



The Asia Foundation

South Asia Small Grants Program (SASGP)

Guidance for Applicants

Nepal

1. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Funder: The Asia Foundation

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Informed by six decades of experience and deep local expertise, our work across the region addresses five overarching goals—strengthen governance, empower women, expand economic opportunity, increase environmental resilience, and promote international cooperation.

Funding Opportunity: The [Asia Foundation](http://www.asiafoundation.org)¹ invites all eligible non-government (NGO) and civil society organizations (CSO's) in Nepal to submit funding proposals for programs and activities under its South Asia Small Grants program (SASGP).

Announcement type: Grant

Announcement Date: March 15, 2020

Deadline: April 15, 2020 (11:59) (GMT +5:45)

What is the South Asia Small Grants Program (SASGP)?

The South Asia Small Grants Program (SASGP) advances the Asia Foundation's long-standing presence and commitment to support a thriving and prosperous Nepal. Small grants programming has been the Asia Foundation's signature grant-making window that leverages new knowledge, expands networks and increases our reach in strengthening human and institutional capacity across Asia. The SASGP seeks to support CSOs and NGOs in their priorities under alignment with the Government of Nepal's vision of a "*Prosperous Nepal Happy Nepali.*" We firmly believe the small grants program reflects our trademark collaborative process of constructive partnership that allows our partners to lead and the Foundation to support to meet Asia's changing and dynamic environment.

In Nepal, over the past three decades, our small grants program has supported hundreds of local entities in support -- from various philanthropic organizations over the years including, but not limited to, the McConnell Foundation, Ford Foundation, Skoll Foundation, and Give2Asia, as well as bilateral donors (particularly the U.S. and U.K. governments). As the Foundation approaches its 30th Anniversary of partnership in the country, the Foundation would like to launch a fresh round of funding and support to its civil society partners with a focus on promoting ***Nepal Driven Nepal Development.*** in the following four areas:

- **Public Finance and Institutional Strengthening**
- **Promoting Subnational Investment and Inclusive Economic Governance**
- **Supporting Nepal's E-Governance and Digital Economy**
- **Active Citizenry**

¹ The Asia Foundation is a non-profit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. www.asiafoundation.org.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE SOUTH ASIA SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

Designed as a flexible mechanism to respond to existing contexts and emerging opportunities, the open grant window will support CSOs to work on critical governance challenges around four core themes:

- Increasing public sector accountability and transparency;
- Strengthening the rule of law;
- Promoting civil society participation and media in these efforts; an
- Strengthening democratic institutions and practices.

SASGP hopes to support civil society to achieve three main objectives:

- 1) To promote greater transparency, accountability, rule of law, and responsiveness in their respective governments;
- 2) To broaden the space to meaningfully engage with democratic institutions including those related to the criminal justice sector, anti-corruption bodies, human rights commissions, election administration, parliament, media and local governments;
- 3) To enhance the internal capacity, knowledge base, and programming capabilities of CSOs through capacity development inputs from SASGP.

3. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

TAF invites all eligible CSOs in Nepal, to submit proposals for funding projects under the South Asia Small Grants Program (SASGP). The small grant window is open to innovative and actionable proposals to deliver results that contribute to the above objectives in four program areas: Public Finance and Institutional Strengthening, Promoting Subnational Investment and Economic Governance, Active Citizenry, Improving Nepal's E-Governance and Digital Economy. The following table provides a list of priority areas under each of the program areas that SASGP proposes to fund.

