



**An Roinn Gnóthaí
Eachtracha agus Trádála**
Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade

Civil Society Fund

2021 Call for Applications

DEADLINES

Eligibility Form and Accompanying Documents: Monday, 5 October 2020

Application Form: Friday, 8 January 2021

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1. Civil Society Fund

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has a long history of supporting Irish civil society organisations working in the developing world. The Civil Society Fund (CSF) supports overseas development projects which have the potential to contribute to the priorities and commitments in [A Better World: Ireland's Policy for International Development \(2019\)](#).

Applications are accepted on an annual basis from Irish and invited international civil society organisations to carry out projects of between one and three years in duration. The process is highly competitive and not all applications will be successful. There is a two-stage application process. Interested organisations will firstly need to submit an Eligibility Form. The Department will subsequently inform organisations of their eligibility to apply and eligible organisations will receive the application form.

2. Timeline

The following sets out the timeline for the 2021 CSF Round:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Eligibility Form & Accompanying Documents: | Monday, 5 October 2020 |
| • Application Form: | Friday, 8 January 2021 |
| • Appraisal: | January to March 2021 |
| • Notification of Outcome: | April/May 2021 |
| • Contracts and Payments ¹ : | May to December 2021 |

3. Grant Limits

60% Dependency

Income received from the Department, either directly or indirectly, must not exceed 60% of the overall organisational income of the applicant. This should be calculated based on an average of the last two years accounts and excludes in-kind income. The grant sought should not exceed this.

Minimum and Maximum Available Grants

The minimum annual grant is €50,000 and maximum annual grant is €400,000, subject to the limit of 60% dependency on the Department.

¹ On fulfilment of conditions and receipt of satisfactory reports on previous projects.

Percentage Contribution

The Department will contribute a minimum of 30% and a maximum of 70% of annual project costs. In-kind contributions and costs should not be considered co-funding. For Year One, the co-funding must already be either available or committed to the organisation and evidence of this must be provided. The co-funding must not either directly or indirectly, be sourced from the Department. For Years Two and Three (if applicable), the organisation must provide a guarantee that the co-funding will be available.

Indirect Costs

The Department will support indirect costs up to a maximum of 10% of the annual CSF grant. Indirect costs are costs in support of project objectives but not necessarily incurred for the project and as such cannot be readily associated with the project, e.g. these may include administration, financial services and travel and subsistence.

Ineligible Expenditure

The following activities are ineligible for CSF support:

- Activities which may discriminate against any groups or persons on the basis of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, etc.
- Activities in contravention of international human rights norms and standards
- Core funding²
- Development Education activities in Ireland³
- Evangelisation or proselytisation
- Fundraising
- Individual or family sponsorship
- Interventions that are primarily welfare support(s)
- Major infrastructural schemes
- Membership of an umbrella or representative body
- Organisational development
- Public awareness in Ireland
- Retrospective Expenditure (i.e. costs incurred prior to the project start date agreed with the Department)
- Standalone activities that are not part of a wider project
- Study or research fellowships (excluding short-duration training of staff, partners and beneficiaries within the region)
- Response to sudden-onset acute emergencies (*however, interventions for chronic or protracted humanitarian crises are eligible*)

² The Civil Society Fund is designed to provide project funding, not institutional core support.

³ Separate grants are available for Development Education within Ireland (understood as an educational process which aims to increase public awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world).

4. Eligibility

The following eligibility criteria apply:

