Robert Carr Fund
Request for Proposals 2021
Q&As (Edition II, 3 May 2021)

General questions

Added on 20 April 2021

Q. Is this a recurring RFP? What is the funding cycle?

Yes, generally the Robert Carr Fund (RCF) distributes its funding every 3 years. The Fund is currently in the 2019-2021 cycle and the 2021 RFP concerns the 2022-2024 cycle.

Q. How many applications are you going to fund through this RFP?

RCF currently funds 24 grantees (which equals 68 networks). RCF would aim to fund a similar number of grantees during 2022-2024, but this will depend on the level of funding available, the number of applications received and amounts requested. Actual funding amounts are subject to pending donor commitments, and on the number of successful applications and therefore any amount awarded may be less than which the applicant applied for. Applicants should take this adjustment of awarded amount into consideration when applying and have a clear plan on how to address any shortfall in resources.

Request for Proposals 2021

Chapter 3: Eligibility and Chapter 4: Definitions and further explanation of key terms

Added on 20 April 2021

Q. Are there any changes to the eligibility criteria compared to previous rounds?

Technically the eligibility criteria remain the same as in previous rounds but have been further refined (please see Chapter 4: Definitions and further explanation of key terms). One adjustment to take note of under this RFP is that newly formed networks - emerging networks - (less than 2 years of existence) are encouraged to apply (please see Chapter 6 Funding Priorities).

Inadequately Served Populations (ISPs)

Added on 20 April 2021

Q. Do ISPs include people living with disabilities?

While the Fund uses a standard definition for ISPs, it recognizes that there is tremendous diversity of identity and experience even within these groups. Other factors, including gender, race and ethnicity, social and/or economic status and ability/disability status including mental health, can significantly influence rights and access to care even within the same ISP.

In the application form you will have the possibility to select - next to the ISPs listed in the definition - '*Other*' and you will be asked to provide an explanation for the population which is the focus of your application as to why they can be considered an ISP, in the sense that they face increased vulnerability to HIV and barriers to accessing services.

Q. Do ISPs include children and adolescents living with HIV from 01-19?

At RCF and in this RFP Youth is defined from 18-30.

However in the application form you will have the possibility to select - next to the ISPs listed in the definition - '*Other*' and you will be asked to provide an explanation for the population which is the focus of your application as to why they can be considered an ISP, in the sense that they face increased vulnerability to HIV and barriers to accessing services.

Q. Do TB communities fall under ISPs?

Further to its mission statement (please see RCF Strategic Plan 2020-2024) '*The Robert Carr Fund invests in global and regional civil society networks to sustain and expand the role of inadequately served populations in the **HIV response [...]**'* however as described in the Strategic Plan 'the Fund must also collaborate with other health movements to respond to ISPs' needs – including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), tuberculosis (TB), hepatitis C virus (HCV) and other rights-related movements, such as the drive for universal health coverage (UHC)'.

In the application form you will have the possibility to select - next to the ISPs listed in the definition - 'Other' and you will be asked to provide an explanation for the population which is the focus of your application as to why they can be considered an ISP, in the sense that they face increased vulnerability to HIV and barriers to accessing services.

Q. What do you mean by: Depending on the dynamic of the HIV epidemic and the legal status of these populations, ISPs may also include women and girls?

Practically this means that you will have to specify in the application why they can be considered ISP depending on the dynamic of the epidemic. You will be asked to provide an explanation for the population which is the focus of your application as to why they can be considered an ISP, in the sense that they face increased vulnerability to HIV and barriers to accessing services.

ISP-led networks

Added on 20 April 2021

Q. Is the possibility to award non-ISP led applicants new from the last call. If so why?

No networks which are not led by ISPs have always been eligible. However through RCFs new mission statement ISP-led networks have now been prioritized.

RCF mission statement: '*The Robert Carr Fund invests in global and regional civil society networks to sustain and expand the role of inadequately served populations in the HIV response, with a commitment to prioritize ISP-led networks for funding to uphold rights, remove barriers to accessing services, and to contribute to sustainable financial investment in communities and programming' (please see Strategic Plan 2020-2024)*.

