



# Irish Aid

Rialtas na hÉireann

Government of Ireland

## Human Rights & Democratisation Scheme Project Fund

### 2023 Call for Applications

#### DEADLINES

- Concept Notes: Submission by Sunday, 10 September 2023 by email to [hrdp@dfa.ie](mailto:hrdp@dfa.ie)
- Application for shortlisted projects: Submission by Wednesday, 15 November 2023 by email to [hrdp@dfa.ie](mailto:hrdp@dfa.ie)

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## 1. Human Rights & Democratisation Scheme

The Human Rights and Democratisation (HRD) Scheme provides support for Civil Society Organisations engaged in promoting human rights and democratisation. The HRD Scheme has, over many years, formed an important component of Ireland's support to the Palestinian people.

Ireland has provided core budgetary assistance to empower civil society organisations to monitor and document human rights abuses, work with victims towards redress, support the establishment of fair, independent and responsive accountability mechanisms and to engage in policy and reform dialogue with duty bearers.

Applications are now being sought from **Palestinian** civil society organisations for a 2023 project funding to carry out projects of up to one year in duration. It is envisaged that the selected projects will commence in February 2024 onwards. The process is highly competitive and not all applications will be successful.

## 2. Objectives and Priority Issues

### Geographical focus

This call shall focus on intervention within the occupied Palestinian territory.

### Objectives

To empower Palestinian civil society organisations in contributing to Palestinian institutional building, and to protect and promote fundamental freedoms.

### Thematic Priorities

*Projects should aim to address at least one of the following thematic priorities:*

- 1) To strengthen skills of journalists in digital journalism and learn about range of tools and techniques that help journalists prepare for their stories. This should focus on digital tools and best practices for newsgathering and online verification, weighing information & evidence and help journalists to find and tackle dis/misinformation, and verify and tell engaging stories.

- 2) Promote or safeguard Palestinian cultural heritage, identity or representation, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups and areas and on the natural environment.
- 3) Use of innovative approaches (e.g. utilising multimedia in social media campaigns) to advance topical policy issues related to gender equality, women's empowerment or combatting gender-based violence.

### 3. Indicative timeline

The following sets out the indicative timeline for the 2023 HRD Projects Scheme:

- |                                      |                             |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Launch Call for Proposals:         | Tuesday, 15 August 2023     |
| • Receipt of inquiries:              | Wednesday, 23 August 2023   |
| • Respond to inquiries:              | Friday, 25 August 2023      |
| • Concept Notes Submission deadline: | Sunday, 10 September 2023   |
| • Appraisal Process:                 | Friday, 29 September 2023   |
| • Notification of Outcome:           | Friday, 6 October 2023      |
| • Applications Submission deadline:  | Wednesday, 15 November 2023 |
| • Appraisal Process:                 | Friday, 15 December 2023    |
| • Notification of Outcome:           | January 2024                |
| • Contracting:                       | January 2024                |
| • Projects starting date:            | February 2024               |

### 4. Grant Limits

#### Maximum Available Grants per application:

The maximum possible annual grant is €40,000.

#### Dependency:

Organisations are encouraged to co-finance projects from other sources of funding.

#### Ineligible Expenditure

The following activities are not eligible for a grant:

- Activities which may discriminate against any groups or persons on the basis of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, etc.
- Core funding<sup>1</sup>
- Proselytising
- Fundraising

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<sup>1</sup>The HRD Projects Fund is designed to provide project funding, not institutional core support.

- Individual or family sponsorship
- Interventions that are primarily welfare support(s)
- Major infrastructural schemes
- Membership of an umbrella or representative body
- Organisational development
- Public awareness in Ireland
- Retrospective Expenditure (i.e. costs incurred prior to the project start date agreed with the Department)
- Standalone activities that are not part of a wider project
- Study or research fellowships (excluding short-duration training of staff, partners and beneficiaries within the region)

## 5. Eligibility

The following eligibility criteria apply:

