UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and Girls

2025 Call for Proposals: Resourcing Resilience - Investing in Civil Society Leadership to End Violence against Women and Girls

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and tips for application writing

Table of Contents

Eligibility **3**
- Who is eligible to apply for a UN Trust Fund grant? 3
- Who is not eligible to apply for a UN Trust Fund grant? 3
- For international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), can more than one local, affiliate or associate office apply? 3
- Do I need to be legally registered/have a legal basis/mandate as an organization to apply as lead applicant? 3
- Do I need to be a legally registered entity/organization in the country of implementation, to apply as a lead applicant? 4
- Can an eligible organization submit more than one application? 4
- Can a grantee or co-implementing partner that has previously received a grant from the UN Trust Fund to end Violence against Women and Girls apply for a new grant under this Call for proposals? 4
- Can an eligible organization submit the same proposal to another funding source besides the UN Trust Fund? If yes, what if two or more funding sources approve the same proposal for a grant? 5

Partnerships **5**
- Can several organizations apply together? 5
- If several organizations are applying together, how should they divide up the roles and responsibilities? 5
- What is the difference between a co-implementing partner and a supporting partner? 5

Application and appraisal process **5**
- How can I apply? 5
- What language can I submit my application in? 6
- Why are the application templates in Word protected, and can I remove the protection? 6
- What documents are required to submit? 6
- What is the process for appraising and shortlisting applications? 6
- What is the process for pre-selected applicants? 6
- How are unsuccessful applicants informed? 6
- What are the chances of getting a grant? What was the selection process for the 2023 Call for Proposals like? 7
- Where can I find the list of current and past funded initiatives? 7
- My application was not selected. Can I apply again in the next Call for Proposals, and can I use the same proposal? 7
- How does the UN Trust Fund work to improve its application and selection processes? 7

Support **7**
- How can I get support? 7
- Who else can fund my organization or application? 8

Prioritization **8**
- What organizations or applications will be prioritized? 8

How does the UN Trust Fund support and prioritize small organizations? 8
What does it mean that the UN Trust Fund gives special consideration to underrepresented countries? 9
Is the UN Trust Fund prioritizing women experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination (such as transgender women, women with disabilities, sex workers, indigenous women, or afro-descendant women) in its strategic grant-making processes to end violence against women and girls? 9
Evaluation criteria & tips for application writing.... 9
What are the key criteria used to evaluate the proposals? 9
Can I receive specific feedback on why our proposal wasn't selected?....9
What makes a strong application? 10
Where can I find guidance on how to successfully design a Concept Note? 11
What does working with structurally marginalized women and girls and those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination typically entail?....11
What are the EVAW/G Programming principles and how should my proposal embody them? 12
What kind of activities and initiatives could be supported under this year's Call for Proposals? 13
What kind of activities could be supported to strengthen organizational capacity and resilience? 13
Budgets and Funding Requests 14
Is there a recommended range for funding requests? What is "absorptive capacity" and how is it calculated? 14
Must applicants contribute to the initiative budget? 14
What costs are covered by a UN Trust Fund grant?....14
What costs are NOT covered by a UN Trust Fund grant?....14
What are the UN Trust Fund auditing requirements?....15
Is creating additional budget lines permissible in the template? 15
If I am pre-selected, can the budget submitted with the Concept Note be increased when developing a detailed Project Proposal? 15
Online Application Technical Questions 15
Is there a tutorial on how to apply online? 15
I don't remember my user password. 15
Can I switch the language of my application once I have started filling out my application? 15
Do I have to fill out the application in order?....15
Do I have to complete the application in one sitting? 16
Can I print my application?....16
How do I know when I have completed my application? 16
What do the green checkmarks next to the application sections mean?....16
What do the red circles next to the application sections mean?....16
What does the "Inspect Application" button do? 16
Can I make changes to sections that I have already completed? 16
How do I submit my application?....16
Can I make changes to my application after I have submitted it? 17
What if I only have my documents (annual financial reports, etc.) in hard copies, not on a computer?....17
I am trying to upload a file but am having problems. What should I do?....17

Eligibility

Who is eligible to apply for a UN Trust Fund grant?

- Only **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) with specialized knowledge, expertise, and a proven track record of working on eliminating violence against women and girls are eligible to apply**.[1]
- To be considered eligible, the lead applicant must meet all eligibility criteria in full; eligibility requirements cannot be met cumulatively or fulfilled through co-implementing partners.
- Please refer to **Annex 1 - Eligibility Checklist and Mandatory Requirements** and the **online eligibility tool, available here**, to check whether you are eligible before applying.

Who is not eligible to apply for a UN Trust Fund grant?

The following are **NOT eligible** to apply for a grant:

- Organizations proposing interventions in a country not listed in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee's (OECD DAC) list of official development assistance (ODA) recipients[2]
- Organizations whose work and mission/vision statement do not focus on nor explicitly mention gender equality and the elimination of violence against women and/or girls
- Organizations that do not have a legal status in the country or territory of implementation, and neither do any of its co-implementing partners
- Government agencies or institutions
- UN agencies or UN Country Teams
- Private individuals
- Private sector entities
- UN Trust Fund grantees and co-implementing partners (those who are receiving a portion of funds as part of a UN Trust Fund grant) whose initiative has not been programmatically closed by the deadline for submission of 19 November 2025 (meaning the initiative has ended by 19 November 2025)

For international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), can more than one local, affiliate or associate office apply?

