

RAPID RESPONSE FUND

GUIDELINES

How to apply

Before applying to the Rapid Response Fund, please read the following guidelines. For organisations in exile, please contact the administration of the Rapid Response Fund directly at rapidresponse@newdemocracyfund.org.

The application form can be downloaded on www.newdemocracyfund.org/we-support and is to be submitted to rapidresponse@newdemocracyfund.org in English. The application form provides guiding questions to the details to be included in the application and summarizes the following:

- Description of who the beneficiary is and justification of why the support is needed and what activities the applicant wishes to receive support for.
- Description of any cross-thematic (based on the five thematic priority areas) and regional elements in the activities.
- Description of gender aspects and human rights considerations.
- Activity-based budget.
- When relevant, documentation of restrictions of civic space, windows of opportunity, and threats towards individuals or groups.

The applicant can receive advice in the writing process by writing to rapidresponse@newdemocracyfund.org. Once the application is complete it should be sent to this e-mail address.

If the project is supported, the administration of the Rapid Response Fund will, where relevant, make a partner assessment of the applicant organisation.

Background

The Rapid Response Fund represents the New Democracy Fund's ability to provide rapid financial and capacity development support to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the Eastern Neighbourhood Countries (ENC) – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – that preferably have a Danish CSO partner, and that previously have received support from that partner.

These rapid response funds are channelled through the New Democracy Fund which is administered by a consortium of Danish CSOs (see below) that engages in support to strengthen democratic civil society and lasting sustainable regional networks between civil society organisations in Denmark and the ENC.

New Democracy Fund focuses on five thematic areas: youth, media, culture, labour market, and environment and climate. These areas are enforced by a cross-cutting emphasis on gender and human rights.

Purpose

The purpose of the Rapid Response Fund is to provide civil society actors with rapid, critical financial resources, and capacity development support for taking advantage of new opportunities or to protect their work and capacity to contribute to the objectives of the New Democracy Fund through a flexible, fast-track grant mechanism.

The Rapid Response Fund will prioritise its resources to activities that support the achievement of the general purposes of the New Democracy Fund, falls within its five thematic priority areas, and are supportive of the ongoing activities of partners of Danish civil society organisations and institutions in the ENC.

Target group

Support under the Rapid Response Fund is provided to civil society organisations, human rights defenders, artists, filmmakers, and journalists in emergencies, conflict, and serious political or legislative change. Some examples of situations where we provide support are in case of:

- Emergencies, e.g. conflict.
- A drastic change in political or legislative context (positive or negative), e.g. a peace agreement, new windows of opportunity, end of a repressive regime, deterioration of legislative framework and protection of rights, sudden political tension, or polarization.
- Rapidly closing space and/or fundamental human rights under threat.
- Early warning – either worrying trends, e.g. restrictions to freedoms of association, assembly, or expression

Eligible applicants

CSOs in the ENC or temporarily in exile. Civil society is broadly defined to include CSOs, human rights defenders, social movements, media, cultural organisations, academia, trade unions as well as community-based groups and organisations.

The applicant organisation shall have a current or previous partnership with a Danish CSO and shall have received support from that partner, and the support from the Rapid Response Fund shall be channelled through the Danish partner. Only in exceptional cases, support can be channelled directly to an organisation without a Danish partner. The application can also be submitted by the Danish partner.

If an action aims at supporting individuals, this support must be channelled through a CSO. Individuals/human rights defenders are defined as anyone who individually or in association with others promotes and protects human rights. This includes all actors working on issues within a broad human rights issue spectrum.

Consortium member organisations can be a partner in a project supported by the Rapid Response Fund.

Eligible actions

The amount needed for the activities must be clearly outlined in a budget showing the individual costs. The grant amount applied for should not exceed DKK 400,000. Co-financing is allowed if needed. The Rapid Response Fund reserves the right to reduce the amount granted to the individual applications, taking the limited funds available as well as other relevant factors into account. The total budget for the Rapid Response Fund is DKK 5,000,000 available from 2021 through 2022.

The suggested intervention(s) shall be concluded before the end of 2022, and the timeframe should strive to not exceed one year unless circumstances demand it such as a court case or other processes.

