

Call for Proposals

Guidelines for grant applicants

(Updated on 2009-11-13)

1. Sweden's special initiative for democratisation and freedom of expression 2009-2011

1.1 Background

Through Government Decision UF2009/27888/UP the Swedish government has decided to supplement and strengthen Sweden's support to democracy, human rights and rule of law worldwide. The special initiative will primarily focus on support to strengthen democracy and freedom of expression and requests for support to assist private individuals, groups and civil society organisations working for democratisation and freedom of expression.

The Government of Sweden has elaborated a strategy for support within this initiative for the years 2009-2011.

1.2 Objectives of the Initiative

In the Government Communication 'Freedom from Oppression: a Communication on Development Assistance to Democracy' (Govt. Communication 2008/09:11, Report 2008/09:UU6, Riksdag Communication 2008/09:187), the Government emphasises three priority areas: civil and political rights, the institutions and procedures of democracy and the rule of law, and actors in the democratisation process.

The Government is conducting work to promote democracy in order to create the conditions for women and men to assert, and actively exercise, their political and civil rights and by doing so, acquire influence over their conditions of life. Experience of previously successful democratisation processes shows that actors for change in civil society are of key importance in work to increase democracy and freedom of expression.

With this as a starting point, the Government now conducts a three-year initiative to support actors for change so as to strengthen democracy and freedom of expression. This initiative supplements and strengthens the Government's other development cooperation for democracy, the rule of law and human rights. It targets intergovernmental organisations, private individuals, groups or civil society organisations, at local, national, regional and global levels alike, and attends to threats against democracy and

freedom of expression, and restrictions on the freedoms and rights of women and men.

The objective of the strategy is strengthened actors for change, working for increased democratisation and freedom of expression. The new initiative for democratisation and freedom of expression will help reduce various forms of oppression that hinder people's ability to lift themselves out of poverty and prevent equitable and sustainable global development. By doing so, the initiative will contribute to the Government's objective of international development cooperation to create the conditions for poor people to improve their conditions of life. It will also contribute to the Government's overall objective of equitable and sustainable global development.

1.3 Objectives of the Present Call for Proposals

The specific objective of this Call for Proposals is to support actors for change where they operate with difficulty and where there is little room for political pluralism with the view of promoting a holistic approach to human rights and embodying a pluralistic and non-discriminatory view of society. This means, for example, increasing the scope of actors for change to disseminate and receive information and opinions. It also means providing these actors with the opportunity to work for pluralism and freedom of opinion, which can pave the way for democratic, transparent decision-making and changes in legislation, etc., that limits freedom of association, freedom of the press, access to Internet, the right to a fair hearing in court and the right to defence, and otherwise restricts civil rights and liberties.

In that regard, eligible actors under this Call for Proposals will be primarily civil society organisations (CSOs) that wish to support actors for change in DAC-classified developing countries. Exile organisations may also be supported providing that the activities of these organisations aim at strengthening actors for change in the country of origin.

2. Rules for this Call for Proposals

This is a restricted Call for Proposals. In the first instance, only Concept Notes must be submitted for evaluation. Thereafter, applicants whose Concept Notes have been selected will be invited to submit a Full Application Form. Only Concept Notes for projects to be implemented starting year 2010 and ending no later than 31 December 2011 will be considered.

This Call for Proposals will be open until 31 December 2009.

2.1 Eligibility Criteria

2.1.1 Eligibility of Applicants

In order to be eligible for a grant, applicants **must**:

- be legal persons or an entity without legal personality¹ **and**
- be non profit making **and**
- belong to i. a one of the following categories:
 - civil society organisations, including non-governmental organisations and independent political foundations, and networks thereof at local, national, regional and international level;
 - trade unions,
 - free and independent media and journalists,
 - actors in cultural life,
 - researchers,
 - women's rights groups,
 - religious communities,
 - community based organisations,
 - private sector agencies

This list is not exhaustive.