NO

- Only one office may apply per call for proposals. That office must be legally registered (or present its co-implementing partner's legal registration) in an eligible country and/or territory of implementation.
- This is extended to include national affiliates/chapters of INGOs (i.e. only one national affiliate or country office is eligible per call for proposals).
- Further, an INGO can only apply once under this Call for Proposals, either in the capacity of the lead applicant or of a co-implementing partner, across all countries under this Call.
- **Note for International non-government organizations (INGOs):** INGOs are eligible to apply but must clearly demonstrate their added value and a strong commitment to equitable partnerships with local women's rights or civil society organizations. Applications must show how the INGO will support and strengthen local capacity, ensure shared decision-making, and direct most resources to country-level work in support of the communities served. INGOs should also explain why their involvement is necessary, especially in contexts where local organizations face legal or operational barriers to direct funding.

Do I need to be legally registered/have a legal basis/mandate as an organization to apply as lead applicant?

YES

- Only organizations that are legally registered or have a legal mandate as an organization are eligible to apply as a lead applicant.
- The lead applicant needs to have been legally registered for at least 5 years. In exceptional circumstances, three (3) years of history registration may be accepted and it must be fully justified.

[1] The UN Trust Fund recognizes and provides support to women and girls in all their diversity as well as to gender diverse persons and their organizations.

[2] The UN Trust Fund follows the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/DCD-DAC list of countries available at http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm

- **Organizations that are not officially registered or do not have a legal basis/mandate may still receive funding as co-implementing partners**, **provided they work with a lead applicant that meets all eligibility criteria**, including to be legally registered in the country of implementation.
- All organizations must attach documentation confirming their legal status when applying. Applications without clear proof of legal status will be considered incomplete and removed from the review process. Note that articles of incorporation are not proof of legal status.
- **Note**: The UN Trust Fund recognizes that in certain humanitarian crises, emergency situations, or restrictive environments, organizations may face barriers to renewing or maintaining their legal registration. In such cases, the UN Trust Fund may apply flexibility around registration requirements to ensure that essential voices are not excluded — for example, where an organization previously held valid registration but renewal has been delayed or denied. Such flexibility will be applied with care, ensuring both inclusion of critical voices and appropriate due diligence and accountability measures. If you are an organization in this category, please attach a note explaining the issue, including when your registration lapsed or whether renewal is in process, along with documentation of your previous registration.

Do I need to be a legally registered entity/organization in the country of implementation, to apply as a lead applicant?

- The lead applicant must be officially registered or have a legal basis/mandate as an organization. The lead applicant needs to have been legally registered for at least 5 years. In exceptional circumstances, three (3) years of registration history may be accepted and it must be fully justified.
- However, if the lead applicant is not legally registered in the country of implementation, it must submit a legal registration document of at least one of its co-implementing partner(s) that is registered in the country of implementation (in addition to its own legal status/registration document).
- For multi-country applications, applicants also need to provide the legal registration documents of co-implementing partners in the countries of operation.

Can an eligible organization submit more than one application?

NO

- An organization cannot submit more than one application either in the capacity of the applicant organization or of a co-implementing partner, across all countries under this Call.
- International NGOs may submit only one application across their country offices and chapters.

Can a grantee or co-implementing partner that has previously received a grant from the UN Trust Fund to end Violence against Women and Girls apply for a new grant under this Call for proposals?

- A UN Trust Fund grantee and their co-implementing partners (those who receive a portion of funds as part of a UN Trust Fund grant through a lead grantee partner) whose grant has been programmatically closed before 19 November 2025, meaning the project and the partner agreement between the UN Trust Fund and the lead organization have ended, can re-apply for a grant.
- **Note for Previous UN Trust Fund Grantees**: Organizations that have previously received a UN Trust Fund grant are eligible to apply and are encouraged to highlight previous lessons learned, demonstrate how the proposed initiative builds on and strengthens the results of earlier work, and how the new intervention adds value or introduces innovation. Previous grantees are also encouraged to show how they will deepen impact, reach underserved groups, and address any past challenges, while responding to the specific context of this Call.

However, you are **ineligible to apply, either as lead applicant or co-implementing partner,**[3] if you fall under the following categories:

- You are a current UN Trust Fund grantee
- You are the co-implementing partner (receiving a portion of funds as part of a UN Trust Fund grant) of a current UN Trust Fund grantee

[3] Organizations that are currently implementing UN Trust Fund grants, including Cycle 26, Cycle 27, or Cycle 28, whether as lead grantee partners or co-implementing partners, are not eligible to apply under this Call for Proposals.

Can an eligible organization submit the same proposal to another funding source besides the UN Trust Fund? If yes, what if two or more funding sources approve the same proposal for a grant?

YES

- Eligible organizations are encouraged to submit their proposals to additional funding sources, as the UN Trust Fund Call for Proposals process is extremely competitive and the UN Trust Fund receives many more proposals than it is able to fund. In the case of two or more funding sources approving the same proposal, organizations would be expected to communicate in the narrative section of the proposal:
  - Whether funding from the UN Trust Fund and additional sources covers the entire cost of the proposed initiative;
  - Whether there is still a funding gap, and the organization's proposed strategies to bridge that gap.

Partnerships

Can several organizations apply together?

YES

- Organizations may work with relevant co-implementing partners to complement their expertise, outreach capacity and build the capacities of women's grassroots organizations.
- The lead applicant can partner with up to ***four co-implementing partners*** who can receive a portion of the funding. In these cases, the proposal must clearly indicate which organization will take lead responsibility for project management and contractual obligations.
- Having co-implementing partners is not a requirement.

If several organizations are applying together, how should they divide up the roles and responsibilities?

