows prestige to all its stakeholders and signifies for its beneficiaries a high level of political commitment to democratic values.

2. Mandate of UNDEF

UNDEF finances projects primarily carried out by civil society organizations as well as independent constitutional bodies, regional and international organizations. UNDEF aims to support action-oriented projects to bring about measurable and tangible improvements in democracy and human rights on the ground, thereby translating the concept of “democracy” into practical solutions for people to have their voices and choices heard.

UNDEF-financed projects will be implemented over a period of **two years**, principally at country level and in least developed, low or middle income countries. UNDEF also provides discrete funding to a number of regional and global projects promoting democracy (see § 5.1). Eligibility criteria are elaborated further in Section 5.

¹ Paragraph 135, [2005 World Summit Outcome](#), A/RES/60/1, 24 October 2005

3. Scope of the Guidelines

These guidelines describe the two-stage approach of the application procedure for UNDEF grants (1) submission of a project proposal during the call for project proposals (2) development of a full project document. The basic principle behind this approach, and in particular of the first stage (call for project proposals), is to allow interested parties to have their projects short-listed by providing the basic information needed by UNDEF to reach a decision in principle. Only if a project proposal has been short-listed do applicants have to invest the time and resources to produce a full project document (the second stage).

The Project Proposal Guidelines may be periodically revised in subsequent rounds of UNDEF funding cycles to take account of best practices and lessons learned. For further information, please visit the UNDEF website at <http://www.un.org/democracyfund>.

4. Application Procedure

4.1 Schedule (indicative)

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 15 November 2013 | Call for Project proposals |
| | Online Project Proposal System opened |
| 31 December 2013 | Deadline for Project proposals submission |
| | Online Project Proposal System closed |
| Mid-February 2014 | Deadline for UNDEF Office to arrive at “long short-list” |
| Mid-March 2014 | Deadline for UN Programme Consultative Group (PCG) & UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) to provide comments |
| Early April 2014 | Deadline for Advisory Board to adopt short-list |
| Mid-April 2014 | Deadline for Permanent Missions to be informed of projects short-listed in their countries |
| Late May 2014 | Deadline for Advisory Board recommendation to Secretary-General |
| Early June 2014 | Request to short-listed applicants to draft detailed project documents |
| July-August 2014 | Expected deadline for submission of detailed project documents |
| September 2014 | Project document negotiations begin between applicants and UNDEF office |
| September-December 2014 | First projects finalized and receive disbursements |

4.2 Call for Project Proposal

The Eighth Round of UNDEF Funding will begin when the call for project proposals is launched on 15 November 2013. The deadline to submit project proposals will be **31 December 2013**. Organizations wishing to submit a project proposal to receive UNDEF funding should visit the UNDEF website where they will be prompted to complete an online application form. An outline of the requirements of the Online Project Proposal System (OPPS) is provided in Annex 1 to this document.

Project proposals will be accepted by the OPPS only during the call for project proposals i.e. 15 November – 31 December 2013. Project proposals must be received online by 31 December 2013. The Fund will not accept proposals submitted via e-mail, regular post, facsimile, diplomatic or UN pouch, hand or courier delivery or any other channel. **Project proposals can be submitted only in English or French**, the two working languages of the United Nations. A confirmation email will be generated by the OPPS. The UNDEF Office will communicate directly with the applicant if additional information should be required.

4.3 Award Decisions and “Approval in Principle”

Proposed projects will be assessed by the UNDEF Office and its external consultants, short-listed by the Fund’s Programme Consultative Group (PCG), in consultation with United Nations Resident Coordinators, and reviewed by UNDEF’s Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will submit a recommendation of awards to the Secretary-General, who holds the ultimate authority for the funding decision. Prior to the Secretary-General’s decision, Permanent Missions of countries where projects are planned will be advised of the recommendations of the Advisory Board.

Decisions on the selection of projects to be funded will be considered “approvals in principle”. Short-listed applicants should submit a completed project document within 6 weeks of the notification of the “approval in principle”. Failure of the applicant to comply with this deadline may result in UNDEF not going ahead with the grant. Extended deadlines may be granted by UNDEF on an exceptional basis, to especially complex projects. Final approval of the project will only be granted after a detailed negotiation and clearance of the full project document.

By the end of June 2014, **all successful short-listed applicants will be notified at the electronic address indicated in their project proposal**, unless otherwise advised on the UNDEF website.

