

Small Grants Program

Selection Criteria

The Small Grants Program aims to foster positive change by supporting community-driven initiatives that enhance dispute resolution, community cohesion, local civil society organizations, sustainable development, empowerment of marginalized groups. Specifically, this program seeks to promote peacebuilding and reconciliation within communities through effective conflict resolution strategies, mediation programs, and restorative justice practices. Additionally, it aims to enhance community cohesion by funding cultural, educational, and recreational programs, as well as community dialogues and forums that address local issues and foster a sense of belonging. The program also supports initiatives that require a financial investment to resolve longstanding disputes, such as constructing necessary infrastructure to address water shortages or repairing bridges to reconnect isolated communities. By funding these types of projects, the program seeks to address practical issues that contribute to ongoing conflicts, ultimately promoting lasting solutions and improving community relations.

Support for local civil society organizations is another key objective, providing resources to grassroots organizations to address local needs, strengthen their capacity through training and networking, and promote advocacy efforts. The program also emphasizes promoting sustainable development by backing initiatives focused on environmental sustainability, such as sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, waste management, and conservation.

Empowering marginalized groups is critical, offering funding for projects that support vulnerable populations, including women, youth, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities. This includes promoting social inclusion, equal opportunities through education, skills training, and economic empowerment, and protecting the rights of marginalized communities. Finally, the program encourages innovation in community-based projects by funding creative approaches to solving community problems, supporting pilot projects, and leveraging technology to address social, economic, and environmental challenges. By supporting these diverse initiatives, the Small Grants Program seeks to create lasting positive impacts, fostering environments where all community members can thrive.

- **Eligibility Criteria:**

1. **Applicant Profile:**

- **Registered Non-Profit Organizations, Community Groups, or Local Civil Society Organizations:** Eligible applicants must be officially registered entities, including non-profit organizations that operate for public benefit and civil society organizations that advance social, political, or environmental causes. Proper registration ensures legal operation and recognition by local authorities. Local initiatives from community groups, such as women's groups, youth groups, and other informal collectives, are also encouraged to apply, even if they have limited formal experience, as long as their initiatives demonstrate sustainability and potential for long-term impact.
- **Commitment to Community Betterment and Conflict Resolution:** Applicants must demonstrate a strong commitment to the betterment of their community, particularly in areas related to conflict resolution, access to justice, and the promotion of social cohesion. Projects aimed at resolving local disputes, improving legal awareness, and fostering mutual respect and cooperation are highly encouraged.

2. **Project Relevance:**

- **Alignment with Program Objectives:** Projects must align with the program's objectives, including dispute resolution, community cohesion, support for civil society, sustainable development, empowerment, and innovation.
- **Clearly Defined Goals and Outcomes:** Proposals should have clear, specific, and measurable goals and outcomes.
- **Target Population and Geographic Focus:** Projects should clearly identify the target population and focus on specified regions.

3. **Impact Potential:**

- **Significant Positive Impact:** Projects should have the potential to create significant positive impacts on the community.
- **Clear Metrics for Success:** Proposals should include clear metrics for measuring success and impact.
- **Sustainability:** Projects should demonstrate the potential for sustainability beyond the grant period.

4. **Project Design:**

- **Well-Structured and Feasible Plan:** Projects should have a well-structured and feasible plan with a detailed timeline and achievable milestones.
- **Comprehensive Budget:** Proposals should include a comprehensive budget with reasonable and justified costs.

5. **Innovation and Creativity:**

- **Innovative Approaches:** Projects should demonstrate innovative approaches to addressing community issues.
- **Scalability and Replicability:** Creative solutions that can be scaled or replicated in other communities are encouraged.

6. Collaboration and Partnerships:

- **Engagement with Local Stakeholders:** Projects should engage local stakeholders, including community members, other NGOs, and local authorities.
- **Partnerships:** Proposals should include partnerships that enhance project effectiveness and sustainability.

7. Capacity and Expertise:

- **Capacity to Implement Projects:** While demonstrated expertise in the project area is advantageous, we also welcome applications from organizations with less experience, particularly if they show strong community ties and commitment. AWEK is planning to provide capacity-building support, including project management training and ongoing mentorship, to help selected organizations successfully implement their projects.

