Advocacy Support Fund 2016: Supporting Collective Action for Change

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

This document provides information on a variety of topics which potentialAdvocacy Support Fund 2016grant applicants should be aware of. These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) arose during solicitation workshops held across the Kingdom in May 2016 and written requests for clarification which were submitted via email by the 15 May 2016 deadline. These consolidated questions and answers will be posted on the USAID CIS website (www.cisjordan.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/CISJordan) by 18 May 2016. Phone calls to USAID CIS staff and visits to the USAID CIS office are not permitted and may be regarded as grounds for disqualification.

Answers to frequently asked questions are organized by major topic. Applicants are encouraged to review the USAID CIS Grants Manual as details on similar topics can be found there (http://cisjordan.org/GrantOpportunities.aspx).

A) **Application-Related Questions**
B) **Project-Related Questions**
C) **Budget-Related Questions**
D) **Award-Related Questions**
E) **Government-Related Questions**
F) **Other**

A) *Application-Related Questions*

1. **Q: How can I apply for a Grant?**
    A: The first step is to read in detail the Advocacy Support Fund 2016 RFA and the application materials (http://cisjordan.org/GrantOpportunities.aspx#cis). Detailed application instructions are included in the RFA. Potential applicants must also read the USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program (USAID CIS) Grants Manual (http://cisjordan.org/GrantOpportunities.aspx) to ensure the applicant has the capacity to manage an award. All documents are available in Arabic and English.

2. **Q: Where can applications be sent?**
    A: All applications should be submitted via email tojordanusaidcis@fhi360.org by June 5, 2016 at 23.59 (11.59pm). Please refer to page 13 of the RFA for detailed application procedures.

3. **Q: We didn't attend a solicitation workshop;can we apply?**
    A: Yes.

4. **Q: Can an organization submit more than one application? Can more than one award be given to an organization?**
    A:Yes, more than one application may be submitted. Successful grantees may also receive multiple awards within the open competition period of the ASF RFA 2016 if the grantee can demonstrate capacity to implement.

5. **Q: Can organizations that already have grants from other USAID programs apply?**
    A: Yes, if the applicant has the capacity to manage multiple awards.

6. **Is there any priority for organizations that received FHI/USAID grants previously?**
    A. No. Previous FHI 360/USAID funding is not an evaluation criterion of the ASF RFA.

7. **Q: If the organization is currently implementing an FHI/360 grant can it apply to this RFA?**
    A: Yes

8. **Q: What are the opportunities for charitable organizations to receive the grant if they receive funding from other donors?**
   A: Applicants must demonstrate capacity to manage multiple awards. If the question refers to multiple donors funding the same project idea, that is allowed as long as project costs are clearly delineated and separately captured between the funders.

9. **Q: Can newly established organizations apply for a grant?**
   A: Newly established organizations that are registered as legal entities in Jordan, with their headquarters based in Jordan, are eligible to apply. However, all applicants must demonstrate that they possess, or have the ability to obtain, the necessary management and financial competence to comply with all conditions of the grant before it is awarded. After the grant evaluation committee shortlists applications, the FHI 360 Grants Team will conduct due diligence process. Due diligence is part of the evaluation process and the results must confirm that a potential Recipient can successfully comply with the financial, management and programmatic requirements of the grant. The shortlisting of an application does not guarantee an award. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the USAID CIS Grants Manual, section 5.c. Due Diligence, in detail prior to applying for a grant.

10. **Q: Our organization is newly registered and doesn't have experience, however its founding members do. Will the individual's experience be considered instead of the organization's experience?**
    A: The applicant must explain how the organization, or the proposed key personnel in the event the organization is newly registered, has the required experience to implement the proposed project activities and manage the administrative and financial aspects of the grant. If the organization is newly registered and has not yet acquired the necessary experience, the experience of the key personnel proposed to implement the project will be evaluated in lieu of the organization.

11. **Q: Must the organization applying have a minimum number of employees?**
    A. There is not a minimum number of employees per se, but the organization must demonstrate the capacity to implement and manage the grant if shortlisted. Please review the evaluation criteria for Grant Evaluation Committee # 2 (see page 7-8 of the ASF RFA) which states that applicants must have "Demonstrated ability to conceptualize and implement the project (problem, violated right, desired situation, implementation elements)" (40 of the 100 points).

12. **Q: Can we cooperate with other organizations?**
    A: Yes.In all cases, one lead organization must act as the grant applicant, and if selected for a grant, sign the grant agreement and assume responsibility for grant management and reporting requirements.It is the sole responsibility of the prime grantee (main grant applicant) to make sure the sub-grantee is complying with USAID regulations and the grant terms and conditions.