Program Areas
<i>Public Finance and Institutional Strengthening</i>
<i>Core Objective: Institutional and public finance integrity strengthened</i>
Increasing transparency and accountability across policy, planning, budgeting, and implementation processes
Promoting right to information practices
Strengthening oversight and fiduciarily risk reduction
Strengthening budget transparency laws and/or practices
Promoting participatory planning practices
Promoting and strengthening financial disclosure practices
Strengthening legal protection mechanisms

<i>Promoting Subnational Investment and Economic Governance</i>
<i>Core Objective: Inclusive economic governance and sustainable investment environment strengthened</i>
Strengthening public procurement processes
Strengthening enforcement of contracts and international agreements to improve investment environment
<i>Active Citizenry</i>
<i>Core objective: Active participation and civic engagement strengthened</i>
Promoting citizen participation in policy processes
Research to support subnational legislative committees
Promoting affirmative action policies
<i>Improving Nepal's E-Governance and Digital Economy</i>
<i>Core objective: Access to information and informational integrity strengthened</i>
Data literacy
Producing data for evidence-based decision making
Promoting open and accessible data and/or open data policies
Strengthening independent media
Promoting e-governance and digitization of government procedures
Promoting investigative journalism and journalism skills
Strengthening proactive disclosure practices
Strengthening tools and institutions to combat disinformation in social media

3.1. AWARD INFORMATION

Estimated Funding Level: Applicants can apply for grants with a floor level funding of USD 25,000 and a ceiling of USD 75,000 in equivalent local currency. The SASGP has no preference for funding level and applications will be evaluated on the merit of the program with no prejudice to levels of funding sought.

Award Implementation Period: The implementation period for grants cannot be shorter than 6 months or longer than 15 months. The implementation period is to be driven by the logic of the program and no other consideration.

Award Type: All awards under this Call for Proposals will be cost-reimbursable grants.

3.2. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

- Grants will be limited to national not-for-profit organizations. ‘Not-for-profit’ organizations include national civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), consortia, networks, federations and membership bodies, think tanks, universities etc., but exclude government bodies, for-profit entities, and individuals.

Criteria for eligibility of the organization

Type	Eligibility criteria to apply for the SASGP
CSOs and NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a duly registered non-profit or charitable organization. • Apply in the country where the organization is registered. • Has been in operation for a minimum of 3 years. • Has demonstrated capacity in project/program management. • Has sound credentials in financial management and shall demonstrate good current audited financial statements for the organization. • Has experience in effective governance related programming. • Favorable if organization can demonstrate experience in implementing programming that is sensitive to diversity and promotes inclusivity. If not, demonstrates willingness to incorporate such expertise into a project proposal.
Professional Associations (consortia, networks, federations and membership bodies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a duly registered or recognized non-profit or charitable organization. • Apply in the country where the organization is registered. • Has been in operation for a minimum of 3 years. • Has demonstrated capacity in project/program management. • Has sound credentials in financial management and shall demonstrate good current audited financial statements for the organization. • Has experience in effective governance related programming. • Favorable if organization can demonstrate experience in implementing programming that is sensitive to diversity and promotes inclusivity. If not, demonstrates willingness to incorporate such expertise into a project proposal. • For all consortia, a lead organization must be declared, and all consortium partners should be not-for-profit organizations.
Academic/Research Institutions (think tanks, universities etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be duly registered or recognized by Universities or Campuses and registered as a Research Institution and be a non-profit or charitable organization. • Has been in operation for a minimum of 3 years. • Has a demonstrated capacity in project/program management.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has sound credentials in financial management and shall demonstrate strong audited financial statements. • Has experience in effective governance related programming. • Favorable if organization can demonstrate experience in implementing programming that is sensitive to diversity and promotes inclusivity. If not, demonstrates willingness to incorporate such expertise into a project proposal.
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- All applicants must be eligible to receive foreign donor funds and have the necessary paperwork and legal requirements to receive such funds.
- All applicants will need to provide evidence (in an Application Form) that they are established and have in place the resources, systems and processes that will enable them to effectively manage the size of funds that they are requesting in the application.
- If any of the information provided in the Application Form is proven wrong in the post-award due-diligence process, the applicant will be automatically disqualified even if selected for an award.

4. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

This competition announcement and any amendments can be accessed at www.asiafoundation.org. If you have trouble or difficulties accessing any information contained in this announcement, please contact TAF through the email address assigned to your country. Inquiries will only be entertained through email.

