

KOSOVO RESOURCE CENTER FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION FOR GRANTS FOR VOLUNTEERISM

INTRODUCTION

Kosovo Resource Centre for Civil Society aims to develop capacities of civil society organizations in Kosovo through, tailor-made trainings, mentoring and coaching, help desk services as well as sharing continuous information in regards to organizational development and civic activism. In addition, the project implements granting scheme for volunteerism to support initiatives of civic activism and volunteering.

Grants for volunteerism are intended to deliver concrete results within a set timeframe. Beneficiaries of these grants may be individuals, unregistered initiatives and non-governmental organizations with the most compelling, creative proposals that have high potential to engage Kosovo citizens in addressing issues of their communities.

1. BACKGROUND

Citizens' engagement and volunteering encourages people to be more active in the public sphere and, at the same time, establishes new connections between different sectors, communities, and neighborhoods.

Voluntary engagement also contributes to increased solidarity and interaction between people, thus creating a safer environment and citizens who are committed to addressing issues of public interest, and generally supporting groups in need and the wider community¹.

Kosovo has a diverse and active civil society that has continuously contributed and has an essential role in country democratization and decision-making processes in last two decades. Also, the historical data from the public opinion surveys on citizens' trust towards sectors/institutions, have listed civil society amongst 2-3 most trusted institutions. More concretely, latest opinion polls show that 52% of Kosovo's citizens trust the work of civil society. However, number of citizens involved in civil society activities is relatively low.

Data from public opinion survey² shows that only 3.7% reported that they have been engaged as volunteers in CSOs, or that they have supported any cause raised by civil society (4.8%).

¹ Newkirk, J.A., et.al., (2017), 'Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey', CSF Evaluation report, European Commission.

² KCSF Population Survey, 2020.

The figures are relatively similar when it comes to citizens participating in the work of CSOs or providing any financial support to CSOs. Only about 4% of citizens', report that they have participated in CSO activities, while less than 3% have donated funds to support the work of any CSO.

With the aim to increase the potential for greater impact, increase in interpersonal trust and social cohesion, CSOs need to make more efforts for regular communication and involvement of different groups of citizens in their work.

Given the trust that civil society holds, it remains one of the most viable mediums for promoting and developing a culture of community engagement and volunteering for issues of the public good.

a. What are Grants for Volunteerism?

Grants for volunteerism are intended to civic activism initiatives and promoting volunteerism in Kosovo, and achieving concrete results within a set timeframe. Beneficiaries of these grants may be individuals, unregistered initiatives and non-governmental organizations with the most compelling, creative proposals that have high potential to engage Kosovo citizens in addressing issues of their communities.

2. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF CALL REQUIREMENTS

a. Who can apply?

In order to be eligible for application, applicants need to fulfil the following criteria:

- Be individuals, unregistered initiatives or NGOs active in Kosovo engaged in any non-profit initiative;
- Have an annual turnover not more than EUR 25,000 for the last three years (applies only for NGOs);
- Be directly responsible for the management of the grant (*partnerships with other NGOs/unregistered initiatives are allowed only if the leading applicant takes full responsibility for project implementation and management*);
- Demonstrate capacity for the management of the proposed activities;
- Are not led or managed by Politically Exposed Persons.³

³ For more on limitations related to Politically Exposed Persons see the Application Form Template.

b. Individuals and unregistered initiatives

This call strongly encourages application from individual activists and unregistered initiatives. In cases when the applicants are individuals or unregistered initiatives, they shall demonstrate that their engagement is not for profit and is for public benefit rather than private interest. They should also demonstrate that they adequately meet the relevant eligibility criteria. All other requirements related to grant administration are applicable as per non-governmental organizations.

c. Non-Governmental Organizations

Despite their legal status, not all of NGOs are included in the above eligibility criteria. Due to the wide scope of the applicable legislation in Kosovo for registration of NGOs, sports clubs, sports federations, amateur cultural associations (ensembles of songs and dance) or religious organizations that are registered as NGOs are not targeted with these grants. Similarly, NGOs that represent businesses or similar entities which have obvious financial capacities to cover the costs of their organization or sustain their activities are not targeted with these grants.

d. Timeframe and budget

Project duration should not be longer than 12 months.

The maximum budget requested for funding from this call should not exceed EUR 5,000.

e. Areas of intervention

With this call for proposals, KCSF and CBM will support initiatives that contribute to mobilizing volunteers and promoting volunteer work to foster solidarity, social responsibility and active citizenship.

The following is an illustrative list of areas and initiatives that may be financed under this call.