13. **Q: What is meant by Partners? Are they the target groups or other groups/entities?**
    A. The selection and role(s) of partners are to be defined by the applicant in line with the proposed project. As described in the RFA, if shortlisted, applicants are expected to bring along their partners or stakeholders as part of this presentation to tell their story to the GEC #2.

14. **Q: Must organizations be registered as part of an official coalition?**
    A. No this is not a requirement.

15. **Q: In order to apply with a partner, do you want one application package?**

A: Yes, one application should be submitted. One lead organization must act as the grant applicant, and if selected for a grant, sign the grant agreement and assume responsibility for grant management and reporting requirements.

16. **Q: Does applying as a coalition put us in a better position to receive the grant?**
    A. Guiding principles as outlined in the RFA include: "Proposed change should be driven by collective actions, collaboration, networking and coalition-building among community actors, i.e. CSOs, private sector, decision-makers, influencers, etc.)". It is up to the applicant to determine how their proposed project achieves this. Please review the evaluation criteria for Grant Evaluation Committee # 2 (see page 7-8 of the ASF RFA) which states that applicants must have: "Demonstrated engagement of stakeholders in collective action" (30 out of 100 points).

17. **Q: Can we partner with an international organization instead of a local one?**
    A: Yes, Jordanian organizations with their headquarters based in Jordan may partner with international organizations. However, applicants are encouraged to partner with other Jordanian-based organizations.

18. **Q: Must registration documents and profession licenses be valid when applying?**
    A: Yes.

19. **Q: Is it possible to apply for the grant before completing the organization registration process and finalize the process during the month of June 2016?**
    A. Applicants must be registered legal entities per the RFA by the application deadline of June 5, 2016.

20. **Q: Are organizations that are capable of preparing a strategic plan under the Institutional Strengthening for Change (ISC) in a preferential position for receiving the grant?**
    A. There is no link between the ISC strategic planning process and the Advocacy Support Fund RFA.

21. **Q: Will there be a geographic distribution of the grants, i.e. North, Middle, and South?**
    A:Applications are evaluated on a governorate level (i.e. Mafraq applications evaluated against Mafraq applications). If no applications from that governorate are shortlisted, no awards will be made there.

22. **Q: Can you reduce the amounts of the minimum value of the grant so more than 2 grants are given to the governorate (example: start at JDs10000)?**
    A. Two grants per governorate is the proposed target and the final results will be decided in conjunction with USAID, pending the outcomes of the grant evaluation committee and due diligence process. As outlined in the RFA, USAID CIS may fully fund the project; fund the project with conditions; reduce the scope and amount of theproposed project; or not to fund the project.

23. **Q: What if there happen to be more than two outstanding ideas from one governorate or in the case that no applications are selected from a certain governorate, would FHI consider granting more than just two grants per governorate?**
    A. Two grants per governorate is the proposed target and the final results will be decided in conjunction with USAID, pending the outcomes of the grant evaluation committee and due diligence process.

24. **Q: Can we submit the proposal in Arabic? Must the proposal be submitted via e-mail?**
    A: Yes. Proposals can be submitted in either English or Arabic, although English language is

preferable if the applicant has English language capacity. Electronic applications should be submitted via email to jordanusaidcis@fhi360.org

25. Q: **Must marginalized groups (the target group) be part of the video application and will the video application be evaluated on that basis?**
    A. Please review the evaluation criteria for Grant Evaluation Committee #1 (see page 7 of the ASF RFA) which states that applicants must demonstrate "Engagement of marginalized groups in design & implementation through collective action" (30 points out of 100). How the applicant demonstrates this is up to them.

26. Q: **Can we refer to previously implemented projects to answer the question of "Why should we fund you and not someone else"?**
    A. Yes, if this contributes to effectively answering the question.

27. Q: **In case questions or clarifications are needed during the preparation of the proposal, is there any way to contact USAID CIS?**
    A: The deadline for requests for clarifications has passed with responses included here in this FAQ. In addition, USAID CIS has posted additional case studies and examples of Jordanian advocacy efforts on its website and encourages applicants to review these: [www.cisjordan.org.](http://www.cisjordan.org) Phone calls to USAID CIS staff and visits to the USAID CIS office are not permitted and may be regarded as grounds for disqualification.

28. Q: **If the submitted proposal was not selected, can we amend and apply again?**
    A: No.

29. Q: **Is it possible to notify applicants of the results of the evaluation and the reasons for rejection?**
    A. All applicants are officially informed of the status of their application, once informed, USAID CIS is available to provide feedback.