- The lead applicant may use co-implementing partners to partially implement the initiative. Their roles and responsibilities must be clearly described in the proposal and the value-add of each partnership should be evident.
- However, as per the terms of the contract that will be signed between a successful grantee and the UN Trust Fund, the lead applicant (whose contact details are provided in the proposal) is accountable for the management of the grant in its entirety – for the entrusted funds, programmatic and financial delivery, monitoring, progress reporting, associated risks and results of the overall initiative. That also means the lead applicant will be responsible and liable for its co-implementing partner's performance and results delivery.
- It is the responsibility of each lead applicant to make sure that it/its co-implementing partner(s) understand and comply with the requirements and obligations of their UN Trust Fund grant and that this information is shared with them in a timely and comprehensive manner.
- The lead applicant must ensure that each co-implementing partner agrees in writing, to be bound by the terms and conditions of the UN Women partner agreement, relevant to the portion of the work or services to be performed by each co-implementing partner.
- For the reasons stated above, the UN Trust Fund highly recommends that lead applicants sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)/contract with all of their co-implementing partners, setting out specific roles, responsibilities, deliverables and lines of accountability (Internal Control Framework) as relevant to the initiative and for the duration of the grant.

What is the difference between a co-implementing partner and a supporting partner?

- **Co-implementing partners** are civil society organizations that directly carry out activities and receive a portion of the grant funding.
- **Supporting partners**, in contrast, do not receive direct funding or implement activities. These partners may support the initiative through technical expertise, advocacy, coordination, or other forms of collaboration. There is no limit to the number of such partners, and they may come from any sector, not only civil society.

Application and appraisal process

How can I apply?

- Applicants must submit proposals in the form of a Concept Note. All applications must be submitted online via the UN Trust Fund's online application system at https://grants.untf.unwomen.org/.
- The UN Trust Fund will not accept applications submitted via e-mail or regular post.

What language can I submit my application in?

- Applications must be submitted in English, French or Spanish only.
- Please note while the Call is also available in Arabic, Chinese and Russian, applications are not accepted in these languages.

Why are the application templates in Word protected, and can I remove the protection?

- The UN Trust Fund provides the application templates in **Word format with protections enabled for accessibility purposes**. These templates are meant to help applicants **draft and prepare their proposals offline** before entering the information into the online **Grants Management System (GMS)**.
- Please note that the Word templates **cannot be used to submit an application**. All applications must be completed and submitted **directly through the GMS** at https://grants.untf.unwomen.org/.

What documents are required to submit?

- Your online application must include all the following required documents to be considered complete.
    1. Legal Registration Documents
    2. Certified Financial Statements (2022, 2023 and 2024)
    3. Supporting evidence the organization is women's rights or girls' rights and/or women-led and/or constituent-led
    4. Supporting evidence the organization has specialized knowledge, expertise, and a track record of working on the elimination of violence against women and/or girls
    5. At least two references demonstrating a track record of working on ending violence against women and/or girls (VAW/G)
- All required documents should be uploaded through the online application system only (we cannot accept email or paper documents). Please note that incomplete applications will be automatically disqualified.

What is the process for appraising and shortlisting applications?

- Applications are reviewed by **independent experts** and **Programme Advisory Committees (PACs)**, which bring together representatives from civil society and UN agencies. All proposals are assessed against **standard evaluation criteria** to ensure a fair, transparent, and rigorous review process.
- The process is very competitive and only a subset of applicants are selected for a grant.
- The below process is indicative for the 2025 Call for Proposals:
    - Call open for applications
    - Concept Notes longlisted by independent experts
    - Concept Notes shortlisted by CSO and UN inter agency Programme Advisory Committees
    - Pre-selected applicants develop a detailed Project Proposal with support from the UN Trust Fund

What is the process for pre-selected applicants?

- A final group of applications is pre-selected by the Global Inter agency Programme Advisory Committee (GPAC).
- All pre-selected applicants, for both the 2026 and 2027 cohort, will be informed in the second quarter of 2026 via the email used to register on the GMS platform.
- Pre-selected applicants will be invited to submit a detailed Project Proposal and receive technical support from the UN Trust Fund to develop their Project Proposal.
- Following the final selection and acceptance of the grant, an agreement will be signed with UN Women on behalf of the UN Trust Fund.
- Once agreements are signed, first year funding is disbursed to the grantee.

How are unsuccessful applicants informed?

- Applicants will be informed of the selection outcome in the second quarter of 2026 via the email used to register on the GMS platform.
- Please make sure you provide an email address that will remain valid and operational for at least a year when entering your contact information.

- Due to the high volume of applications, the UN Trust Fund is unfortunately unable to provide individual feedback on specific proposals.

What are the chances of getting a grant? What was the selection process for the 2023 Call for Proposals like?

- The UN Trust Fund receives many more high-quality applications than we can fund.
- The 2023 Call for Proposals received **2,889 applications from 130 countries, requesting over USD 1.5 billion**, reflecting high global demand. Given limited resources, the UN Trust Fund awarded grants across two cohorts: **Cycle 27 (2024)** funded **28 organizations in 24 countries with USD 13.6 million and Cycle 28 (2025)** funded **19 organizations in 19 countries with USD 11 million**, prioritizing **small, women-led, constituent-led and women's rights organizations** addressing violence against marginalized and crisis-affected women and girls.
- While the process is highly competitive, we strongly encourage eligible organizations to continue applying.

Where can I find the list of current and past funded initiatives?

- The list of current and past funded initiatives can be found on our website. Infographics with world map filters are also available on the Grants Management System website.

My application was not selected. Can I apply again in the next Call for Proposals, and can I use the same proposal?

- Yes, as long as you meet the eligibility criteria, you are encouraged to apply in the next Call for Proposals.
- Regarding reusing your proposal, while you can certainly build upon your previous application, it's important to note that each Call for Proposals may have different focus areas, priorities, or requirements. We recommend reviewing the next Call for Proposals carefully and adapting your proposal to ensure it aligns with any new or updated guidelines.

How does the UN Trust Fund work to improve its application and selection processes?