- support actors for change with restriction to DAC-classified developing countries. Exile organisations may also be supported providing that the activities of these organisations aim at strengthening actors for change in the country of origin.

Support to actors for change may be allocated via third parties such as civil society organisations and party-affiliated organisations.

Support will be able to be given both to actors for change with whom Sida has previously cooperated and to actors that Sida has not previously supported.

¹ Grant applications may be eligible if submitted by entities which do not have legal personality under the applicable national law, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and assume financial liability.

If selected to submit a full application organisations will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Documented competence in the area of democracy and freedom of expression
- Reliable systems for management and control
- Competence in development issues
- Experience of working with development and human rights issues and/or humanitarian support
- Whether or not the proposed support is additional in regard to Sida's ongoing support

2.1.2 Eligible Actions

Support can be given in the form of organisational support and project support. It can be used for capacity building and/or specific and time-bound actions such as campaigns, legal activism and dissemination of information.

As underlined under Section 1.3, the focus will be on situations where civil society operates with difficulty and where there is a serious lack of fundamental freedoms.

The proposed actions will contribute directly in a given country or region to improving the situation relating to at least one of the following themes:

- The right to freedom of opinion and expression, to information and to communicate, including freedom of the media, fight against censorship, and access to the Internet;
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, sexual orientation and religion;
- The right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, including the right to form and join a trade union;
- The right to freedom of movement within the borders of a state, and the right to leave any country, including one's own, and to return to one's country.
- The right to liberty and security of person
- The right to political participation
- The right to a fair trial
- Accountability
- Non-discrimination
- Transparency

There must be a clear and reasonably motivated relation between any action supported with regard to the above themes and a larger process of democratisation or strengthening of democratic conduct in the target country or region.

Special priority will be given to actions which aim to protect and facilitate the work of human rights defenders and their organisations.

Nevertheless other human rights may be combined with these main issues since all actions should promote a holistic approach to human rights. Consequently, the actions may use other “entry points” such as social, economic, cultural and ethnic rights, though the aim and the intended impact should relate to democratisation and the fundamental freedoms identified above.

2.1.3 Location

The situations targeted are those where fundamental freedoms as identified above are the least secure, and where disrespect for these freedoms is particularly pronounced. These situations can be characterised by the following selected *indicators* relating to violations of basic human rights as contained in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Human Rights Defenders of 9 December 1998:

- i) Limitations on the right to freedom of expression, to information and to communicate (e.g. regular repression of and major reprisals for criticism of public policies, obstacles to collection, publication and dissemination of information on human rights, including access to the Internet; general censorship);
- ii) Limitations on the right to freedom of association (e.g. regular and widespread obstacles to registration of civil society organisations and their independent operation, forced closure of civil society organisations, and physical threats to their members);
- iii) Limitations on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly (e.g. frequent prohibition or violent repression of peaceful protests);
- iv) Threatening and insecure environment, which seriously undermines right to life and physical and mental integrity (e.g. extra-judicial killings, death threats, beatings, torture and ill treatment during questioning or detention).

Although relevance according to the criteria above is the principal basis for assessing and prioritising action proposals, strategical considerations such as thematical and geographical spread will also apply.

Actions addressing the above-mentioned situations may take place at country, regional or global level. Such situations may be limited to a particular region or may affect only a particular group in a country. Transnational and regional actions may also be supported provided that the activities will focus on situations described above. In addition, actions may include operations “out of country”- in neighbouring countries, with the diaspora, refugee communities, etc.

2.2 How to Apply and the Procedures to Follow

If you consider your organisation or project to be eligible fill in the digital format provided on the web page and submit it before December 31, 2009.

Questions can be e-mailed to: callforproposals@sida.se.

In order to manage questions efficiently a link to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) will be created at this web address shortly. Consult this link for answers to your question.

Sida will review the submitted Concept Notes and select applicants who will be asked to submit a full proposal.

Applicants will be notified of their status during January/February, 2010.