

Rights Democracy and Inclusion Fund (RDIF)

Guidelines for Applying for Funding

1 Background

Nepal's government, constitutional bodies, and political parties have faced many challenges in performing their roles since the reintroduction of multiparty democratic government in 1990. Associated problems — including institutional failings and a failure of institutions to represent all sectors of society — have seriously hindered Nepal's development.

The Rights, Democracy and Inclusion Fund (RDIF) is an initiative of the UK, Swiss, Australian and Norwegian governments for the sustainable reform of political governance in Nepal. It was launched in February 2006 and is managed by the Enabling State Programme (ESP), a programme of the British government's Department for International Development (DFID). The fund is part of the DFID, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's (SDC), Ausaid and Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) global commitment to supporting accountable and responsive governance.

The fund aims to help bring about a strengthened and more sustainable system of accountable governance that is characterised by more respect for rights, democratic norms, and the political inclusion of excluded groups. Such a system will fit with PRSP objectives on good governance and social inclusion and be more durable, responsive and accountable.

The main institutions involved in democratic governance are the political parties, government bodies that regulate and supervise elections, parliamentary bodies, and in some cases the media and other organisations. The fund will focus on improving the performance of all these institutions and on including excluded groups in Nepali politics and government. The fund's aims are in line with HMGN's declared policy of the democratisation of the country's system of governance.

2 What type of initiatives will be supported?

The fund will encourage and support Nepali ideas to help the sustainability of democracy. It will support Nepali civil society organisations, academic institutions and other organisations working legally in Nepal.

The fund is focused on *sustaining* accountable political governance. It will therefore support work that has a lasting medium to long-term impact. The fund will establish funding priorities on a half-yearly basis.

The fund will support promising ideas in the following three subject areas:

- a) **Strengthening the machinery of democratically elected government** — including, but not limited to initiatives to:
 - improve the internal governance of the political parties. This will include measures to improve their overall functioning and in particular to make them function more democratically and inclusively so as they become more responsive to members and constituents. A priority here is to support parties to develop their policies in a more democratic way and to encourage the consideration of policy alternatives;
 - strengthen policy advisory bodies such as think tanks; and

- strengthen the capacity of government and non-government bodies that regulate and monitor elections and other aspects of the political process.
- b) **Strengthening understanding and conduct of political rules and options** — including, but not limited to initiatives to:
- raise awareness and understanding among groups interested in political governance (for example, party cadres) of key democratic concepts including the rule of law, human rights, and democratic working practices; and
 - encourage political governance actors to abide more by agreed ‘rules of the game’ of democratic governance such as obligations to implement manifesto promises and behaving in cooperative and consultative ways in coalitions.
- c) **Political inclusion** — involving initiatives to increase opportunities for the political participation of excluded groups (women, Dalits, ethnic groups, terai communities and others) in political parties and in national and local government by:
- making the institutional systems involved in political governance more accessible to excluded groups; and
 - improving the awareness and capacity of excluded groups to participate in political processes including at district level and in political party leadership.

Project activities can take any form but are likely to include initiatives for institutional reform, awareness raising, promoting engagement between constitutional forces, capacity building, idea sharing, and dialogue promotion. The fund aims to support a range of initiatives across all parts of the constitutional spectrum.

3 Who can apply for funding?

Proposals can be submitted by national and international organisations legally operating in Nepal including government agencies, NGOs, Nepali associations, professional bodies, community groups, educational institutions, and INGOs. INGOs will only be supported if they work alongside a local partner.

The fund will **not** provide support directly to political parties, and will operate in a completely non-partisan manner. Those organisations that receive funding must abide by the donors’ Basic Operating Guidelines (BOGs).

An important consideration In assessing whether to fund proposals will be organisations’ track records in improving the sustainability of democracy and their credibility in the eyes of project stakeholders.

Organisations funded by RDIF must produce evidence of sound management practices, including financial transparency and accountability arrangements. Organisations that receive funds must produce a copy of their organisation’s complete independently audited accounts each year in the same form as those submitted to the organisations’ own management, including any notes from the auditor.

If two or more organisations submit a joint proposal, the proposal needs to state which will be the lead agency responsible for administration and implementation.

4 What size of projects will be funded?

There is no minimum or maximum amount. Organisations submitting proposals are expected to make a significant contribution to the resources needed to run their projects. This can be by providing human, financial, or other resources.

5 Information needed in RDIF proposals

Each proposal should contain the following information and should be no more than 10 single-spaced typed pages long in Arial 11 font size. Proposals can be written in either Nepali or English.

Title page: (1 page)

This front page should say “Proposal for RDIF funding” at the top of the page and also include the proposed project’s name, the main applicant organisation’s name, and the month and year of proposal submission.

Information on applicant organisation (maximum 2 pages):

- Name, address, telephone numbers, and email details
- Name of primary contact person
- Legal status
- Goal and main subject working areas
- Brief history
- Description of major on-going activities
- The organisation’s previous experience in political governance.

Project proposal (maximum 5 pages):

- State the core problem that the project will address.
- Background to the core problem including the problems the project will address.
- Context analysis explaining why the project is relevant to the issues involved.
- A summary of other initiatives already underway in this area undertaken by other groups.
- Project goal and objectives.
- Project activities (who will do what, with whom, where, when, how often, and for how long, etc.)
- Project target groups/beneficiaries (who they are and how they will be affected by the project?).
- Specific measurable results and outcome indicators (what changes or differences will the project make towards improved governance. What specific and practical end results will be achieved by implementing the project?).
- Duration of the project (maximum two years).
- Resources — state the total amount asked for and what resources the submitting organisation will provide.
- Management arrangements — briefly explain how the project will be managed. State which is the lead agency if more than one agency will be involved.
- Coordination — explain if implementing the project will involve coordination with other organisations.
- Work plan — give timeline for each activity.
- Brief terms of reference and qualifications of proposed key personnel.

Project budget (maximum 2 pages)

- Budget costs in Nepali rupees broken down by activity (staffing, administration, training, projects, printing costs, miscellaneous, etc.). The budget is best prepared in a spreadsheet and inserted into the Word document once finalised.
- Total funding requested from RDIF.
- Local financial contribution from the submitting organisation and sources/amount of any co-funding that will be committed.

6 Proposal submission

Project proposals are reviewed every month in order of submission. They should be sent to the RDIF Coordinator, in one of the following three ways:

deliver to: Enabling State Programme
 Kiran Bhawan
 Sanepa, 2
 Lalitpur

post to: Enabling State Programme
 P.O. Box 15142 / PPC 333
 Kathmandu

email to: mail@esp-nepal.com

7 How are proposals selected for funding?

All proposals submitted in the proper format (as explained above) will be reviewed by the RDIF Steering Committee. This committee is made up of representatives from DFID, Ausaid, British Embassy and the SDC.

The committee may ask for clarification or additional information from submitting organisations. It will inform, through the RDIF Coordinator, all submitting organisations whether or not their proposals have been accepted for funding.

Note: these guidelines are posted on RDIF's website: www.rdif.org.np