

UNDEF

The United Nations
Democracy Fund



FNUD

Fonds des Nations Unies
pour la démocratie

United Nations Democracy Fund
Project Proposal Guidelines
12th Round of Funding

20 November – 20 December 2017

Summary

The present guidelines describe the application procedure for the Twelfth 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 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 supports projects that strengthen the voice of civil society, promote human rights, and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes. The large majority of UNDEF funds go to local civil society organizations -- both in the transition and consolidation phases of democratization. In this way, UNDEF plays a novel and unique role in complementing the UN's other, more traditional work -- the work with Governments -- to strengthen democratic governance around the world.

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.

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).

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

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/apply-funding>.

4. Application Procedure

4.1 Schedule (indicative)

2017

20 November	Call for Project proposals Online Project Proposal System opened
20 December	Deadline for Project proposals submission Online Project Proposal System closed

2018

Mid-February	UNDEF Office to compile the “long short-list”
Mid-March	UNDEF Programme Consultative Group (PCG) ² & UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) to provide comments
Early May	UNDEF’s Advisory Board ³ to recommend short-list
Early May	UNDEF informs Permanent Missions of projects on short list
Early June	UNDEF submits recommended short list to Secretary-General for approval
Mid-June	Request to short-listed applicants to draft detailed project documents
July-August	Expected deadline for submission of detailed project documents
September	Project document negotiations begin between applicants and UNDEF office
Sept.-Dec.	First project documents finalized, first disbursements and projects start

² <http://www.un.org/democracyfund/programme-consultative-group>

³ <http://www.un.org/democracyfund/advisory-board-0>

4.2 Call for Project Proposal

The Twelfth Round of UNDEF Funding will begin when the call for project proposals is launched on 20 **November 2017**. The deadline to submit project proposals will be **20 December 2017**. 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. 20 November – 20 December 2017. UNDEF 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, in consultation with the Fund’s Programme Consultative Group (PCG) and the United Nations Resident Coordinator System, reviewed and short-listed 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 new projects to be funded will be considered “approvals in principle”.

By the end of June 2018, **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

Short-listed applicants should submit a completed project document based on the original project proposal within 4 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.

Project documents should be based in general on the original project proposals submitted, and should follow the UNDEF format as explained in the 12th 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 11th Round Project Document Guidelines for an overview of the information required on the UNDEF website: <http://www.un.org/democracyfund/information-grantees>

Project documents will undergo a detailed review and if necessary negotiations will take place to ensure compliance with UNDEF's requirements. Final approval of the project prior to the first disbursement will only be granted after clearance of the full project document.

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.

Please visit the UNDEF website at the end of June 2018.

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

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 80% of its programmable resources in each funding round for projects taking place in one country and will allocate no more than 20% 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 two years. Grants will not necessarily match the full amounts applied for. Grant allocations will be of a minimum of US\$100,000 and **not exceed US\$300,000** for any given project. Applicants must request an amount within this range. 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. Eligible applicants must be duly constituted nationally or internationally and have legal status.

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 democracy⁴
- (2) **Independent and Constitutional Bodies,**
- (3) **Global and Regional inter-government bodies, organizations and associations** other than the United Nations

UNDEF's priority is Civil Society Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (see 1 above). The organization must be legally constituted. UN accreditation is not a prerequisite to apply for UNDEF funding. UNDEF encourages local CSO's to submit high quality project proposals.

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.

⁴ 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

5.5 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.

Proposals are subject to a highly rigorous and competitive selection process, with fewer than two per cent chosen for funding. Projects fall under one or more of eight main areas:

- Gender equality
- Community activism
- Rule of law and human rights
- Youth engagement
- Strengthening civil society interaction with Government
- Media and freedom of information
- Tools for knowledge
- Electoral processes

In this Round, UNDEF particularly welcomes proposals in the areas of gender; rule of law; media; or electoral processes focusing on elections scheduled for 2020 at the earliest.

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 programs and activities
- Projects focused primarily on research
- Projects that will be co-financed with other donors.

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.