- 1. Registration:** Applicant organisations which are in operation and have a valid NGO Registration Certificate and Number, and have a minimum of two years of experience as of 1 January 2024.
- 2. Organisation Focus:** Applicant organisations must have clear focus and expertise in the area of support. Organisations will be assessed based on the level of expertise and understanding in the project focus area.
- 3. Funding Status:** In order to avoid double-funding, applications cannot be accepted from any organisations which have been approved to receive a grant in 2023 or 2024 from the Department of Foreign Affairs.
- 4. Accounts:** The Eligibility Form should be accompanied by full audited accounts for the last financial year prior to application<sup>2</sup>.
- 5. Record of Compliance:** Applicants with a record of non-compliance with the terms of Department contract(s) will not be considered for funding.
- 6. Safeguarding:** Applicants must have policies and procedures in place to protect vulnerable and young adults, children<sup>3</sup>, beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, as relevant. Copies of these policies might be requested at any stage of the appraisal and contractual process.

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<sup>2</sup>The organisation's own financial year can be used.

<sup>3</sup> NGOs must have policies and procedures in place which are compliant with the aims and objectives of the [Children First Act 2015](#).

## 6. Application Process

The application process consists of two stages:

Stage One: Concept notes submission

Stage Two: Applications submission (by invitation only)

Interested applicants are requested to submit a concept note only using the template that can be downloaded from the website.

Selected applicants will then be invited to submit a full application using the standard templates for appraisal. Further instruction will be provided in the invitation.

It is worth noting that the invitation for submitting a full application does not guarantee in any way the acceptance of the application.

All projects must start on February 2024.

### **Stage One:**

The concept note consists of two sections:

1. Project Summary
2. Overview

An organisation may submit only one Concept Note by e-mail to [hrdp@dfa.ie](mailto:hrdp@dfa.ie) by **Sunday, 10 September 2023**. Submissions after this deadline will not be considered. It is essential to refer to the Email Policy Section of the Guidance Note for information on email submission.

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

Questions should be sent to [hrdp@dfa.ie](mailto:hrdp@dfa.ie) by **Wednesday, 23 August 2023**. Questions will be compiled and answers will be published on the website by **Friday, 25 August 2023**.

No direct contacts or phone inquiries will be accepted.

Please note that any attempt to either directly or indirectly influence the outcome of the decision-making process in relation to grant applications will result in disqualification. As

such, please ensure that no representative of your organisation seeks individual meetings with any representative of the Department of Foreign Affairs in connection with the application once the Call for Applications issues.

**Stage 2:**

Applicants who are successful in the first round will be invited to complete an application form and annexes.

The application form consists of *five main sections* and four annexes. The five main sections are as follows:

1. Project Summary
2. Organisational Details
3. Proposed Project
4. Additional Information (optional)
5. Declaration

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

1. Results Framework
2. Budget
3. Estimated Flow of Funds
4. Action Plan

As mentioned above, please note that the invitation for submitting a full application does not guarantee in any way that the application will be awarded a grant.

In designing the project, organisations need to take into consideration that all projects must start in February 2024 onwards, and the project duration should not exceed 12 months.

## **7. Appraisal and Approval Process**

Organisations will need to comprehensively demonstrate their capabilities and experience in each of the following four areas in order to be recommended for funding:

1. Evidence of a clear objective and vision;
2. Evidence of capacity to deliver results;
3. Evidence that the organisation operates from a sound strategic, policy and financial basis; and
4. Governance and financial oversight.

Organisations will be informed of the outcome of the appraisal process in writing. Prior to the signature of contracts and payment of grants, successful organisations will be required to meet a number of conditions, including but not limited to, submission of policies and strategies referenced in the application form as requested, a revised budget, updated annexes relevant to the project. As such, the grant offer should be considered provisional until the Department confirms that the relevant conditions have been met.

## **8. Contracts and Payments**

The Contract will be entered into with the applicant organisation only and that organisation will be accountable to the Department for the oversight and administration of the grant. The Department's primary engagement will be with a nominated staff member of the organisation under contract.

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



## 9. Standards

### Grant Funding Principles

Organisations should be aware of the requirements of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform circular (13/2014) relating to the [Management of and Accountability of Grants](#).

Four principles apply to organisations which are in receipt of grants from public funds: *clarity, governance, value for money and fairness*.

### Monitoring

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

### Reporting

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

## 10. Freedom of Information

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