4.4 Successful Proposals and Detailed Project Documents

Proposals approved in principle for funding by UNDEF will have to be elaborated into full project documents and undergo a detailed review to ensure compliance with UNDEF’s requirements, prior to receiving final approval for disbursement. Project documents should be based in general on the original proposals submitted, and should follow the UNDEF format as explained in the Eighth Round Project Document

Guidelines which will be available on the UNDEF website prior to notification of short-listing. In the interim, please refer to the Seventh Round Project Document Guidelines for an overview of the information required on the UNDEF website:

<http://www.un.org/democracyfund/information-grantees>

4.5 Declined Project Proposals

Organizations whose project proposals were not approved for funding will not be notified individually. Such organizations may wish to revisit the UNDEF website periodically to be aware of future calls for project proposals. Applicants who have not received a positive response by the end of June should consider this silence as decisive, unless otherwise advised on the UNDEF website.

Because of the large number of project proposals, UNDEF does not have the resources to individually advise unsuccessful applicants.

5. Eligibility Criteria

5.1 Local and Global/Regional Projects

UNDEF will invite proposals for projects that either take place in one country only (local), or occur in several specified states of a region or sub-region (regional) or intend to operate at the global level (global). UNDEF will reserve at least 70% of its programmable resources in each funding round for projects taking place in one country and will allocate no more than 30% to global/regional projects.

5.2 Duration of Projects and Amounts Awarded

In principle, UNDEF grants will be allocated for projects with default duration of two years. However, it is acceptable to UNDEF if a successful applicant completes a project in less than 2 years. Grants will not necessarily match the full amounts applied for. Grant allocations will **not exceed US\$400,000** for any given project, and will be of a minimum of US\$50,000. The majority of projects are granted **no more than \$250,000**. Once the implementation period has elapsed, beneficiaries will be required to return unspent funding to UNDEF.

5.3 Eligible Beneficiaries

UNDEF funds projects implemented by non UN organizations, not individuals, profit-making or government entities.

At the project proposal stage, you will be required to indicate the type of organization applying for funding:

- (1) **Civil Society Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations** engaged in promoting democracy²
- (2) **Independent and Constitutional Bodies,**
- (3) **Global and Regional inter-government bodies, organizations and associations** other than the United Nations

UN accreditation is not a prerequisite to apply for UNDEF funding.

5.4 Priority Countries and Regional Balance

Strong preference will be given to applicants from countries and regions where the challenges of democracy are more critical, such as countries emerging from conflict, new and restored democracies, the [Least Developed Countries](#) (as per the official classification of the UN-OHRLLS), [Low Income Countries](#) (“Low Income Economies” as per the World Bank’s official classification based on Gross National Income per capita) and [Middle Income Countries](#) (“Lower and Upper Middle-income Economies”, idem).

UNDEF aspires to a satisfactory regional balance in the awarding of grants, and will consider each individual proposal on its own merits. UNDEF encourages local CSO’s to submit high quality project proposals.

5.5 Examples of UNDEF projects

To view summaries of existing UNDEF projects, go to:

<http://www.un.org/democracyfund/projects>

Remember that UNDEF funds projects, not organizations. Your project proposal should be innovative and distinct from the activity you already conduct.

² UNDEF will not consider project proposals that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate or representative of an organization that recommends or is apologetic of the use of violent means in political action in general and of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations in particular, as stated in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (§81). Based on ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) resolution 1996/31 on consultative relationship, as well as the UN Department for Public Information (DPI) criteria for associated NGOs, UNDEF will require that the aims and purposes of the applying CSO be in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations; the CSO must be duly constituted nationally or internationally; the CSO shall ideally have a satisfactory record of collaboration with UN field offices, UNDP, a United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) or other parts of the UN system or similar institutions; the CSO shall have statutes/by-laws providing for a transparent process of making decisions, elections of officers and members of the Board; it shall have an established headquarters, with an executive officer; the CSO shall finally have authority to speak for its members through its authorized representatives; evidence of meeting these requirements shall be the onus of the applying CSO

UNDEF will not give priority to project proposals which focus on the following:

- Initiatives which do not promote democracy
- Initiatives filling a funding gap for on-going/regular programmes and activities
- Projects focused primarily on research

5.6 Assessment Criteria

During the assessment process, project proposals will be assessed based on the following ten assessment criteria:

1. The project promotes the objectives of UNDEF
2. The project draws on the United Nations' comparative advantage
3. The project will have a significant impact
4. The project will encourage inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups
5. The project will enhance gender equality
6. The project has strong prospects for successful implementation
7. The applicant organization has a strong track record
8. The project is technically sound in conception and presentation
9. The project represents good value for money
10. The project has strong prospects of sustainability beyond the project duration.

