



Pakistan: Call for Grant Proposals

Protecting Civil Society Access to Resources in Pakistan

The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) is pleased to invite proposals for grants as part of its efforts to support local civil society in Pakistan in protecting civic space and the operational environment for non-profit organizations (NPOs). Grants of up to \$20,000 USD are available for projects implemented by a single organization meeting the criteria discussed below. Organizations are encouraged to form consortia with other local NPOs, in which case they may apply for a greater amount of funding (up to \$49,500 USD). Organizations may apply as part of more than one proposal. The activities funded by each grant must be completed no later than November 30, 2022.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until May 9, 2022 or until available funds are depleted.

Background

Like many countries worldwide and in the Asia region, Pakistan has experienced contractions of civic space and the operational freedom of civil society actors, made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent years, there has been an increase in repressive government measures levied against civil society operating in Pakistan, from restrictions on free expression and social media, to increasingly burdensome reporting and foreign funding requirements. Under the guise of countering terrorism and money laundering, numerous NPOs have been shut down, and new regulations have been enacted to control and monitor spending of cross-border funds by non-profits.

Despite this challenging environment, local NPOs have been resilient and creative in seeking opportunities to maintain Pakistan's civic space and carry out their work – particularly with respect to pandemic response. They have also actively engaged with the Economic Affairs Department and its regulations around foreign funding, carving out areas for policy reform amidst increasingly complex, burdensome regulatory requirements for NPOs.

The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) seeks to support local civil society organizations (CSOs) in Pakistan to expand on these efforts to protect access to resources and operational mobility for Pakistani organizations. There appear to be particular opportunities at the current time, given changes in government, recent

positive court decisions, and willingness among actors like the EAD and Cabinet to consider changes to foreign funding rules.

We therefore encourage proposals from domestic Pakistani CSOs related to advocacy and/or concrete activities to improve the operational environment. Proposals may be designed around a range of activities designed to achieve the grant's objective, including, but not limited to:

- Building an effective domestic coalition of NPOs to advocate on issues related to foreign funding access and usage, including capacity-building, dialogue, and advocacy around Financial Action Task Force (FATF) guidelines
- Operationalizing NPO help desks and engagement with the EAD to further secure improvements in the regulatory framework for NPOs
- Conducting in-depth research, monitoring, and/or data collection with respect to how foreign funding laws are implemented and their impact on the NPO sector, particularly with respect to service, humanitarian, or COVID-19 relief
- Pursuing systematic engagement and openings with government, and developing new toolkits, strategies, activities, and alliances to advocate for greater access to resources and fewer burdensome restrictions
- Conducting roundtables, seminars, or informational campaigns to formulate civil society strategies and raise awareness around international standards of free association and access to resources
- Building narrative and social/multi-media campaigns to promote civil society work and counter negative depictions of NPOs and improve public and government awareness of non-profit sector contributions

*This list is illustrative, and ICNL strongly encourages applicants with innovative ideas and approaches not described above to apply. *Please note that **service-related or direct humanitarian interventions** (e.g. providing COVID-19 relief) are **not relevant to this call and will not be considered. Due to the number of expected applications, only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.***

Application Instructions

To apply for a grant, applicants must submit the following items in English, to asia@icnl.org. Please ensure that the subject of your email is "Pakistan Grant Application 2022."

- Proposal (see below).
- Line-item budget (no more than \$20,000 USD if applying as a single organization, and no more than \$49,500 USD if applying as a consortium)

- Resumes/CVs of staff to be engaged in the project.
- Background information about the applicant organization (e.g., website links or informational materials).

Content of Proposal

In *five pages or less*, please describe your proposal. The proposal should address the following topics:

- Identify a clear challenge for CSOs or civic space resulting from government regulations restricting the operational space (including, e.g., foreign funding policies).
- Provide an overview of the proposed initiative to overcome, ease, or navigate the mentioned restrictions, including specific activities and anticipated outcomes.
- Describe applicant's experience implementing similar activities proposed in this call.
- Identify CSOs, government bodies, and other stakeholders that will be engaged in the activities outlined in the application; if applying as a consortium, indicate what organizations will play which roles and carry out which activities.
- Provide a proposed activity plan with specific goals and a timeline, recognizing that grant activities must be completed no later than November 30, 2022.

Eligibility Requirements

Open to any not-for-profit, non-governmental organization based in Pakistan.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following factors:

- Compliance with eligibility requirements and application procedures.
- Demonstrated commitment of the applicant to improving civic space and operational constraints in Pakistan.
- Quality of proposed project, including the project's innovations, the proposed methodology/design, and feasibility of the project (e.g., activities are targeted to achieve stated results, and anticipated results are realistic and attainable).
- Likelihood that the proposed project will enhance civic space in Pakistan.
- Proposed budget and value for money.
- Inclusion of reasonable indicators to measure project success.

Deadline

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until May 9, 2022 or until available funds are depleted.