Notwithstanding its commitment to prioritizing ISP-led networks in this Request for Proposals, networks which are not led by ISPs are also eligible. The Robert Carr Fund recognizes that there are regions where the ability of other ISPs to meet, organize and register organizations may be constrained by legal, political or other barriers. RCF also recognizes that in some contexts some ISP groups experience greater challenges to ISP leadership e.g. prisoners, migrants and children. However, where ISP leadership exists, these networks will be prioritized. Furthermore, non-ISP led networks are also eligible but must demonstrate meaningful engagement of ISPs in the work of the organization.

Q. You indicate in the RFP 'non-ISP led networks are also eligible but must demonstrate meaningful engagement of ISPs in the work of the organization' – what do you mean with meaningful engagement of ISPs?

RCF recognizes that in some contexts certain ISP groups experience greater challenges to ISP leadership e.g. people in prisons and other closed settings, migrants and children. Nevertheless applicants should demonstrate meaningful ways of engaging populations that face these challenges in their governance (e.g. setting up a Youth Board, include former people in prisons or other closed settings and migrants in the Board), programming and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.

Network and Consortia

Added on 20 April 2021

Q. Are there any changes to the definitions of networks and consortia in this RFP compared to previous RFPs?

No the definitions for networks and consortia remain the same. However they have been further nuanced and definitions for civil society networks and ISP-led networks have been introduced for the first time (please see Chapter 4: Definitions and further explanation of key terms).

Q. Where can we find the definitions?

For definitions please see Chapter 4: Definitions and further explanation of key terms.

Applicants considering applying as a consortium are strongly encouraged to carefully review sample guidance on key elements of strong performance of consortia (based on the analysis of previous consortia performance) or specific challenges, related to the consortia management – see Annex 2 "Lessons Learnt from Consortia Building and Management".

Q. Can you give a definition of 'emerging networks'? Can it be not officially registered but its establishment is proven by protocols (minutes) of the meetings?

An emerging regional and/or global network is a network which has been in existence and operation for less than two years. It may not be (currently) registered but its establishment can be proven through minutes, a strategy, website presence or an announcement by founding members.

Q. What is the difference between a consortium and a consortium of networks and which one of the two is eligible for funding?

A Consortium can be a Consortium of networks or a Consortium with other partners - where other types of agencies or organizations with specific expertise may join (e.g. a human rights/legal organization). Both types of Consortia are eligible however the number of regional/global networks, as defined by the RCF, in a Consortium must be equal to or over 50% of Consortia membership (e.g. in a Consortium with 2 members at least one member must meet the regional/global network definition as defined by RCF).

Q. In order to meet the criteria of networks and consortia: does it mean that a national organization domiciled in country A must reach out and create relationships with organizations in country B and C and develop a joint proposal? / Can country CSOs apply? / Can a country network take the lead and work with 3 more country networks/informal groups to form a Consortium? / Can a single organisation with different projects apply?

RCF funds regional and global networks and Consortia. Cross border/multi-country collaborations between national networks or organizations are not eligible. National networks (working and having members in one country) are also not eligible for funding. Aggregates of projects, individuals or professional associations are also not eligible for funding.

In order for a grantee to claim geographical presence or coverage in a region, it must: (1) conduct activities directed at a regional body (e.g. African Union or European Union etc. or a regional process (e.g. Global Fund multi-country dialogue or a regional consultation or a campaign targeting at least 3 countries in that region etc.); AND/OR (2) conduct a sequence of activities over the course of one year in at least 3 countries in the region; AND/OR (3) have active national network members operational in at least 3 countries in the region.

The number of regional/global networks, as defined by the RCF, in a Consortium must be equal to or over 50% of Consortia membership (e.g. in a Consortium with 2 members at least one member must meet the regional/global network definition as defined by RCF)

Q. Does being a global and regional network apply just to the lead organization or to all members of the consortium?

The Robert Carr Fund considers a consortium of networks to be a network-led group of networks, where other types of agencies or organizations with specific expertise may join (e.g. a human rights/legal organization). Thus the Consortium must be led by a regional/global network as defined by the RCF. Further, the number of regional/global networks, as defined by the RCF, in a Consortium must be equal to or over 50% of Consortia membership (e.g. in a Consortium with 2 members at least one member must meet the regional/global network definition as defined by RCF).