5.7 Project Management Arrangements

The vast majority of UNDEF projects are delivered directly by civil society organizations (CSO). In this type of project the CSO is responsible for the overall management of the project and bears all substantive, financial, monitoring, and reporting and evaluation responsibilities.

In exceptional circumstances and where there is clear value added, the applicant might feel the need to partner with a United Nations Executing Agency. In this case, the UN agency will oversee and monitor the project and act as UNDEF's agent for project oversight.

The CSO or other applicant will bear substantive responsibility for achieving results in the project. The UN Agency will be responsible for the oversight of the project and will bear all financial, monitoring, reporting and evaluation responsibilities.

Should an applicant decide to work with a UN Agency, the applicant **must seek the Agency's** prior consent before submitting their project proposal. The CSO must indicate in the project proposal the contact details of the person who has given this consent.

5.8 Budgetary considerations

UNDEF funds projects, not project implementers. *Please note therefore that salary, contractual services and miscellaneous costs should be modest.*

UNDEF will not give priority to project proposals in which:

- A substantial part (more than **20%**) of the budget relates to institutional recurrent costs (e.g. rent, utilities) and/or personnel costs.
- Equipment and hardware purchases are too high in the context of total project costs (e.g. the purchase of vehicles)

These costs will impact on the assessment of the project proposal under the “Value for Money” assessment criterion (see § 5.6). All such costs must be itemized clearly and included under each budget category (e.g. salaries, equipment/hardware, miscellaneous).

Please note that 10% of the total project costs will be retained by UNDEF to cover monitoring and evaluation. This amount will be capped at 25,000USD for projects over 250,000USD.

5.9 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

All project applicants must monitor their own activities.

You need to describe how project results/outcomes will be measured, what measurements will be used (outcome indicators, baseline, targets and monitoring tools) and who will be responsible for measuring them.

Further monitoring and reporting details will be provided to successful applicants through the Project Document Guidelines.

All project proposals must allow for a rigorous evaluation strategy that will be further detailed in the project document.

Don't forget!
10% of the total project cost will be kept aside by UNDEF for monitoring and evaluation purposes. M&E costs are capped at \$25,000.

6. Assistance to Applicants and Transparency

UNDEF cannot provide direct support in the preparation of project proposals. In the case of technology-related difficulties with the Online Project Proposal System (OPPS) please contact: info@undefapplication.org

UNDEF will also apply a policy of transparency with regard to the approved projects. During the assessment process, project proposal information will be shared with the UNDEF Office, the UN Programme Consultative Group (PCG), the UN Resident Coordinators and the UNDEF Advisory Board. Once short-listed by the Advisory Board, basic information about the proposal will be provided, as a matter of courtesy, to the Permanent Missions to the UN of the country in which the project is to take place. Once project documents have been approved, information on projects receiving UNDEF grants will be posted on the UNDEF web site.

Annex I - Outline of On-line Project Proposal System (OPPS)

The On-line Project Proposal System (OPPS) allows prospective grantees to submit their project proposals to UNDEF electronically. The OPPS can be accessed at the UNDEF website at www.un.org/democracyfund.

The present outline describes the application procedure that any applicant needs to follow to submit a project proposal. All project proposals must be completed **online** in **English or French**.

Project proposals can be **submitted only through our OPPS**. Project proposals submitted by e-mail, regular post, facsimile, diplomatic or UN pouch, hand or courier delivery or any other channel will NOT be considered.

Please note:

- **Registration**: Prospective applicants need to create a profile in the OPPS before they can start applying. An email is sent by the OPPS to users after their registration. The email contains all the necessary information to log back into the system
- **Length**: The fields can accommodate only a **limited number of characters**. If you go over the character limit, your text will be truncated. This greatly affects the quality of your proposal. Therefore, please present your project information in a concise and clear manner, and ensure that you do not go over the limit.
- All the fields with red bars are compulsory.
- **Budget**:
 - Please ensure that programme support costs (salary, rent, utilities, equipment etc.) are modest (see sections 5.8 of the guidelines for further details).
 - Please ensure the total requested in the budget by Output/Activity and the budget by Item match, and they correspond to the total requested grant amount in section 2 of the form.
- **Timeline**: Please note that, if approved, your project will not commence until September 2014 at the earliest. Therefore, projects with activities that need to commence earlier than this will not be considered.
- **Geographic scope**: Please be as specific as possible on the geographic scope of the project to give a clear idea of the project scale.
- The OPPS has a **saving function** which allows you to begin drafting and then save a project proposal to continue it at a later point. When your project proposal is saved for the first time, you will receive an email informing you that you have not yet submitted your project proposal and how to log into the system to continue working on your project proposal prior to submission. If you lose your login information, UNDEF will not be able to retrieve it.