- The UN Trust Fund is committed to continuously improving our processes to better serve applicants and grantees. We actively seek feedback from applicants through surveys that provide valuable insights into the applicant experience, helping us identify areas for improvement. The results of these surveys directly inform our planning for future Call for Proposals cycles. For example, based on previous feedback, we've made improvements such as offering live webinars and informational sessions and expanding our FAQ section to address common applicant questions.
- We also analyze application trends and grantee feedback to refine our priorities and processes. Your participation in these surveys is crucial in helping us make the application process more accessible and user-friendly while maintaining the rigor necessary for responsible grantmaking.
- We appreciate all feedback and suggestions from applicants, whether successful or not, as it helps us better serve the global community working to end violence against women and girls. Thank you for your participation in this important process.

Support

How can I get support?

- For any question and technical problems with the online application, please contact the UN Trust Fund Secretariat by email at untfgms@unwomen.org.
- Live Information and Grant Writing sessions with Q&A for applicants will be organized in English, French and Spanish across different time zones. Sessions will be recorded, shared with registered applicants and uploaded on the website. The content of the sessions will be the same across language, date, and time. To attend a session, please register using the specific link.
    - Spanish, Monday 6 October, 10.30 am to 12.00 pm (New York time): https://unwomen.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_BT5_DCsSRNqfp3WdZXPq5w
    - English, Tuesday 7 October, 8 am to 9.30 am (New York time): https://unwomen.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HLJcsd9HTyqUEKk_lPV04A
    - English, Wednesday 8 October, 3 am to 4.30 am (New York time): https://unwomen.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_7ANVM1mmQHWBREF9FSyeWg
    - French, Wednesday 8 October, 8 am to 9.30 am (New York time): https://unwomen.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_tmeElv-ZRyCpYXO-Hg89jw
    - English, Thursday 9 October, 8 am to 9.30 am (New York time): https://unwomen.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WTZ3bcqvTC-penTROmFC4w

Who else can fund my organization or application?

- Organizations may find the following resources useful to **identify other funders and strengthen their fundraising strategies**:
  - The UN Trust Fund has prepared an Alternative Sources of Funding list (2023): Excel / PDF
  - Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) Who Can Fund Me? database: https://www.awid.org/feminist-funding-resources. A searchable directory of 200+ funders that support gender justice work across regions and sectors.
  - Getting the Money We Need - A 101 Guide on Fundraising for Small Grassroots Organisations (AWID)
  - **Justice Funds** is a bi-weekly, curated list of funding opportunities for social justice projects in the Global South.
  - The ImpactMapper's 2025 Funding Database features 270+ grant opportunities, searchable according to users' needs including areas for issues funded, regions, type of fund, type of funder, if funds are open to the public or only for current grantees or if funds are a result of endowment increases, spend downs or emergency responses. You can subscribe for free to access the database here: https://mailchi.mp/681b42025edb/2025-funding-database-by-impactmapper

Prioritization

What organizations or applications will be prioritized?

- Applications from women's rights and girls' organization, women-led organizations, constituent-led organizations, small organizations and organizations that are first time recipients of a UN Trust Fund grant will be prioritized.
  - **Women's rights organizations (WRO).** To be considered a "women's rights organization", the applicant must demonstrate its core work is in the field of women's rights, gender equality, the elimination of violence against women and/or girls, or sexual and gender-based violence. The organization's official mission and vision statements must reflect its commitment to pursuing gender equality and empowering women and girls.
  - **Girls' rights organizations**. To be considered a "girls' rights organization" the applicant must demonstrate that its core work focuses on advancing the rights of girls, including but not limited to gender equality, the elimination of violence against girls, and the promotion of their empowerment, protection, and participation. The organization's official mission and vision statements must explicitly reflect its commitment to defending and promoting the rights of girls as central to its mandate.
  - **Women-led organizations**. To be considered a "women-led organization", the applicant must demonstrate it is governed and led by women. This requires evidence that a minimum of 51 per cent of leadership positions across various decision-making levels, including in management, senior management and board levels are held by women.
  - **Organizations led by and for marginalized women and girls (constituent-led)**. To be considered a constituent-led organization, the applicant must be led by marginalized women and girls, with core work focused on addressing their specific needs and informed by their priorities.
  - **Small organizations**. To be considered a "small organization", the organization's annual organizational budget must have been lower than US$ 200,000 (on average) in the last three years.
  - **Organizations that are first time recipients of a UN Trust Fund grant**. This reflects the UN Trust Fund's commitment to expanding access, supporting under-resourced and under-represented organizations.

How does the UN Trust Fund support and prioritize small organizations?

- The UN Trust Fund recognizes the essential role small organizations play in ending violence against women and girls.
- It consistently prioritizes small organizations, which have represented at least **50% of selected grantees in recent funding cycles**.
- To support small organizations, the Fund provides additional flexible funding: small organizations can allocate **up to 18% of their grant to flexible funding** (compared to 12% for larger organizations).
- The UN Trust Fund encourages equitable partnerships with smaller, local and grassroots women's and girls' rights organizations, whether as co-implementing partners or supporting partners. These partnerships should ensure fair access to resources, shared decision-making, and meaningful participation throughout all phases of the initiative.
- The UN Trust Fund recognizes that differences in organizational capacity often reflect broader structural inequalities in access to resources, training, and institutional support. Our evaluation criteria accounts for varying organizational contexts and resource bases. This approach ensures that innovative grassroots solutions and community-led initiatives receive fair consideration alongside proposals from well-resourced institutions. Small organizations' applications are also evaluated in comparison with other small organizations, with reviewers instructed to take their unique context into account.

- While we currently use the same application process for all organizations, the evaluation process also takes into account the unique circumstances of small organizations, ensuring they are assessed in a fair and supportive manner. Our goal is to provide a fair and supportive process, acknowledging the specific circumstances faced by small organizations.