- 1. Country of Registration:** The applicant organisation must be either Irish, or a non-Irish organisation which has received an invitation to apply for funding.
- 2. Charitable Status:** Irish applicant organisations must hold a Registered Charity Number for a minimum of two years as of 5 October 2020. International NGOs must be in receipt of a relevant invitation from the Civil Society Fund and must also be registered as charities in the countries of their headquarters since 5 October 2018.
- 3. Organisation Focus:** Irish applicant organisations must have ongoing operations in Ireland that relate to the direct management and oversight of overseas development projects. International NGOs must have HQ operations that include responsibilities for the direct management and/or oversight of overseas development projects. Missionary organisations and religious orders are not eligible to apply and should instead contact [Misean Cara](#).
- 4. Independence and Added Value:** If the organisation is part of a larger international family, it must have its own constitution or governance document and an independent board of trustees (i.e. the board must be locally appointed and be free and able to make independent decisions on strategic and operational issues).
- 5. Tax Clearance Certificate:** Irish organisations must submit a Tax Clearance Certificate with the Eligibility Form. Non-Irish organisations must provide an equivalent assurance.
- 6. Funding Status:** Applications cannot be accepted from any organisations which have been approved by the Department to receive a grant in 2021 from either the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Civil Society Fund or Programme Grant.
- 7. Focus of Work:** The areas of intervention by the organisation must meet the [OECD Development Assistance Committee \(DAC\) definition of Official Development Assistance](#) and take place in a country or countries classified by the OECD DAC as eligible for assistance.
- 8. Accounts:** The Eligibility Form should be accompanied by full audited accounts for the two financial years prior to application⁴. Accounts must also be available on the organisation's website prior to the eligibility deadline.

⁴ The organisation's own financial year can be used.

9. Record of Compliance: Applicants with a record of non-compliance with the terms of Department contract(s) may not be considered for funding.

10. Safeguarding: Applicants must have policies and procedures in place to protect vulnerable and young adults, children⁵, beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, as relevant. Copies of these policies should be submitted along with the Eligibility Form. If it is intended to on-grant some or all of the CSF support to a partner organisation, these must also have relevant policies and procedures in place and copies of these should also be submitted with the Eligibility Form.

Organisations that consider that they meet the above criteria can now request Eligibility Forms by contacting civilsocietyfunding@dfa.ie. The completed Eligibility Form, Tax Clearance Certificate, accounts for the past two years and safeguarding policies should be submitted to civilsocietyfunding@dfa.ie **by 5pm on Monday, 5 October 2020**. *Please note that forms which are received after this deadline cannot be considered.* Eligibility decisions will be communicated in mid October to each relevant organisation and application forms will issue to eligible organisations.

Eligibility forms should be completed in respect of the applicant organisation only. Where the organisation is part of a consortium, the form should be completed by the lead organisation. It is acceptable if the proposed project, requested grant and duration differ from that submitted in the subsequent Application Form.

5. Application Process

The application form will consist of six main sections and four annexes. The six main sections will be as follows:

1. Project Summary
2. Organisation Details and Capacity to Operate in Partnership with the Department
3. Evidence of Change
4. Proposed Project
5. Project Partners
6. Additional Information and Clarifications (optional)

The four annexes are equally as important and should be presented in the Excel format provided:

⁵ Irish NGOs which engage, either directly or indirectly, with children must have relevant policies which are compliant with the [Children First Act 2015](#) and non-Irish NGOs must have equivalent policies and procedures in place.

1. Results Framework
2. Budget
3. Estimated Flow of Funds
4. [OECD DAC Codes](#)

An organisation may submit only one application to the Civil Society Fund. Where a consortium of organisations wishes to apply, the application should be completed in respect of the lead organisation with the other organisations reflected as partners. It is acceptable if the proposed project, requested grant amount and duration differ from that set out in the Eligibility Form. Applications will be accepted by e-mail to civilsocietyfunding@dfa.ie until **5pm on Friday, 8 January 2021**. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

The application form will include guidance for completion. Please ensure that the content of the application form is clear and complete as the Department will not seek further information during the appraisal process. Please carefully read the guidance associated with the application form. Information provided in the application form is subject to verification and grant offers may be withdrawn if any information is found to be inaccurate or unsubstantiated.

Questions should be sent to civilsocietyfunding@dfa.ie. If necessary, a FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) document will be made available at www.irishaid.ie.

Please note that any attempt to either directly or indirectly influence the outcome of the decision-making process in relation to grant applications will result in disqualification. As such, please ensure that no representative of your organisation seeks individual meetings with any representative of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in connection with the application once the Call for Applications issues.