Rapid response funding can be provided for both reactive as well as proactive action:

- A) Grants to locally-led activities to proactively counter restrictions and meet the threat of cases listed above.
- B) Grants to locally-led activities to proactively use new windows of opportunity, new political openings.
- C) Emergency assistance funds to individuals and groups under threat.

A) Grants to locally-led activities to collectively counter restrictions to civic space

Criteria: Restrictions to freedoms of association, assembly or expression (civic space) or other human rights violations e.g. crackdown on artistic and cultural expression, the rights of children or youth, filmmakers or journalists exercising their freedom of expression, trade union members organising their workplace, environmental activists etcetera have occurred or seem likely to occur and will be addressed collectively through activities by more than one thematic civil society group.

A variety of activities can be supported depending on what local actors deem most relevant in the specific context. They can include:

- Advocacy and campaigns against restrictive laws.
- Research and documentation.
- Roundtable dialogues.
- Support to domestic litigation and technical assistance to strategic litigation.
- Other relevant activities identified by the applicant.

B) Grants to locally-led activities aiming proactively to use new windows of opportunity

Criteria: Proactive initiatives to improve the enabling environment and work within the five themes of the New Democracy Fund and gender equality and human rights as cross-cutting elements. Securing engagement of civil society in potential changes, creating dialogue and coordination between CSOs, advocacy campaigns, collecting of evidence of civil rights abuse in transition periods, support to independent media, securing the presence of a diverse output of cultural expressions.

To increase local-led collective actions, the Consortium will encourage applicants to build alliances – when relevant – among civil society organisations with an aim of cross-thematic involvement. Outreach to other stakeholders can be supported and could happen in the following ways:

- The grantee reaches out to other CSOs and groups working across different thematic areas to ensure strong alliance building.
- Coordination with other international efforts is encouraged.
- Danish CSOs can provide contacts to their partners to ensure involvement across thematic areas.
- Danish actors can be invited to take part in the activities by the applicant to provide their expertise is seen as beneficial.

C) Emergency assistance funds to individuals and groups under threat

Criteria: A group or an individual must have experienced war, threats, attacks, extra bureaucratic hurdles, legal barriers, dismissal, prosecution, imprisonment, torture, defamation, harassment, stigmatization, discrimination, exclusion, marginalization, displacement etc. due to their work.

Provision of emergency assistance funds: provided to a CSO or groups under threat or intimidation who preferably are partners of one or more Danish CSOs or embassies. The type of activities/equipment that can be supported are:

- Temporary relocation of individuals at immediate risk.
- Support to temporarily relocated individuals enabling them to continue their human rights work or studies.
- Legal support to individuals and groups facing prosecution concerning their human rights and development work.
- Replacement of ICT and assets confiscated or damaged by the authorities.
- Other relevant activities identified by the applicant.

Process for applying

Applications are handled on a rolling basis for eligible applicants. The Rapid Response Fund ensures that the application meets the eligibility criteria and assesses the application based on the assessment criteria, on knowledge from partnerships and the NDF Regional offices in Lithuania and Georgia.

In processing applications, it shall always be explicitly clarified if the applicant is a partner of one of the Consortium members. Where this happens, this should be clearly flagged to the Selection Committee, who will then decide whether there is a need to change the procedure for how such an application is handled.