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 UNDEF will add 10 % to any grant in order to cover monitoring and evaluation costs. This added amount will not be disbursed to the grantee, but retained by UNDEF from the outset. 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.

Proposals 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.

All project proposals must allow for a rigorous monitoring and evaluation strategy that will be further detailed in the project document. Further monitoring and reporting details will be provided to successful applicants through the Project Document Guidelines.

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 Online 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 Online Project Proposal System**. 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**. 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 and the budget by Input 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 October 2018 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 drafting of a proposal to begin and the ability to save a project proposal to continue at a later point. When a project proposal is saved for the first time, an email will be sent to inform the applicant that the project proposal has yet to be submitted and will include instructions on how to log into the system to continue working on a project proposal prior to submission. If log in credentials are lost, UNDEF is unable to retrieve this information.

Be careful!
Saving your project proposal does not mean it has been submitted to UNDEF.

A project proposal is submitted to UNDEF once the applicant clicks the “Submit” button on top of the form. A confirmation email will be sent by the system soon after submission of a project proposal. This email will contain the receipt number of the project proposal. Should this email not be received within 48 hours of submission, contact UNDEF at democracyfund@un.org.

Applicants may view but not edit a project proposal once it has been submitted. Applicants will be able to view submitted project proposal only while the application period is open. **For this reason, UNDEF recommends applicants keep a copy of all submitted project proposals.** UNDEF will not send submitted project proposals back to applicants.

Contents of Project Proposal Application Form

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

PORTAL REGISTRATION

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

PROJECT PROPOSAL APPLICATION

1. Applicant Information

1. Organization Name (filled out automatically by the portal)
2. Organization Acronym (filled out automatically by the portal)
3. Street Address
4. City
5. State/Province
6. Zip/Postal Code
7. Country
8. Website/Social Media Page(s)
9. Organizational Acronym (filled out automatically by the portal)
10. Type of Applicant (choose from the dropdown menu)
11. First Time or Prior Applicant/ obtained funding in earlier UNDEF rounds (choose from the menu)
12. Annual Expenditure (choose from the dropdown menu)
13. Number of Staff (choose from the dropdown menu)
14. Year of Legal Constitution (max 650 characters)
15. Organizations vision (max 650 characters)
16. Prior Experience of your organization (max 650 characters)
17. Prior Experience of Your Organization with the UN (max 500 characters)

18. Affiliation (max 500 characters)
19. Other Grants (max 255 characters)
20. UNDEF Lessons Learned (copy/paste links of lessons accessed from <https://www.undeflessonslearned.org>)
21. Prefix, Name, Title and Phone and Email of Head of the Organization
22. Prefix, Name, Title and Phone and Email of Key Contact (NOTE: email of key contact must be the same as the email used for portal registration)

2. Project Proposal Information

1. Project Title
2. Project Scale (choose either *local (country)*, *regional*, or *global* from the dropdown menu)
3. Project country (if local project choose a country from the dropdown menu)
4. Specific region and specific countries (if regional project)
5. Project Summary (max 1000 characters)
6. Requested Grant Amount
7. Project Focus Area (choose one from the dropdown menu)
8. Previous Initiatives (max 500 characters)
9. Innovation (max 500 characters)

3. Project Proposal Description

1. Democratic Context (max 500 characters)
2. Problem Analysis (problem identification and its underlying causes) (max 1500 characters)
3. Project Beneficiary (choose from the dropdown menu)
4. Project Objective (max 255 characters)
5. Outcomes (max 260 characters)
6. Performance Indicators (max 400 characters)
7. Outputs (max 1000 characters)
8. Key Activities (max 600 characters)
9. Monitoring and Evaluation (max 500 characters)
10. Sustainability (max 500 characters)
11. Gender Considerations (choose from the dropdown menu and explain) (max 500 characters)
12. Marginalized or Vulnerable Groups (choose from the dropdown menu and explain) (max 500 characters)
13. Why UNDEF? (max 300 characters)

4. Partner Information (if applicable)

1. Proposed implementing partner(s) (if any)

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 (budget A) and by Input (budget B).
- All budget amounts should be expressed in US dollars and should contain rounded figures to the nearest thousand dollars only.
- **The total project cost (TPC) amounts in budgets A and B should be identical, and cannot exceed USD 300,000**
- Project support costs (staff, office rent, electricity/internet etc.) should remain a **modest proportion** of the budget (no more than 20%). These costs must be clearly indicated under the different budget line of the Budget by input (“Staff/Personnel costs” and “Office and Administration costs”).