6. Appraisal and Approval Process

Organisations will need to reach a minimum threshold in each of the following five areas in order to be recommended for funding:

1. Evidence of a clear logic of intervention
2. Evidence of capacity to deliver results
3. Coherence with [A Better World](#)
4. Evidence that the organisation operates from a sound strategic, policy and financial basis
5. Governance and financial oversight

Organisations will be informed of the outcome of the appraisal process in writing. Prior to the signature of contracts and payment of grants, successful organisations will be required to meet a number of conditions, including but not limited to, the receipt of satisfactory reports on previous projects and submission of all policies and strategies referenced in the application form, a revised budget, flow of funds, results framework and OECD DAC Codes relevant to the project. As such, the grant offer should be considered provisional until the Department confirms that the relevant conditions have been met.

7. Contracts and Payments

The Memorandum of Understanding and Contract will be entered into with the applicant organisation only and that organisation will be accountable to the Department for the oversight and administration of the grant. In that regard, the organisation under contract must have a significant role in the oversight and management of the CSF grant. The Department's primary engagement will be with a nominated staff member of the organisation under contract. The Department will not directly engage with any third party, including offices in other countries or partner organisations.

The Memorandum of Understanding may include agreed benchmarks to be achieved by the organisations over the period of the project. The contract will include obligations regarding the management, delivery and monitoring and evaluation of the project. It will also include requirements regarding co-funding, communication, monitoring and reporting.

8. Standards

Grant Funding Principles

Organisations should be aware of the requirements of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform circular (13/2014) relating to the [Management of and Accountability of Grants](#). Four principles apply to organisations which are in receipt of grants from public funds: clarity, governance, value for money and fairness.

Legislation

Organisations are expected to ensure that all applicable laws, statutes and regulations are complied with. For Irish offices, this includes, but is not limited to the [Charities Act 2009](#); the [Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015](#); the [Criminal Justice \(Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Act 2010](#) as amended by the [Criminal Justice Act 2013](#); and the [Children's First Act 2015](#) and the associated [2017 Guidance](#) as well as relevant legislation in countries of operation. Non-Irish NGOs are also expected to adhere to relevant legislation in all countries of operation, including headquarters.

Best Practice

Organisations are expected to adhere to the guidance from the Irish Charities Regulatory Authority, including the [Governance Code](#) and the guidance on [Managing Conflicts of Interest](#), [the Promotion of Political Causes](#), [Internal Financial Control](#), [Fundraising from the Public](#) and [Charity Trustees](#).

It is expected that all organisations will follow the [Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages](#). Organisations are also expected to make every reasonable effort to ensure safety of their staff and conform to the Department's [Guidelines for NGO Professional Safety and Security Risk Management](#). Where relevant, organisations are also expected to adhere to [Comhlámh's Code of Good Practice for Volunteer Sending Agencies](#).

Organisations implementing humanitarian interventions should demonstrate adherence to humanitarian standards including [Sphere and Core Humanitarian Standard \(CHS\) on Quality and Accountability](#). It is also recommended that organisations follow the minimum standards suggested in the [CHS Alliance Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Implementation Handbook](#).

Monitoring and Evaluation

Where the CSF grant is on-granted to implementing organisations, the onus is on the organisation under contract with the Department to satisfy itself as to the suitability of the implementing partner organisation to properly implement the project and manage the funds. The organisation under contract with the Department should adequately monitor project implementation. It is important that the Results Framework and budget agreed with the Department is adhered to. Any required changes must be agreed in advance by the Department. Organisations may be subject to field monitoring visits by representatives of the Department. These monitoring visits will be covered by terms of reference, with a focus on monitoring the achievement of results.

Organisations in receipt of annual grants of €200,000 or over should conduct an independent final evaluation of the programme, in line with good development practice.

Reporting

Each organisation will report on progress towards expected results annually in line with Monitoring and Reporting Guidelines which will be shared in advance of signature of the Memorandum of Understanding and Contract. Reports will include project progress, analysis of results, lesson learning and governance and organisational updates. Reports must also be accompanied by the most recent annual accounts and a Certificate of Assurance signed by both a board member and a senior member of staff confirming that the Department grant has been properly accounted for.

9. Freedom of Information

Documents, including application forms and annexes, any report submitted to the Department, any other written communication with the Department and any records which the Department may generate about the applicant organisation are immediately considered records of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and as such, are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014.