Be careful!

Saving your project proposal does not mean it is submitted to UNDEF.

Your project proposal is submitted to UNDEF once you click the “Submit” button on top of the form. You will receive a confirmation email soon after submitting your project proposal. This email will contain the receipt number of your project proposal. Should you not receive this email within 48 hours of submission, contact us at democracyfund@un.org.

You can view but cannot edit a project proposal once it has been submitted. You will be able to view your submitted project proposal only while the application period is open (15 November – 31 December 2013). For this reason, UNDEF recommends you keep a copy of your project proposal. UNDEF will not send submitted project proposals back to applicants.

Contents of Application Proposal Form

Please find below a list of all the information you will be asked to provide in order to submit a project proposal to UNDEF.

Registration Stage

1. Organization name
2. Name, title and contact information of key contact
3. Username (same as the email of the key contact)
4. Password

1. Applicant Information

1. Organization name (filled out automatically)
2. Organization acronym (if any)
3. Type of applicant
4. First time or prior applicant/ obtained funding in earlier UNDEF rounds
5. Prior experience of your organization in the same sector, country or region
6. Operational budget
7. Prior experience of your organization with the UN
8. Affiliation
9. Other grants
10. Name, title and contact information of head of the Organization
11. Website and address of the Organization
12. Name, title and contact information of key contact

2. Project Information

1. Project title
2. Project location
3. Project summary
4. Requested Grant Amount
5. Applicant’s own contribution (cash or in-kind)
6. Main feature of the project
7. Previous initiatives/Innovation

3. Project Description

1. Problem analysis
2. Why UNDEF?
3. Project Objective
4. Expected results/outcomes
5. Outputs/deliverable products
6. Key activities
7. Monitoring and evaluation
8. Sustainability
9. Gender considerations
10. Marginalized or vulnerable groups

4. Partner Information (if applicable)

1. Proposed implementing partner(s) (if any)
2. Other donors/sponsors and amounts of their contribution
3. Is there an Executing Agency for this project?
If so: Name and location of Executing Agency, name and position of the contact person, email and phone number

5. Budget

- Please note that in the project budget the requested grant amount (section 2 of the form) needs to be presented in two different ways: by Output/Activity (sample budget A) and by Item (sample budget B).
- All budget amounts should be expressed in US dollars and should contain rounded figures to the nearest thousand dollars only.
- **The total requested grant amount in budgets A and B should be identical, and cannot exceed USD 400, 000**
- Both budgets A and B have a budget line where 10% of the Total Project Costs (TPC) will be set aside to cover Monitoring and Evaluation. Please refer to section 5.8 for further details on how to calculate this amount.
- Project support costs (salaries, travel, rent, office supplies, etc.) should remain a **modest proportion** of the budget (no more than 20%). These costs must be clearly itemized under the different budget inputs (e.g. salaries, travel and miscellaneous).

A) Sample UNDEF Budget by Output/Activity²

| 5. BUDGET | | | |
|--|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| <p><i>In this section, you need to present your project budget by detailing how the requested grant amount to UNDEF (section 2) will be used. Please note that you need to present the budget in two different ways: by Activity and by Item activity. Use rounded amounts to the nearest thousand dollar. They must add up to the same figure.</i></p> | | | |
| UNDEF funded Budget by Output/Activity | | | |
| <p>Activity Descriptions:</p> <p>Activity 1: e.g. training course for local women councilors Activity 2: e.g. voters education campaign targeted at youth Activity 3: e.g. development of advocacy/outreach materials (DVDs, brochures etc. Activity 4: e.g. meeting of stakeholders to provide recommendations on measures to empower youth Activity 5: e.g. production of radio/TV programme Activity 6: e.g. study Tour to Country X</p> | | | |
| Activity 1 | <input type="text"/> | Activity 2 | <input type="text"/> |
| Activity 1 - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> | Activity 2 - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> |
| Activity 3 | <input type="text"/> | Activity 4 | <input type="text"/> |
| Activity 3 - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> | Activity 4 - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> |
| Activity 5 | <input type="text"/> | Activity 6 | <input type="text"/> |
| Activity 5 - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> | Activity 6 - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> |
| Activity 7 | <input type="text"/> | Activity 8 | <input type="text"/> |
| Activity 7 - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> | Activity 8 - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> |
| Activity 9 | <input type="text"/> | Activity 10 | <input type="text"/> |
| Activity 9 - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> | Activity 10 - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> |
| Total Project Costs (TPC) | | \$ 0.00 | |
| Monitoring and Evaluation, Executing Agency fee - Amount in US\$ | | <input type="text"/> | |
| Total Requested Grant Amount | | \$ 0.00 | |