A) Sample UNDEF Budget by Output **

▼ Project Budget by Output

Output Descriptions:

Output 1: e.g. 1.1 Awareness raised among youth on media role during elections
 Output 2: e.g. 1.2 Capacities of targeted media outlets on fair electoral reporting and voter education increased
 Output 3: e.g. 2.1 Effective dialogue opened between youth and media outlets
 Output 4: e.g. 2.2 Joint initiatives undertaken by youth and media outlets
 Output 5: e.g. 3.1 Mechanism for Electoral Commission to consult with youth leaders and key media outlets established
 Output 6: e.g. 3.2 Political Parties commit to fair use of the media during elections

Important: salaries and other support costs such as office rent, equipment, bank fees or audit are not considered as outputs. Please include a pro-rated amount of such costs in each output listed below.

Output 1 <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	Output 2 <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
1 - Amount in US\$ <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	2 - Amount in US\$ <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Output 3 <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	Output 4 <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
3 - Amount in US\$ <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	4 - Amount in US\$ <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Output 5 <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	Output 6 <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
5 - Amount in US\$ <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	6 - Amount in US\$ <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Output 7 <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	Output 8 <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
7 - Amount in US\$ <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	8 - Amount in US\$ <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Output 9 <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	Output 10 <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
9 - Amount in US\$ <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	10 - Amount in US\$ <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Total Project Costs (TPC) <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	

* The total grant amounts of the budgets by Output and by Input should be the same and correspond to the grant amount requested in section 2 and cannot exceed USD 300,000.

** In the budget by Output the project support costs (salaries and miscellaneous etc.) should be built-in i.e. a pro-rated amount of the support cost should be included in each output.

*** Total Project Costs (TPC) will be populated automatically by the portal

B) Sample UNDEF Budget by Input**

▼ Project Budget by Input

Professional project personnel, administrative personnel and all other staff costs for general project management

Staff/Personnel Costs - Amount in US\$

Printed materials, commodities, supplies and stationary for project and office activities such as training and other events.

Supplies - Amount in US \$

IT equipment, project support equipment (e.g. TV, radio equipment, printer)

Equipment/Furniture - Amount in US\$

Transportation and per diem (meals and accommodation) for project management team and participants traveling to activities (e.g. workshops or training sessions).

Travel - Amount in US\$

Commercial/consultancy services, translation, providers, etc.

Contractual services/consultants - Amount in US\$

Venue Hire, Meals during event, Refreshment and other activity-based related costs

Direct Activity Costs

Small sub-grants to beneficiaries and local partner organizations.

Transfers/Grants - Amount in US \$

Office rent, utilities, audit and bank fees, miscellaneous and other office related costs

Office and Administration Costs

Certification of reports on the use of funds by an independent auditor/accountant

Audit - Amount in US\$

Total Project Costs (TPC)

* The total grant amounts of the budgets by Output and by Input should be the same and correspond to the grant amount requested in section 2 and cannot exceed USD 300,000.

**Total Project Costs (TPC) will be filled in automatically by the portal

Annex II - Commitments

All applicants will be requested to tick five boxes committing to:

- ✓ To develop a project by the established deadline following the “UNDEF Project Document Guidelines”
- ✓ Not 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).
- ✓ To have statutes/by-laws providing for a transparent process of decision making, elections of officers and members of the Board; the Applicant Organisation has authority to speak for its members through its authorized representatives identified above.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Submit annual activity reports and audited financial statements of previous two years upon request by UNDEF.

UNDEF reserves the right to terminate the development of a project document should, in UNDEF’s view, the applying organisation fail to display satisfactory project design capacity or commitment.