Volunteering initiatives should be in one or more areas of intervention listed below:

- Youth empowerment;
- Environmental protection;
- Public health;
- Gender mainstreaming;
- Cultural heritage;
- Social inclusion;

Examples of activities may include volunteering initiatives that:

- promote volunteering and engagement of youth in decision-making processes in their respective communities (i.e. proposing a policy change in local government, village council, school council, participation in consultations at local level, provide education on financial literacy etc.);
- engage youth in advocacy and mobilization activities on social inclusion; (i.e. advocacy initiatives addressing public safety issues of the city, village, or neighborhood; organizing round-table discussions for budgetary planning with municipality etc.)
- include activities that mobilize volunteers in environmental protection beneficial to the wider community; (i.e. recycling activities, promoting and protection of natural sites, public activities to raise awareness on importance of waste sorting etc.)
- include activities that mobilize volunteers on promotion and protection of cultural heritage and cultural diversity of different communities living in Kosovo; (i.e. increasing knowledge of common cultural heritage through site visits, promotion of cultural sites as a tool for increase of tourism etc.)
- include public lectures and debates on the education of young girls and boys on, public health and sexual health (i.e. accessibility to hygiene products, peer-to-peer education for sexual reproduction health, etc.);
- promote gender equality, with special focus on addressing gender stereotypes for boys and girls and fostering gender mainstreaming (i.e. activities that address combating discrimination at all levels; participation and advocacy to promote gender budgeting etc.);
- include activities that mobilize youth in the promotion of communication and cooperation between communities in Kosovo to address common issues (i.e. public debates, workshops, street performances, youth exchange etc.);
- re-envisioning public spaces to promote community participation, including re-usage of public spaces and innovative ideas for social activities (i.e. re-destination of public spaces in neighborhood so it can be used by community such as parks, schools, cultural centers etc.);

Note: All of these examples should serve as an orientation point in designing the proposal. This is not a mandatory requirement to include specific activities as listed above. Applicants are encouraged to bring their originally ideas related to areas above mentioned.

Applications must comprise equal participation of girls and boys, address the rights and needs of diverse girls and boys, people with disabilities, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, and Serb minorities, LGBTI, elderly and youth.

f. Level of intervention and geographical coverage

Through this call, support will be provided to civil society initiatives throughout Kosovo that seek to bring about transformations at local/municipal and/or national/central level. In particular, at least half of grants will be awarded to applicants based and operating outside of Pristina.

g. Citizen engagement and volunteer engagement

Engagement of citizens throughout the implementation of the supported initiative, as well as volunteer engagement of both implementing parties and targeted citizens are important elements required for these grants.

Applicants are expected to elaborate on how they intend to engage citizens, clearly identify and analyze the group of citizens they will target and engage through this grant, why their engagement and participation are relevant for their initiative and the different ways that they intend to engage them. In doing this, applicants are expected to be cognizant of the differences within the targeted citizens (such as sex, age, ethnicity, religion, education, location, socio-economic circumstances, interests and needs) and adapt their proposals and intervention accordingly.

Applicants are also required to demonstrate that their engagement, as well as the engagement of the targeted citizens and other stakeholders is done on voluntary basis. In very specific cases when payment of certain symbolic fees is absolutely necessary for the achievement of the goal of the project, applicants are required to properly justify such a necessity.

h. Internal governance

Internal governance of NGOs remains an important aspect in efforts to improve and build the trust of citizens in the civil society sector and to be able to lead by example of good governance, transparency and accountability towards the public.

All NGOs that will be awarded with a grant will be supported by KCSF on issues of good governance practices, sound financial management and tenets of transparency, anti-corruption and accountability.

i. Networking Groups

In order to foster greater collaboration for joint action between grantees, Kosovo Resource Centre for Civil Society will provide different platforms and meeting venues where grantees can meet, exchange and share experiences amongst each other. Joint organizing and action on issues of common interest would be an intended outcome, thus it is expected that grantees will be proactive in identifying and contributing to opportunities for cooperating with other volunteer and civil society initiatives in their areas of interest or geographical location.

j. Cross cutting issues

Gender mainstreaming as a tool towards gender equality will be a crosscutting issue throughout all interventions. As a general rule, all grantees are required to extend their interventions equally, be mindful of the effects of the intervention for men and women, boys and girls, and avoid contributing to harmful stereotypes. All grantees are expected to collect and maintain data disaggregated by sex. For guidance on gender mainstreaming, please see the short document in KCSF website.

3. ELIGIBILITY OF OPERATIONS AND COSTS

a. Ineligible interventions/activities

The following interventions/activities will not be supported:

- Interventions that are directly affiliated with or are supportive of political parties;
- Capital Investments;
- Grants composed entirely or mostly of preparatory work and/or studies;
- Cross border projects and proposals for activities to be implemented outside Kosovo;
- Service type activities such as Technical Assistance;
- Awareness raising campaigns without proper follow up;
- Interventions which are subject to multilevel dependency and approval, thus posing high risk for achieving results;
- Sub granting to third parties;
- Scholarships.