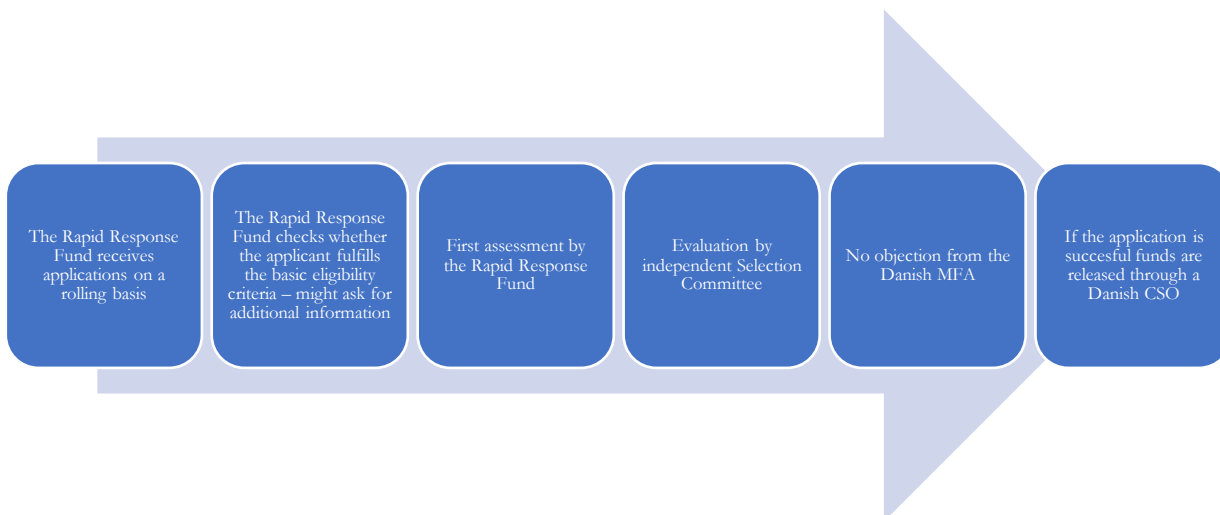
The Rapid Response Fund recommends a decision on the application based on the above examination, assessment criteria, and insight into ongoing development in the ENC.

The assessment criteria are as follows:

- The need and urgency of the action to the country-specific context.
- Action recognized by the defined target groups as relevant.
- The applicant team’s experience within the relevant themes (youth, media, culture, labour market, environment and climate, gender).
- Integration of human rights based approach, gender aspects, inclusion, etc.
- Coherence of intervention logic.
- Additionality and relevance to other similar interventions and avoidance of duplication.
- Risk assessment including safety.
- Prospects of sustainability if possible.
- Experience of applicant team.
- Budget transparency – including clear transparency on rates, salaries, etc.

The final decision and prioritisation of applications are decided by an independent Selection Committee consisting of five independent professionals with experience from the region, from the thematic priority areas (youth, media, culture, labour market, as well as environment and climate) and civil society partnerships in the ENC.

Please find the process scheme of the workflow below.



If approved by the Selection Committee, the application is sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark for a no-objection procedure and funds are then released through the Danish CSO.

Smaller applications

For applications for grants under DKK 50,000, the Selection Committee appoints two representatives on a revolving basis. The Selection Committee ensures that the representatives are replaced at least every third month or with a shorter timeframe. These two members from the Selection Committee must decide whether the application will be granted.

In response to the crisis in Ukraine following the Russian invasion The Rapid Response Fund has implemented the following procedure.

Under C) Emergency assistance funds to individuals and groups under threat, the RRF provides two fast tracks:

1. For grants up to DKK 200,000 one member from the Selection Committee and one Assessor or where this is not possible at least two persons from the Admin Group of NDF approves the application in parallel with the no-objection procedure by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.
2. For grants between DKK 200,000 and DKK 400,000 the application will in addition to the procedure described above also be approved by the Selection Committee in a ‘silent procedure’ to be decided within 24 hours.

In these cases, the applications can be rudimentary described and budgeted.

Complaints procedure

Applicants for the Rapid Response Fund can submit a complaint in situations where they consider that an error has been made in the administration or a factual error in the assessment of the application, or if the assessment of the application otherwise has been inconsistent in relation to the guidelines of the Rapid Response Fund.

Applicants must submit their complaints to the Steering Group of the New Democracy Fund. The complaint must include the full application and the answer from the Secretariat. Further, the applicant must disclose a written statement to the Steering Group with a concrete explanation of why the complaint has been filed.

The Steering Group will assess the complaint as fast as possible. If the Steering Group decides that the complaint is valid, the application will undergo a revised assessment. The Selection Committee will then decide if the applicant should receive a grant.

Conflict of interest

Persons and/or Consortium partners taking part in the assessment team, the Selection Committee or otherwise involved in the process are responsible themselves for informing the Administration Group of any existing or potential conflicts of interest related to their involvement in the selection process.

A conflict of interest may exist

- Where a person or someone involved in the assessment team, Selection Committee or otherwise has a direct, indirect, personal, financial, or business interest in the decision made.
- Where a person or a Consortium partner involved in the assessment team, Selection Committee or otherwise involved has a direct personal, financial, or business interest in the decision made.
- Where other relevant reasons for any of the above persons makes it clear that a vested interest may exist.