8. Sustainability and Long-Term Impact:

- **Sustaining Outcomes:** Proposals should include plans for sustaining project outcomes after the grant period.
- **Additional Funding Strategies:** Strategies for securing additional funding if necessary should be outlined.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- **Robust Plan:** Proposals should include a robust monitoring and evaluation plan to track progress and outcomes.
- **Learning and Adapting:** Mechanisms for learning and adapting based on project performance should be included.

10. Risk Management:

- **Identification of Risks:** Potential risks and challenges should be identified.
- **Mitigation Strategies:** Proposals should include mitigation strategies to address identified risks.

• **Additional Considerations:**

1. Community Involvement:

- **Active Involvement:** Projects should actively involve community members in planning and implementation.
- **Reflecting Community Needs:** Projects should reflect the needs and priorities of the local community.

2. Gender and Inclusion:

- **Gender Equality and Inclusion:** Proposals should demonstrate a commitment to gender equality and the inclusion of marginalized groups.
- **Participation of Vulnerable Populations:** Specific strategies to ensure the participation and benefit of women, youth, and other vulnerable populations should be included.

3. Environmental Sustainability:

- **Environmental Impact:** Projects should consider environmental impacts and promote sustainability.
- **Environmental Conservation:** Initiatives that contribute to environmental conservation and resilience are encouraged.

Application Process:

1. Proposal Submission:

- To apply for the Small Grants Program, applicants need to submit a complete application form along with a detailed project proposal. The proposal should clearly outline the project's objectives, methodology, budget, and timeline. Additionally, applicants should include supporting documents such as proof of organizational registration and reports from previous projects, if available. Proposals can be submitted in three languages: Dari, Pashtu, and English.
- We understand that some local community groups and small civil society organizations may need assistance in preparing their proposals. Therefore, we encourage simple and straightforward submissions and are available to provide support during the application process. Furthermore, AWEK is committed to capacity strengthening for selected organizations, offering training and ongoing support in areas such as project management, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation. This ensures that organizations not only successfully implement their projects but also build lasting capabilities for future initiatives.

2. Review and Evaluation:

- **Initial Screening:** Proposals will undergo an initial screening for eligibility.
- **Detailed Evaluation:** A selection committee will conduct a detailed evaluation based on the criteria outlined above.

3. Interviews and Site Visits:

- **Interviews:** Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed.
- **Site Visits:** Site visits will be conducted for projects with significant community involvement or logistical considerations.

4. Final Selection:

- **Selection Committee:** The final decision on grant awards will be made by a selection committee composed of at least five members, including representatives from TLO and two partners: the Afghan Women's Educational Center (AWEK) and the Sanayee Development Organization (SDO). The diverse composition of the committee ensures a fair and thorough evaluation process, incorporating various perspectives and expertise.

5. Grant Agreement and Disbursement:

- **Grant Agreement:** Successful applicants will sign a grant agreement outlining the terms and conditions.
- **Disbursement:** Funds will be disbursed according to the agreed schedule.

6. Timeline:

- **Submission Deadline:** Will be decided after approval of selection criteria
 - **Review Period:** Will be decided after approval of selection criteria
 - **Interviews and Site Visits:** Will be decided after approval of selection criteria
 - **Final Decision Announcement:** Will be decided after approval of selection criteria
7. **Contact Information and Support:**
- For any questions or assistance during the application process, please contact (will be added later).
8. **Conflict of Interest Policy:**
- Members of the selection committee are required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest and recuse themselves from evaluating applications where a conflict may arise.
9. **Compliance:**
- All projects must adhere to relevant legal and ethical standards, including anti-corruption policies and local regulations.
10. **Reporting Requirements:**
- Successful applicants must submit regular progress reports, financial statements, and a final evaluation report as outlined in the grant agreement.
- **Budget Considerations:**
 - **Budget Allocation per Project:** The minimum amount per project is Euro 1,000, and the maximum amount is Euro 3,000 (75,000-227,000 AFN). Applicants are encouraged to propose budgets that are realistic and aligned with the scope and scale of their projects.