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Applications that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to furnish or comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

Content and form of application submission:

Please note:

- Applications can be submitted in English or Nepali
- All budgets should be in local currency.
- All pages should be numbered.
- All documents should be formatted to A4 paper.
- All Microsoft Word documents should be single-spaced, 11-point fonts, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.
- The following fonts should be utilized for each language: English – Calibri (Body) and Nepali – Nirmal UI

When submitting an application, applicants are required to include the following documents and information, as applicable:

A. Application Form: Applicants must complete and submit the form given in *Annex 1*.

A copy of the organization’s registration and non-profit status should be provided along with the application. Applicants must also submit proof of their ability to receive foreign and international donor funding.

B. Concept Note: Applicants must prepare a concept note using the template provided in *Annex 2*.

C. Budget Estimate: Applicants must present a budget total and breakdown in the budget template available in *Annex 3*.

Funding Restrictions

- Construction: This award does not allow for construction activities or costs.
- Pre-award Costs: Pre-award costs are not an allowable expense for this funding opportunity.
- Program Activities: Activities that are not typically funded include, but are not limited to:
 - profit-generating projects;
 - scholarships to support educational opportunities or study for individuals;
 - paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
 - financial support for fundraising or fund development projects;
 - projects that are inherently political in nature or that contain the appearance of partisanship/support to an individual or single party in electoral campaigns;
 - political party and lobbying activities;
 - projects that support specific religious activities; and,
 - microloans/microfinance projects, distribution of seed money for enterprises, and legal/land rights-focused programs.

Submission Date and Time:

Applications may be submitted by email for consideration by the closing date of this opportunity, which is **April 15, 2020**. All submissions must be received by **11:59 p.m. local time**. This deadline is firm and is not a rolling deadline. If organizations fail to meet the deadline noted above their application will not be considered for funding and will be considered ineligible. The time stamp provided by the email service provider will be used by officials to determine whether or not an application was submitted on time.

All application materials may only be submitted electronically to the following email address:

sasgp.np@asiafoundation.org

[Concept notes rejected in Round 1 cannot be re-submitted for Round 2]

The issuance of this Call for Proposals does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of TAF, nor does it commit TAF to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. TAF reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Further, TAF reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this Call.

5. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Selection Criteria:

Each concept note submitted under this opportunity will be evaluated and rated by a Technical Evaluation Panel on the basis of an evaluation matrix detailed below. The criteria outlined in the matrix are designed to assess the quality of the concept note, and to determine the likelihood of its success. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of the concept note. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail.

Concept Note Evaluation Matrix:

- Quality of the project idea and project planning (50 Points): This relates to your problem statement, approach, how innovative your project idea is and how well it fits with the broader Program Objective (s).
- Ability to achieve project objectives (25 Points): This is related to how well your goals, objectives, activities, outputs and outcomes are articulated and linked.
- Institution's record and organizational capacity (15 Points): This is related to the quality of the personnel deputed to the project and the organization's capacity statement.
- Value for money (10 points): This relates how you plan to deliver value, your project costing, cost-effectiveness, and how your personnel inputs are priced.

Review and Selection Process:

- Each application will initially be reviewed against the organizational eligibility criteria given above (this corresponds to the information provided in the Application Form) and screened for alignment with the thematic. All shortlisted applications found to be eligible will be forwarded to a Technical areas Evaluation Panel of experts.
- The Technical Evaluation Panel will evaluate, score and rank the shortlisted applications based on the Concept Note Evaluation Matrix given above. The highest-ranking concept notes will be selected for funding.
- If your concept note is selected for an award, TAF will invite representatives from your organization (including the Team Lead) to attend a project development workshop. Apart from M&E frameworks, reporting requirements and detailed budgeting, the workshop will also contain voluntary modules on developing a full-scale proposal.
- After the workshop all grantees will be required to submit a detailed project proposal.
- Once the proposals are received, full scale due diligence and budget negotiations will be carried out and Letters of Grant will be issued immediately after.
- All applicants will be sent a written response on the outcome of their application. The overall process will take an average of 2 to 3 months.

ANNEXURES

Annex 1: Application Form

Annex 2: Concept Note Template

Annex 3: Budget Template