The Administration Group assesses each case to determine whether a conflict of interest exists. This assessment by the Administration Group must be based on transparent criteria. The conclusion of this assessment by the Administration Group must be made in written form and filed (ex. via minutes from a meeting).

If the Administration Group determines that a conflict of interest exists, then the person and/or the Consortium partner will not be able to participate in any decisions regarding the specified applicants, whose application has given rise to the conflict of interest.

Implementation

Leading up to and during the implementation of the action, grantees can receive advice from all member organisations of the Consortium if needed. The consortium will extract learnings from the implementation and share them publicly when relevant.

Reporting

The following reporting should be provided to the Rapid Response Fund:

- Interim financial and narrative report depending on the amount and length of the intervention.
- Final financial and narrative report – with results disaggregated by gender.
- Audited accounts depending on the amount of the intervention.
- One-pager learning brief produced.

If some of the action includes persons or organisations that could be endangered by being connected to the Consortium and/or the New Democracy Fund, this will be discussed before the narrative report is submitted.

All projects should be finalised before the end of 2022.

The organisation of the Rapid Response Fund

An Administration Group consisting of the Danish Cultural Institute, International Media Support, and 3F develop external and internal guidelines for the fund. This includes composing and approval of the Selection Committee.

Grant administration is provided by International Media Support.

The partners behind the New Democracy Fund

Confederation of Danish Industry (DI), Danish Cultural Institute (DCI), Danish Youth Council (DUF), International Media Support (IMS), and United Federation of Workers in Denmark (3F), have formed a consortium that is managing the Rapid Response Fund as part of the New Democracy Fund (NDF).

The overall goal of the NDF is to support the strengthening of a democratically organised civil society and to promote the people-to-people exchange of experience and regional networks. The focus of the fund is directed to the ENC consisting of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. The thematic priority areas of the NDF are youth, media, culture, labour market, as well as environment and climate. The NDF is complimentary to the Danish Neighbourhood Programme and seeks to contribute to a more peaceful and stable Europe with freedom and progress through the development of democratic societies with accountable governments, an active civil society, free media, and well-functioning markets.

The expected outcome is that CSOs in the ENC are strengthened to act as democratic organisations fostering people-to-people cooperation in the areas of youth, media, culture, labour market, as well as environment and climate; that sustainable networks between CSOs in the ENC and Denmark lead to increased understanding and dialogue; and that the Danish public is informed about the developments in our neighbouring countries to the East. The outcome is further expected to be that the consortium will be able to assist Danish CSOs in establishing new and innovative partnerships and that rapid response can be provided to civil society groups, human rights defenders and journalists to act in situations where rapid support is required.

Confederation of Danish Industry (DI) is Denmark's largest, most representative and most influential employers' and business membership organisation (EBMO), covering manufacturing and construction as well as service industries across sectors such as transport, energy, IT, health, trade and professional services.

Danish Cultural Institute (DCI) is a self-governing institution. Since 1940 DCI has been engaged in creating mutual understanding between people. DCI believes that the arts and culture are among Denmark's most important assets. Together with partners, DCI develops international activities that push boundaries and create opportunities, which provide mutual value and inspire. Especially when it comes to equal rights, education, sustainable development, democracy, and active citizenship. Important values in the world and in Denmark.

Danish Youth Council (DUF) is an umbrella organisation founded in 1940, representing 78 children and youth organisations and more than 600,000 Danish children and youth. The member organizations of DUF range from scouts to political youth organizations, voluntary social organizations, cultural organizations, environmental organizations, organizations for youth with disabilities and many more.

International Media Support (IMS) support public-interest journalism in conflict affected, fragile and transitional states has benefitted over 60 countries. With more than 500 national partnerships established, IMS's approach centres on three areas: participating in and building international and regional coalitions; linking local impact and knowledge from its country or regional programmes to global policy and standards development; and ensuring knowledge transfer and sustained local partner involvement in global discussions.

United Federation of Workers in Denmark (3F) is Denmark's largest trade union federation with approximately 270,000 members. For more than three decades 3F has carried out development- and solidarity work by supporting trade unions in developing countries and Central and Eastern Europe. 3F work for the international labour rights as set out by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and for a just and well-regulated labour market with better working and living conditions for all workers in the world.