What does it mean that the UN Trust Fund gives special consideration to underrepresented countries?

- In the 2025 Call for Proposals, the UN Trust Fund indicated that it may give **special consideration to applications from countries where no UN Trust Fund grants have been awarded in the past 10 years**. This does not mean that organizations from these countries are automatically guaranteed funding, but rather that their proposals may receive additional attention when ensuring geographic balance and diversity in the global grant portfolio.
- The list of underrepresented countries in the UN Trust Fund global portfolio is as follows: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Gambia, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libya, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Micronesia, Montserrat, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Niger, Niue, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Saint Helena, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sudan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tokelau, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna.

Is the UN Trust Fund prioritizing women experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination (such as transgender women, women with disabilities, sex workers, indigenous women, or afro-descendant women) in its strategic grant-making processes to end violence against women and girls?

YES

- The UN Trust Fund recognizes and provides support to women and girls in all their diversity as well as to gender diverse persons and their organizations.
- The UN Trust Fund prioritizes funding to applications seeking to address violence against structurally marginalized women and girls, in line with its Strategic Plan.
- A majority of applications received propose to work with and for communities with marginalized populations and both Cycle 28 and Cycle 27 partners all are working with diverse populations including women with disabilities, indigenous women, sex workers, and more.

Evaluation criteria & tips for application writing

What are the key criteria used to evaluate the proposals?

- The UN Trust Fund evaluates proposals based on several overarching criteria, considering the profile and capacity of the organizations (including expertise in ending violence against women and girls) as well as the quality of their proposed initiatives.
- The evaluation is based on responses to the questions in the concept note form and aligned with the priorities outlined in the Call for Proposals, including a clear focus on addressing violence against structurally marginalized women and girls.
- Throughout the evaluation process, there is a strong emphasis on prioritizing women's and girls' rights organizations, women-led, constituent-led, and small organizations, with the goal of ensuring that at least half of the selected proposals originate from these groups.
- **Key criteria included:**
    - Organizational profile, capacity and expertise
    - Initiative relevance and design
    - Safety and ethics
    - Potential for impact
    - Inclusivity and Intersectionality
    - Partnerships and Collaboration
    - Monitoring and Evaluation
    - Budget appropriateness

Can I receive specific feedback on why our proposal wasn't selected?

Due to the high volume of applications received, we are unfortunately not able to provide individualized feedback on proposals. However, for the 2023 Call for Proposals, these were the common weaknesses and areas of improvement:

- **Clearer Demonstration of EVAW/G Expertise and Organizational Capacity**: Highlight the organization's expertise in Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW/G) and demonstrate its capacity to implement the initiative effectively.
- **Stronger Alignment with UN Trust Fund Priorities**: Ensure that the initiative aligns with the priorities of the UN Trust Fund. Clearly articulate how the initiative supports these priorities.
- **Robust Intersectional Approaches with Focus on Marginalized Groups**: Incorporate intersectional approaches to address the diverse needs of different groups, considering factors such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status. Clearly explain how the initiative will address the specific needs of structurally marginalized groups and ensure their inclusion in the initiative activities.
- **Improved Initiative Design and Feasibility**: Enhance the overall initiative design and feasibility. Ensure that the initiative is well-planned, realistic, and achievable within the given timeframe and resources.
- **Strong Problem Analysis and Rationale**: Ensure that the problem analysis is backed by relevant data and evidence. Clearly articulate the needs of the beneficiaries and how the initiative will address these needs.
- **Clear Initiative Goals, Results, and Activities**: Clearly define the initiative goals, expected results, and activities. Ensure that they are coherent and aligned with the identified context, challenges, and needs.
- **Well-Defined Partnership Strategies**: Develop a clear and detailed partnership strategy. Specify the roles and contributions of each partner and how they will collaborate to achieve the initiative goals.
- **Comprehensive Ethical and Safety Measures**: Include detailed ethical and safety measures in the proposal. Ensure that there are clear protocols to protect the safety, dignity, and well-being of all initiative participants.
- **Realistic Budget with Clear Justification**: Ensure that the budget is realistic and aligned with the initiative activities. Provide clear justification for each budget category and ensure that costs are reasonable and necessary.

What makes a strong application?

It is very important to explain the specific value of your initiative and its potential to make a significant and lasting impact in ending violence against structurally marginalized women and girls. A clear demonstration of the organization's expertise and experience in addressing this issue, specifically with the selected groups of beneficiaries and proposed strategies should be included. The initiative's scope should be specific, realistic, and evidence-based, incorporating tailored strategies, coherent planning, and a commitment to safety and sustainable long-term impact.

Below are some practical tips to consider when developing the concept note:

Follow instructions and provide specific responses:

- Follow all instructions carefully and provide all required documents.
- Give clear and specific answers to each question. Your answers can be shorter than the maximum word limit as long as they are clear and respond to the question.
- Before submitting your proposal, carefully review each section, and make sure you clearly responded to the question asked.
- Your concept note should make sense to people who are not familiar with your work, your context and your organization. Ask for feedback from people with different expertise.

Clearly explain what your initiative's unique value is, based on analysis and data:

- Provide analysis on local context, issues and needs of structurally marginalized women and girls in relation to violence against women and girls, with data/evidence.
- Explain why your initiative is relevant and why it will be effective.
- Highlight the initiative's added value in filling critical gaps to end violence against structurally marginalized women/girls.

Outline your organization's expertise and experience in addressing violence against women and why it's best suited to implement the proposed initiative.

Be specific:

- Be specific about the groups of structurally marginalized women and girls to be focused on, the forms of violence they face, and explain how the proposed strategies will meet their needs and address the violence they face. Do not try to address all

forms of violence generically. Avoid selecting the maximum types of beneficiaries and forms of violence solely for the purpose of ticking as many boxes as possible.