In the application form you will be asked to describe why the Consortium is composed of these members and what value each individual member of the consortium adds to the shared goal/objective of the proposal.

Q. Would a global coalition of ISPs be eligible?

The RCF Secretariat is unfortunately not in a position to comment or rule on the possible eligibility of individual organisations. Decisions on eligibility of applicants in line with the eligibility criteria will be made during the Administrative Screening phase of the review process.

Regions

Added on 20 April 2021

Q. Which regions are eligible to apply? / What about Asia/SE Asia/Asian countries?/ My question is East and Southern Africa covered too here?/ Asia/SEA Asia is not mentioned/ EECA region was not mentioned, are you seeking application from this region?/ Would an organization/network based within the EU and fulling the other criteria to be eligible?

All regions are eligible to apply.

As indicated in the RFP (please see Chapter 6: Funding Priorities for 2021 RFP) RCF welcomes applications which seek to address previously underserved regions (in the RFC portfolio). These include: Networks and/or consortia from the Middle East and North Africa, West Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Chapter 6: Funding Priorities for 2021 RFP

Added on 20 April 2021

Q. You indicate in the Funding Priorities to focus on 'A balance between continuity of the current grant portfolio, and support for emerging networks, especially those from previously under-represented populations or networks?' Can you say more about that balance and the balance between funding 'old' RCF grantees vs new RCF grantees?

Request for Proposals conducted by the RCF are open and competitive and all applications that meet the eligibility of this Request for Proposals are welcome. The RCF has set no percentage aside to seek for a balance between new and experienced RCF grantees. However, the Fund has highlighted ISPs and regions that are identified as underrepresented in the 2019-2021 funding cycle to encourage proposals from regional/global networks and consortia that represent these populations and regions with the aim to achieve more balance in the 2022-2024 funding cycle.

The Robert Carr Fund recognizes that programs to address the structural barriers to quality HIV services for ISPs, and to address the social enablers of the HIV response, including human rights, and to strengthen community-led responses, are complex. These programs rarely yield results in the short-term, thus requiring a longer-term investment. Therefore, the Fund is dedicated to continuity in its funding portfolio. At the same time, however, the Fund wishes to support emerging networks, especially those representing populations or regions which are currently under-represented in the funding portfolio.

The Robert Carr Fund has to balance its goal of supporting emerging networks with managing the range of risks and additional administrative support associated with doing so. Therefore, in this funding cycle, the Fund plans to provide a limited number of smaller grants (2-3) for networks which have been in existence for under two years.

Q. Should 'old' consortia include new networks? / Is it a condition?/ Is a preference given to Consortia that include new networks?

It is not a condition to bring in new networks. However, the Fund would encourage applicants to consider what they seek to achieve through their scope of work under this request and whether bringing in new voices/expertise would benefit the consortia at this time.

In addition to the Funding Priorities, the Fund desires to support emerging networks, especially those representing populations or regions which are currently identified as underrepresented in the 2019-2021 funding cycle. For this reason, more established networks and consortia are encouraged to consider in their scope of work activities which contribute towards supporting and/or establishing emerging networks whilst being mindful of their own organizational capacity to do so.

Q. Are there restrictions on the number of projects that you are going to support in one region? If in EECA region you have supported the project of one network, is it possible for other networks to get funding for activity implementation in the EECA region?

This RFP is an open competitive round and is seeking for a balanced portfolio. However RCF has no targets per region – this will also depend on the number of applications. RCF have in the past funded several networks in a region. It would be important to see how you are seeking to complement each other and you may also want to outline in the application what your complementary is and/or how you would envisage to work together.

Chapter 7: Participation in multiple applications

Added on 20 April 2021

Q. Can a fiscal host submit a separate application as well as network/consortium that it hosts?

Please note that a fiscal host is not considered to be the 'applicant' but is accountable under a project agreement if the applicant is successful in their proposal. A fiscal host can be a fiscal host for several networks. However, the rational for doing so should be provided under 3. Applicant Information of the application form.

Each network or consortium may submit one proposal. No single organization or network may lead more than one Robert Carr Fund-funded consortium.

