

DFID (Department for International Development)

## 2. Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF)

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### Background

The Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF) is the Department for International Development's (DFID's) main channel of support for development projects of non-government organisations (NGOs) based in the UK. First introduced in 1999, the CSCF supports activities in developing countries in the South as well as in countries of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union with a current annual budget of £14 million. Within DFID, the fund is managed by the Information and Civil Society Department (ICSD) based in East Kilbride. The CSCF aims primarily to support the role of civil society organisations in enhancing the capacity of poor and excluded people through rights-based activities. In addition, the fund also supports service delivery projects of an innovative nature which include elements of empowerment and advocacy.

### Types of Grant

Grants to UK-based non-profit organisations or networks that seek to implement development projects in co-operation with a local civil society partner

### Grant Size

The maximum grant size is £500,000 per project.

### Own Contribution

DFID will provide up to 100% of the total costs.

### Funding Priorities

The CSCF provides funding for individual projects specifically targeted at poor communities and under-represented people in developing countries. Projects should focus on one or more of the following issues in particular:

- capacity building of Southern civil society to foster their engagement in local and national decision-making processes (e.g. in local government bodies

and the formulation of national poverty reduction strategies);

- global advocacy to improve international links and to enable Southern civil society to participate at international level;
- service delivery projects taking place in difficult environments (e.g. in areas without effective government service provision or in post-conflict environments); and
- service delivery projects using innovative approaches and providing experience and lessons learned to ensure sustainability.

In addition to capacity-building elements, all project proposals must include awareness-raising measures that inform the target groups about their rights and entitlements as citizens and about factors which perpetuate poverty. Funding will not be provided for projects that consist primarily of capital expenditure (e.g. the purchase of land or equipment) or pure welfare activities.

### Grant-making Criteria

Applicants must be non-profit organisations or networks (NGOs, membership- or faith-based groups, trade unions, etc.) based in the UK. Eligible organisations or networks must demonstrate effective relationships with one or more partner organisation in developing countries as well as the necessary experience and know-how to manage the proposed project activities. The local partners must be comprised of local civil society and cannot be any for-profit or government organisation. Moreover, applicants must be capable of properly accounting for the total project costs. All applications should address the following other criteria:

- Organizations must show evidence that the proposed project will contribute to poverty reduction and towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); see 'Tips'.
- All themes and activities of the project should be consistent with the relevant DFID Country Assistance Plan (CAP) and should aim to contribute towards achieving the development targets specified therein.
- Applicants must demonstrate a coherent development approach. This includes clear, achievable and measurable objectives and an assessment of the project's outcomes.
- Projects should include learning and sharing of experience as integral parts of all activities. At best, initiatives should be innovative and develop best practices that could be adapted elsewhere.
- The applicant and the local partner have to demonstrate that both of them will make a genuine

contribution towards achieving the project's objective (i.e. the applicant cannot simply offer a channel for funds for the local partner).

- Project proposals must provide evidence that the particular needs of both women and men (i.e. gender equality) and the needs and rights of people with disabilities have been considered.
- The impact of HIV/AIDS on the target groups has to be taken into account in the design and implementation of the project.

## Guidelines

DFID has published detailed CSCF guidelines and presentations, which should be followed closely. These can be accessed at: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/funding/civilsocietyinfo.asp>.

## Project Duration

Projects will be funded up to a maximum of five years. Any follow-on phases cannot be funded from the CSCF.

## Deadline

As a general rule, concept notes must be submitted between 1 February and 15 June each year. Proposals must be received no later than 31 July to be considered for funding from the following April onwards. Applicants are advised to submit the concept note early, as this will allow sufficient time for it to be considered by DFID and to incorporate any relevant feedback in the proposal.

## Application Forms

Concept notes, proposals, and the logical framework must conform to a standard format. Please see Annexes A, B and C of the CSCF guidelines, which are available here: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/funding/civilsocietyinfo.asp>. All applications must be sent by email to [cscf@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:cscf@dfid.gov.uk).

## Application and Procedures

Interested organisations are advised to follow the rules and guidelines carefully when applying for funding from the CSCF. The application process itself is divided into two phases:

Firstly, applicants have to submit a concept note based on the underlying idea of the proposal that provides sufficient information for DFID to decide

(usually within four weeks) whether or not the project is suitable for funding from the CSCF.

Then, if your concept note has been approved, you will be invited to submit a proposal within 18 months. It is important that any feedback received on the concept note must be addressed in this proposal. The proposal must be a detailed document which will be used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the project you intend to undertake. In addition to an internal evaluation, DFID also sends all proposals to its overseas offices as well as British high commissions and embassies for comment on the local context and the coherence of the proposed projects with DFID's CAPs.

The final decision on which proposals will be funded will then be taken by DFID's CSCF committee. Applicants will then be informed about the decision by the middle of February.

## Languages

English

## Tips

Interested organisations should look at the DFID CAP for the country in which their project will be implemented to make sure the proposed activities are consistent with it. Please go to 'Publications' on the DFID website (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/>) and select 'Country Assistance Plans' under 'Pub Types' to view a list of all available CAPs.

All proposals have to demonstrate their positive impact on poverty and the lives of the local population. DFID's Target Strategy Paper, 'Realising human rights for poor people' (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/tsphuman.pdf>), offers helpful advice on issues such as participation and inclusion and shows how project activities can be targeted more effectively towards poverty reduction.

If there is the need for further guidance or clarification regarding your concept note or proposal, please do not hesitate to contact the Information and Civil Society Department (ICSD) (see "Contact").

**NAME OF GRANT PROGRAMME**

Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF)

**NAME**

Department for International Development

**ACRONYM**

DFID

**DEPARTMENT**

Information and Civil Society Department

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