- Clearly define your initiative's goal, objectives, expected results, and activities.
- Demonstrate a clear articulation of the results to be achieved, for and with whom, where and how, and for what ultimate goal.

Be realistic:

- Keep the initiative scope realistic, based on your experience/expertise and on your available resources. Avoid being over-ambitious.
- Ensure the budget aligns with your initiative scope and absorptive capacity of your organization.

Ensure coherence throughout your concept note:

- Ensure coherence between the problem analysis, the beneficiaries selected, the forms of violence selected, and the initiative's strategies.
- Ensure proposed activities/strategies contribute to expected results/objectives.

Explain how you will identify and mitigate risks to ensure the safe implementation of the initiative, including to ensure the safety, dignity and well-being of staff and beneficiaries.

Plan for systemic and sustainable impact:

- Articulate how your initiative will contribute to systemic change and long-term impact.
- Explain with concrete measures how the initiative will contribute to lasting change beyond the initiative's timeframe.

Where can I find guidance on how to successfully design a Concept Note?

- **Annex 2: Concept Note Application Form** lists the questions that applicants will have to answer in the online application. Those questions have been developed to guide applicants in their reflections and initiative planning. Therefore, it is important to allocate enough time to review these questions, discuss and analyze them with the relevant partners and beneficiaries, and (co-) write the Concept Note accordingly.
- Useful resources are also listed in the Call for Proposals.

What does working with structurally marginalized women and girls and those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination typically entail?

By specifying the groups of structurally marginalized women and girls and the specific forms of violence they face, you can develop interventions that are tailored to their unique needs and circumstances. By focusing on specific groups and forms of violence, you can develop strategies that are more relevant and effective, increasing the likelihood of achieving meaningful and sustainable results. This approach allows you to allocate resources more effectively and address the root causes of the targeted issues, ultimately leading to a more successful and impactful initiative.

An external analysis, commissioned by the UN Trust Fund and co-produced with former grantees[4], finds that organizations employing intersectional approaches to working with women and girls experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination typically include one or more of the following aspects:

- They identify the specific group or specific groups of women and/or girls who are at high risk of violence because of overlapping aspects of their identities, status, or situation
- They identify the specific forms of violence they face and they specific needs
- They ensure the engagement of women living with intersecting forms of discrimination wherever possible in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the initiative,
- They engage with individuals, groups and systems that may put women and girls at risk of violence and

[4] **Learning from Practice: Exploring Intersectional Approaches to Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls** Palm, S. and Le Roux, E. 2021. *https://untf.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/synthesis%20review%20-%20intersectional%20aproaches.pdf*

- They work collaboratively with partners, including women's movements, that engage with different groups of women to build synergies and maximize resources and learning.

What are the EVAW/G Programming principles and how should my proposal embody them?

All proposals are expected to embody UN Women EVAW/G programming principles[5] within initiative design as contextually relevant and feasible.

1. ***Adopting a human rights-based approach*** that places paramount priority on promoting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights of all women and girls. A human rights-based approach requires developing the capacities of 'duty-bearers' and 'rights-holders'.
2. ***Ensuring a survivor-centered and women's empowerment approach*** that integrates women's and girls' own experiences and inputs within all initiatives and strategies as an essential part of successful programming. A survivor-centered approach is fundamental to the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls affected, and to their empowerment.
3. ***Operating under ethical guidelines*** that ensure interventions and services prioritize, and guarantee women's and girls' rights to safety and security, confidentiality and privacy, expression of opinion and autonomy to make decisions.
4. ***Ensuring gender responsiveness and transformative approaches*** that seek to create or strengthen equitable gender norms and dynamics for fundamental, lasting changes for women and girls.
5. ***Employing culturally and contextually relevant entry points*** through interventions that involve cultural, community, faith-based, youth and other leaders. All proposals should aim to include clear community feedback mechanisms with participation of women from the communities where the initiatives are to be implemented.
6. ***Addressing specific forms and settings of VAW/G through a clear understanding of specific contexts*** in which violence takes place for effective programme design and implementation, with knowledge about specific forms, settings, and population groups affected.
7. ***Adopting an intersectional approach and focusing on groups most at risk of being left behind*** especially excluded or disadvantaged women and girls (such as women and girls with disabilities, LBT, internally displaced and refugees, indigenous, older and members of ethnic minorities).
8. ***Operating within a socio-ecological model of understanding violence*** which aims to ensure that interventions consider and address the conditions across different levels (e.g. individual, family, community and society), which affect women and girls' risks of experiencing violence.
9. ***Working in partnership with different stakeholders*** such as government, donors, UN agencies, civil society and community-based groups, inter-sectorial actors, academic and research institutions; and importantly, women and girl survivors and women-led organizations.
10. ***Drawing on existing evidence of "what works" (or does not),*** to respond to and prevent violence against women and girls, drawn from formal evaluations and assessments, research and studies, expert consensus and recommendations, shared practitioner experiences and – importantly - the feedback of survivors, and women and girls at risk.

For more information on how to embody EVAW/G principles, you can find information on the UN Women Virtual Knowledge Center to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

[5] UN Women EVAW Programming Principles: https://www.endvawnow.org/en/modules/view/14-programming-essentials-monitoring-evaluation.html.

What kind of activities and initiatives could be supported under this year's Call for Proposals?