- 1- For additional details on the manner to calculate the M&E component refer to section 5.8 of these guidelines
- 2- In the budget by Output/Activity, the project support costs (salaries etc.) should be built-in
- 3- The total grant amounts of the budgets by Output/Activity and by Item should be the same and correspond to the grant amount requested in section 2 and cannot exceed USD 400,000.

B) Sample UNDEF Budget by Item

| UNDEF funded Budget by Item | |
|--|---|
| | <i>Professional project personnel, administrative personnel and all other staff costs for general project management</i> |
| Salaries - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> |
| | <i>Travel and per diem (meals and accommodation) for project management team. Note: participants traveling to workshops, training courses should not be listed here but included in workshop etc.</i> |
| Travel - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> |
| | <i>Commercial/consultancy services, translation, providers, etc.</i> |
| Contractual services/consultants - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> |
| | <i>Rental of premises, refreshments, banners, public address systems, interpretation, travel, hotels and meals, resources</i> |
| Workshops, Meetings, and Seminars - Amount US\$ | <input type="text"/> |
| | <i>IT equipment, project support equipment (e.g. TV, radio equipment, printer)</i> |
| Project Equipment/Hardware - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> |
| | <i>Publications, pamphlets, brochures, print media, websites, broadcasts</i> |
| Outreach - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> |
| Fellowships, Grants, Study tours & others | <input type="text"/> |
| | <i>Certification of reports on the use of funds by an independent auditor/accountant</i> |
| Audit - Amount in US\$? | <input type="text"/> |
| | <i>Stationery, communications, postage, insurance, maintenance, utilities</i> |
| Miscellaneous - Amount in US\$ | <input type="text"/> |
| Total Project Costs (TPC) | \$ 0.00 |
| Monitoring and Evaluation, Executing Agency fee - Amount in US\$? | <input type="text"/> |
| Total Requested Grant Amount ? | \$ 0.00 |

1- For additional details on the manner to calculate the M&E component refer to section 5.8 of these guidelines

2- In the budget by Output/Activity, the project support costs (salaries etc.) should be built-in

3- The total grant amounts of the budgets by Output/Activity and by Item should be the same and correspond to the grant amount requested in section 2 and cannot exceed USD 400,000.

Annex II - Commitments

Applicants will be requested to tick four boxes committing to:

- ✓ Develop a project by the established deadline following the “UNDEF Eighth Round Project Document Guidelines”
- ✓ Abide by the “UNDEF Branding and Visibility Rules” in all activities and products of the project if it were to be awarded a grant
- ✓ Provide narrative mid-term and final substantive progress reports (that will include a participatory feedback process involving all key programme stakeholders), audited or certified financial statements as required and ensure or participate in appropriate project evaluation as per the established Monitoring & Evaluation norms contained in the project proposal guidelines and UNDEF Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation Guidelines.
- ✓ Take all necessary measures to facilitate evaluations or audits as and when required by UNDEF or a third party on its behalf

In the case of CSOs, the following additional commitments will be requested by the same procedure:

- ✓ The Applicant CSO/NGO does not intend to provide any type of support for any member, affiliate or representative of an organization that recommends or is apologetic of the use of violent means in political action in general and of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations in particular, as stated in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (§81).
- ✓ As per ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31 on consultative relationship, as well as the UNDPI criteria for associated NGOs, the Applicant CSO/NGO’s aims and purposes are in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
- ✓ The CSO/NGO is duly constituted nationally or internationally.
- ✓ The CSO/NGO has statutes/by-laws providing for a transparent process of decision making, elections of officers and members of the Board; the CSO has authority to speak for its members through its authorized representatives identified above.