However, networks may apply as participants in two consortia. If a global or regional network applies as part of two consortia, or both as part of a consortium and on its own, the rationale for doing so (e.g. drastically different sets of core needs or activities proposed under the two applications) must be clearly explained in both applications. Each applicant must demonstrate and guarantee that the same budget items are not applied for in separate applications.

Added on 3 May 2021

Q. An organization can lead one Consortium and be part of two additional ones – is that right?

No, an organization can only be part of two applications: an organization can apply as a single network and at the same time be part of a Consortium application, or an organization can be part of 2 different Consortia applications. If an organization is part of 2 different Consortia applications it can only be the lead in one application.

The rationale for participating in two applications must be clearly explained in both applications (e.g., drastically different sets of core needs or activities proposed under the two applications). Each applicant must demonstrate and guarantee that the same budget items are not applied for in separate applications.

Chapter 8: Floors, ceilings and funding conditions & Chapter 9: Budget considerations

Added on 20 April 2021

Q. How should we build our budget? Do you recommend to apply for the maximum?

Applicants should build their budget in a realistic manner. It should reasonably serve and cover the planned scope of work and core needs and be within the floors and ceilings for this Request for Proposals 2021. The ISC will decide on the actual amount of funding that successful applicants will receive. This decision will be based on the needs, the quality of the proposals and the size of the resources committed to the Robert Carr Fund by its funding partners.

Actual funding amounts are subject to pending donor commitments, and on the number of successful applications and therefore any amount awarded may be less than which the applicant applied for. Applicants should take this adjustment of awarded amount into consideration when applying and have a clear plan on how to address any shortfall in resources.

Chapter 10: Supporting documents requirements

Added on 20 April 2021

Q. Does the omission of some of the supportive documents play a crucial role? / Can we apply if we have no financial statement?/ Can we apply if we have no audit (because further to laws of the country where we are registered charitable organisations are not obliged to submit audits)?

An explanation can and should be provided for any required or requested documents that are not available at time of application. Any clarifications on omissions or updates to documents may be requested of the applicant as part of the rebuttal of the review process. Successful proposals awarded a grant may be requested for updates to documents or provide further documents to support contracting.

Applications led by unregistered organizations should be supported by a fiscal host, i.e. an organization which will enter into the project agreement with Aidsfonds, and bear ultimate responsibility for financial management and reporting to the Fund.

Q. Page 20 of RFP, first paragraph mentions a cash flow statement is required. However, this is not mentioned in the supporting documents nor application. Please clarify if this is required, and if yes, is there a particular format required?

This is referring to Sheet 5. Sources of Funding, of the RCF Budget Form Template. It is required that all sheets of the RCF Budget Form Template are completed and submitted with your application.

Q. Are supporting documentation required of the Consortium lead only? Or are they required of all Consortium members (as required in past RFPs)?

Supporting documentation is required at submission of proposal of the Consortium lead only, and for the fiscal host if the applicant is applying as such. Successful proposals awarded a grant may be requested for updates to documents or provide further documents to support contracting, including for consortium partners.

Q. Is there a template for '*g. Overview of funding received*' or is this just a list of funding received from donors over the last two years?

The applicant is being requested to provide a list of funding received from donors over the last two years. There is no template for this overview. A word document or PDF is sufficient.

Chapter 12: Process for application review

Added on 20 April 2021

Q. Eligible applications will be reviewed by a set of two or three independent expert reviewers. Can you expand a little more on the composition of the independent expert reviewers?

The independent expert reviewers are independent from any governance body of the RCF. They are not part of the RCF's Program Advisory Panel (PAP). The reviewers are identified through an open call for expression of interests that is to be launched shortly. The reviewers are chosen based on their regional and/or ISP expertise. All of them review applications on a voluntary basis and will have declared any potential Conflict of Interest.

Application Form

4. Monitoring and Accountability

Added on 20 April 2021

Q. Are questions 4.A 2 - 4.A -5 in the application form to be answered for the lead in a Consortium or for the whole Consortium? (e.g. Consortium's governance and management structures or lead network's governance and management structures?)

4. Monitoring and Accountability of the application form should be answered by both single network and consortium applicants. Consortium of networks should answer addressing the Consortium as a whole, which can include highlighting the lead and partners where relevant.