By way of illustration only, proposals might consider one or more of the following:

- **Primary Prevention:** Primary prevention means implementing initiatives to stop violence from happening in the first place. Examples include community or school-based programs and working with men and boys to change gender norms and reduce the acceptance of violence. Effective approaches go beyond awareness-raising alone, which has been shown not to be sufficient, and instead focus on evidence-based strategies that change behaviors, norms, and practices. Evidence from global frameworks, such as RESPECT[6], highlights the importance of multi-component, sustained interventions that address risk and protective factors at different levels of the socio-ecological model. Proposals may also include prevention efforts and community mobilization that affirm gender equality, amplify survivors' voices, and counter anti-rights narratives, stigma, and misinformation.
- **Ensuring survivors have access to quality justice, social and health services, and overall support** through setting up hotlines, safe spaces, psychosocial support, legal aid, and crisis counseling services, advocating for the development or implementation of national standards and laws, and training of service providers. This may also include maintaining or restoring essential services in the face of defunding, restrictive environments, or institutional rollbacks, and developing alternative or informal service delivery models when needed.
- **Economic Empowerment**: Promoting economic empowerment opportunities and programmes that provide employment training, job placement, and financial literacy education, enabling survivors of violence to gain financial independence and escape violent situations.
- **Advocacy and Policy Change**: Advocating for the inclusion of ending violence against women and girls in national laws, policies and frameworks as well as development and funding frameworks (e.g. National Development Plans or Crisis Prevention, Response and Recovery Plans) and other relevant plans and strategies. This also includes advocacy to respond to legal or policy rollbacks, challenge discriminatory laws or administrative barriers, and address institutional inaction , as well as advocating for the recognition, funding, and participation of organizations in decision-making roles to help ensure the continuity of their work.
- **Engaging New Partners**: Involving new, important partners who can help prevent and address violence against women and girls, including working with men and boys, young people, religious groups, employers, trade unions, the media, and others that have untapped potential to make a positive impact.
- **Coalition-Building and Partnerships**: Establishing and supporting local and national coordination groups that bring together multiple stakeholders to work collectively on ending violence against women and girls. Proposals may also include cross-movement and cross-sector alliances to resist backlash and amplify shared demands, as well as efforts to strengthen partnerships with organizations working to end violence against women and girls, emphasizing coordinated approaches and sustained collaboration.
- **Human Rights Instruments Implementation**: Supporting the implementation of internationally and regionally agreed human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Maputo Protocol, Istanbul Convention, Convention of Bélem do Pará, and the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, relevant to preventing and ending violence against women and girls.

What kind of activities could be supported to strengthen organizational capacity and resilience?

Applicants are encouraged to dedicate resources from the overall grant to strengthen their organization's capacity, adaptability, and resilience[7]. Activities may include, but are not limited to:

By way of illustration only, activities could include:

- **Advocacy and Influence**: Developing strategies to advocate for women's rights, including navigating backlash and resistance when addressing sensitive issues related to gender equality and ending violence against women and girls.

---

[6] **RESPECT women: preventing violence against women.** UN Women, WHO. 2019. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/05/respect-women-preventing-violence-against-women

[7] The UN Trust Fund defines organizational resilience as the *the power (ability, capacity) of civil society organizations and women's rights organizations to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, adapt to, learn from, and thrive through crises, challenges and changing circumstances both internal and external and within a context of systemic discrimination against women, girls and groups facing structural inequality, and the organizations that represent them.*

- **Networking, Partnerships and Collaboration**: Strengthening alliances and solidarity between civil society organizations, women's rights organizations and broader feminist movements for mutual support, knowledge exchange, collective care, and coordinated action.
- **Internal Policies, Procedures, Systems and Controls**: Enhancing financial and administrative management capacity (accounting systems, procurement processes, internal controls), establishing robust internal risk management policies, procedures and control systems to enhance operational and programmatic effectiveness.
- **Risk Management and Contingency Planning**: Establishing crisis management and business continuity plans, including preparedness for political, financial, digital or security threats.
- **Equipment, Technology and Digital Platforms**: Investing in tools, secure technologies and digital solutions that facilitate adaptation, remote working, collective organizing, and continuity of services in restrictive or crisis contexts.
- **Safety and Protection:** Strengthening digital and physical safety measures for women's rights organizations, women human rights defenders and feminist activists facing surveillance, harassment, or other threats.
- **Self-Care and Wellbeing**: Dedicating resources for staff self-care, mental health support, and wellbeing to prevent burnout and enable organizations to withstand challenges.
- **Capacity Building and Training**: Investing in developing staff skills and organizational capabilities in areas like financial management, monitoring & evaluation, and project design to build resilient and effective organizations.
- **Knowledge and Learning:** Building systems to document, reflect on, and share practice-based knowledge, lessons learned, and evidence to inform feminist movements and influence broader change.

Budgets and Funding Requests

Is there a recommended range for funding requests? What is "absorptive capacity" and how is it calculated?

YES

- All civil society organizations can apply for a grant amount between US $150,000 and US $800,000.
- Organizations should request a grant amount that aligns with their operation and absorptive capacity to manage and implement funds effectively.
- Absorptive capacity is calculated as three (3) times the organization's average organizational budget over the past three years, based only on the lead applicant's budget (not including co-implementing partners). The organizational budget refers to the applicant organization's total annual budget, including all income and expenses related to running the organization, regardless of the funding source.
- An organization should not request a grant amount more than **3 times its average organizational budget for the past 3 years**.
- For example, if your organizational budget is US $100,000 on average over the last 3 years, you should not request more than US $300,000 for the 4-year grant.
- The UN Trust Fund will assess absorptive capacity against the certified financial reports you are requested to submit as well as information pertaining to your annual organizational budget submitted as part of the application.

Must applicants contribute to the initiative budget?

No

- No, applicants do not need to contribute to the initiative budget.

What costs are covered by a UN Trust Fund grant?

- For all details, please refer to the UN Trust Fund Call for Proposals Annex 3: Concept Budget Form & Budget Guidelines.

What costs are NOT covered by a UN Trust Fund grant?