Unless they are imperative for the achievement of the intended organizational strategy objectives, in principle, the activities outlined below will not be supported:

- Conferences, round table discussions or other similar events in venues (such as hotels) that are not open and easily accessible to ordinary citizens;
- Research and feasibility studies, especially as a tool to design the rest of the intervention;
- Study trips outside of Kosovo.

b. Eligible costs

To be considered eligible, costs should meet the following criteria:

- are necessary for the successful implementation and achievement of the indicated intervention results;
- reimbursement of allowances for volunteers engaged;
- are reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management including fair and market-based calculations and cost-efficiency;
- comply with the requirements of applicable tax legislation in Kosovo;
- will incur during the implementation of the grant;
- are indicated in the proposed budget;
- are identifiable and verifiable;

c. Ineligible costs

The costs presented below are considered ineligible:

- Salaries are not allowed;
- Fees for experts are not allowed, unless absolutely necessary to achieve the goal of the project and properly justified in the application form;
- Customs and import duties;
- Debt or payments for losses;
- Value Added Tax – VAT;
- Loan and interest repayments;
- Currency exchange fees;
- Equipment depreciation expenditures;
- Purchase of land or immovable property;
- Purchase of vehicle or generator;
- Payment of expenses covered by other donors;
- Credit to third parties.

4. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

a. Mandatory Documents

In addition to the application form, that needs to be completed as per the grant template for project grant, the applicants shall submit the below documents:

- If applicant is an individual:
 - o Short bio
 - o Identification document;
 - o Proof that he/she is/has been engaged and/or working in the area that is covered by the program;
- If applicant is an unregistered initiative:
 - o Short background/description of the initiative;
 - o List of names, IDs and Signatures of main members of the initiative;
 - o Proof that they are/have been engaged and/or working in the area that is covered by the program;
- If applicants are an NGO:
 - o Registration Certificate issued by the NGO Department;
 - o Fiscal Number Certificate;
- In case of co-funding for this project, the co-funding proof (e.g. contract, decision, letter of commitment, etc.).

All application documents can be downloaded from the website www.kcsfoundation.org

b. Submission of applications

Completed applications can only be submitted electronically through email at rc-kosovo@kcsfoundation.org.

The e-mail must include the completed application form and all mandatory documents specified in the call for application. Applicants will be required to verify that their application is complete using the checklist presented in the application form. KCSF will confirm the receipt of the application by replying to the applicant with an acknowledgement email. Applications that do not comply with the rules of these guidelines will not be reviewed.

c. Deadline for application submission

Applications for Grants for Volunteerism can be submitted until **31 August 2021, 15:00**.

d. Contact

For questions related to the preparation of the documents for the application you can contact us at rc-kosovo@kcsfoundation.org. All questions and answers will be published in the Q&A section of KCSF and CBM website.

Applicants are strongly advised to check out the Q&A section published in the website.

Please use only the specified email for communication with KCSF regarding the application process.

5. EVALUATION AND NOTIFICATION

Evaluation of applications for the Grants for Volunteerism will be done in two phases:

- 1) Administrative control (verification of formal criteria) and
- 2) Content evaluation (based on pre-defined evaluation categories and criteria).

a. Administrative control (verification of formal criteria)

During this phase all applications are assessed if the following has been respected/submitted:

1. All administrative and technical requirements indicated in the application form;
2. Mandatory documents, including the eligibility of applicants;
3. Budget size;
4. Grant duration.

Applications that do not meet the specified criteria will be rejected.

The results of the administrative control will be communicated to each applicant in written form.

b. Evaluation of applications and final decision

Applications that pass the administrative control will be evaluated by a Grants Evaluation Team (GET) consisting of three external experts with relevant expertise and knowledge. GET will evaluate the proposals in two stages 1) through review of documents and 2) public interviews.

The Grants Evaluation Team will evaluate applications based on the following criteria:

- Relevance of the project and logic of intervention (40%)
- Citizen engagement and volunteer engagement in the project (40%)
- Relevance of previous experience (10%)
- Cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget (10%)

The maximum evaluation per application is 100 points.

After the initial evaluation of the submitted application and all other mandatory documents, the applicants that receive at least **51 points** (out of 100), as well as half of available points (**50%**) in each of the four categories presented above are shortlisted.

All shortlisted applicants will be invited for public interview. The interview of shortlisted applicants will be public and consists of a brief presentation of the grant proposal and a Q&A session with the Grants Evaluation Team members.

After conducting the interviews, the Grants Evaluation Team recommends the list of applicants to be awarded for a project grant. In order to be considered for funding, applicants need to receive at least 71 points in total, as well as the half of available points (50%) in each of the four categories presented above. The list of applicants recommended for a grant will be reviewed against the geographical quota whereby at least 50% of the beneficiaries will be organizations based and operating outside of Pristina.

Donors have a veto right on list of applicants recommended for a grant that are considered against the values promoted by the donor or are overlapping with other similar interventions.

Successful applicants, prior to contracting, will be assisted by KCSF in a mentoring session to finalize their implementation dossier.

c. Notification of the decision and complaint mechanism

Each applicant will be informed on the overall assessment/total scores in writing. Unsuccessful applicants may complain within two working days from the day when the rejection email has been sent. Information on the selected grantees will be published in KCSF website after the contracts are signed.

6. IMPORTANT TENTATIVE DATES

Process	Tentative date
Launch of the Call for Grants for Volunteerism	28 July 2021
Information sessions - Kosovo: *Details will be published at kcsfoundation.org	9-27 August 2021
Information on administrative control	September 2021
Information on shortlisted applicants	September 2021
Interviews with shortlisted applicants	October 2021
Final decision	October 2021
Contract signature	November 2021

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