The UN Trust Fund will NOT fund the following:

- Costs of infrastructure such as purchase of land, property, acquisition of office space, construction, repair of existing buildings or offices, including for example, the building of service facilities, shelters or short-stay homes unless this is specifically justified by inclusivity needs.
- Purchase of any type of large vehicles (i.e. cars, boats, etc.).
- Furnishing of service facilities, shelters or short-stay homes, unless those are specifically for a facility established or utilized for the purpose of the initiative.

- Monetary incentives for participation in trainings, workshops, etc. or honorariums to outlets/journalists for publishing articles.
- Costs that can be financed by other funding sources in the country or by the government (i.e. providing antiretroviral treatment).
- Sub-granting (awarding grants using funds provided under the agreement with the UN Trust Fund).
- Loans (funds extended for the purpose of investment/ return of capital) and debt servicing.
- Duties, taxes and charges, including VAT, that are recoverable/deductible by the organization.
- Non statutory bonuses, provisions, reserves or non-remuneration related costs.

For all details, please refer to the UN Trust Fund Call for Proposals Annex 3: Concept Budget Form & Budget Guidelines.

What are the UN Trust Fund auditing requirements?

- Each selected initiative may be subject to an audit during its lifetime by an UN Women designated auditor.
- A provision of 3 per cent (3%) of the total amount requested must be allocated in the budget of the first year of implementation to cover this cost.

Is creating additional budget lines permissible in the template?

NO

- The existing budget lines should be used to detail all costs relevant to the satisfactory completion of the initiative.

If I am pre-selected, can the budget submitted with the Concept Note be increased when developing a detailed Project Proposal?

NO

- The budget submitted with a Project Concept represents the total funds available and allocated for the detailed Project Proposal. The budget cannot be increased. However, budget lines may be modified as long as the budget is in line with the approved initiative strategy or strategies.

Online Application Technical Questions

Is there a tutorial on how to apply online?

YES

- You can find a tutorial on how to apply on the Grant Management System as part of the call for proposals documents and in the Grant Management System.

I don't remember my user password.

- To retrieve your password, click the "**Forgot your password?**" link on the login page. A verification code will be sent to the email address associated with your account. Type the verification code and then you will be able to reset your password.

Can I switch the language of my application once I have started filling out my application?

No

- Once you select your preferred language in the User Profile when you register to the system, you will not be able to switch to another language.

Do I have to fill out the application in order?

NO

- The application does not have to be filled out in the order of the questions are asked. However, only completion of the Project Overview tab will allow you to work on the Budget tab.
- Use the navigation links: the "Home" icon on the left side of the application or the "Change the Section" link on the top left side of the application to move from section to section.
- Please note that data you enter into the form is only saved **when you hit the "Save" button** on the right side of the application.
- Make sure to save your work often.

Do I have to complete the application in one sitting?

NO

- The application does not have to be filled out in one sitting. With your username and password, you can log in as many times as needed to complete your application before the deadline. Just always remember to hit 'Save' before logging out.

Can I print my application?

YES

- You can print your application by clicking on the "Print" button on the homepage.

How do I know when I have completed my application?

- Once a section has been completed, a check mark will appear next to its section title in the navigation bar. You can also view your application progress in the Applicant Dashboard. You will be able to submit your application only after each section is 100% completed and validated.
- Check marks must appear for all sections for the application to be considered complete.
- Remember to click on the "Inspect" button on the right side in every page of your application to validate the information you entered.

What do the green checkmarks next to the application sections mean?

- The green check marks in the navigation bar signify that a section has been completed. Check marks must appear for all required sections for the application to be considered complete.
- In order for your application to be considered as **fully** completed, you must ensure that the information you entered has been properly validated and it does not contain errors. Therefore, you need to inspect your application by clicking the "Inspect" button on the right side in every page of your application or by clicking the "Inspect Application" button on the Home page.

What do the red circles next to the application sections mean?

- Sections in the navigation bar with a red circle signify that there are mandatory questions that are either unanswered or answered incorrectly in that particular section.
- The number in the red circle indicates the number of questions unanswered or answered incorrectly. You may click on the "Inspect Application" button on the right side to investigate and address the questions that need to be filled out in order to complete a particular section.

What does the "Inspect Application" button do?

- The "Inspect Application" button is located on the home page as well as on each application page of the application form. It is a tool that assists users in accurately completing application forms.
- The "Inspect Application" button vets an application to ensure that all required fields are completed.
- Any required fields that are left blank or contain an invalid answer will be flagged in red. You must then go to the relevant question or section and correctly fill in the required fields to pass the inspection.
- You can click the "Inspect Application" button at any time and as many times as you like prior to submitting your application.

Can I make changes to sections that I have already completed?

YES

- You may edit any part of your application as many times as you want before submitting it.
- It is not possible to make any changes after an application has been submitted.

How do I submit my application?

- Once your application is completed and validated you will be able to click on the "Submit Application" link on the Home page of the application form.

Can I make changes to my application after I have submitted it?

NO

- It is not possible to make changes to a submitted application under any circumstance.

What if I only have my documents (annual financial reports, etc.) in hard copies, not on a computer?

- Please scan all your documents and upload them as PDFs in the online application system.
- No mailed documents will be accepted.
- Your documents do not need to be translated; you can submit them in their original language.

I am trying to upload a file but am having problems. What should I do?

- Your files cannot exceed 50 MB in size.
- If your file is larger than 50 MB, please split it into two parts and upload them separately.
- If the file is still larger than 50 MB, consider scanning only the pertinent sections and re-trying. Please note document upload will also depend on your Internet speed and bandwidth.
- If you are still having problems, please send an email to untfgms@unwomen.org with the following subject line: "APPLICATION HELP: Country of implementation / Organization name".