30. Q: **What is the maximum number of pages for the application form?**
    A: Applicants must answer the pre-application questions utilizing the template. Answers must be concise and not exceed two pages in total.

31. Q: **What is meant by the annual budget in the pre-application form?**
    A: It means the total (master) budget of the organization for 2015.

32. Q: **What is meant by "implementation elements" in the Grants Evaluation Committee evaluation criteria for oral presentations?**
    A. As described in the sub-criteria, this means the applicant should describe "what resources and support are needed to implement this project".

33. Q: **What is the minimum number of people to attend the oral presentation?**
    A: There is no minimum for the oral presentation but a maximum of five. Applicants should consider including those that can best represent their issue and proposed advocacy intervention, whether they are staff, consultants, board members, volunteers, stakeholders, or those affected by the issue.

34. Q: **What if we don't have 5 people for the presentation shall we hire people to come with us so we fulfil the number?**
    There is no minimum for the oral presentation but a maximum of five. Applicants should consider including those that can best represent their issue and proposed advocacy

intervention, whether they are staff, consultants, board members, volunteers, stakeholders, or those affected by the issue.

35. **Who is authorized to sign on behalf of the organization applying for the grant?**
A. This depends on the applicant's legal status and who has the authority to enter into agreements on behalf of the organization.

B) Project-Related Questions

36. **Q. Can an organization in Aqaba conduct an agricultural project in Tafileh supported by CIS if the grant is awarded?**
A: Applicants must be headquartered in the governorate in which its proposed project will be implemented OR applicants can be branches of national umbrella organizations in the governorate where their proposed project will be implemented. Please refer to the ASF RFA for a description of the program objectives and the activities this RFA supports.

37. **Q:The idea is not clear; do you want a political or social cause?**
A: As outlined in the RFA, grants will "support issue-driven collective action and networking to create locally-driven solutions that address rights violations in the areas of democracy, human rights and governance; economic development and energy; education and youth; water resources and environment; population and family health; gender equality and female empowerment; and inclusion of persons with disabilities.[1]

38. **Q:What do you mean by Collective Action if you insist that the application should** be submitted by only one organization?
A: As outlined in the RFA, Collective Action is when individuals, groups, or organizations come together to combine the strength of the group's resources, knowledge and efforts to reach a shared goal by all the stakeholders. The grants will "support issue-driven collective action and networking to create locally-driven solutions that address rights violations in the areas mentioned in the previous question. For contractual purposes, the application must be submitted by one organization.

39. **Q: Can the project/initiative be from any sector and any topic within the Advocacy Grants Program?**
A. As outlined in the RFA, grants will "support issue-driven collective action and networking to create locally-driven solutions that address rights violations in the areas of democracy, human rights and governance; economic development and energy; education and youth; water resources and environment; population and family health; gender equality and female empowerment; and inclusion of persons with disabilities.[2]

40. **Q: Can we apply for a project related to animal rights?**
A: The ASF RFA supports issue-driven collective action and networking to create locally-driven solutions that address rights violations in the areas of democracy, human rights and governance; economic development and energy; education and youth; water resources and

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[1] Issues are also linked to USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (2013-17 (updated March 2015): https://www.usaid.gov/jordan/cdcs
[2] Issues are also linked to USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (2013-17 (updated March 2015): https://www.usaid.gov/jordan/cdcs

environment; population and family health; gender equality and female empowerment; and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

41. Q: **In reference to the "Sar Waqtha" campaign that was presented during the solicitation workshop, does this mean that applicants must focus on issues of persons with disabilities or is this just an example?**
A. This is an illustrative example of a Jordanian advocacy case. Additional examples can be found at http://cisjordan.org/GrantOpportunities.aspx.

42. Q: **Can we apply for a grant to complete projects/previous campaigns that have already started/continue on the same idea?**
A. The goal of this RFA is to advance rights-based advocacy at whatever stage.

43. Q: **If we want to work on a cause does the number of people suffering from this problem count on the evaluation or not?**
A. As outlined in the RFA evaluation criteria, the proposal must demonstrate a "clearly defined problem & how it impacts the community" (40 out of 100 points).

44. Q: **Does theASF support Productive projects? Are grants awarded to organizations that are working to strengthen the charitable sector as a whole?**
A:No, please refer to the ASFRFA for a description of the program objectives and the activities it supports.

45. Q: **Can the proposal include a profit making production project or revolving loans?**
A: No, please refer to the ASF RFA for a description of the program objectives and the activities it supports.

46. Q: **The government will not back off on laws and violated rights; how will you intervene to facilitate putting pressure on the government?**
A. Through the ASF, USAID CIS will support civil society efforts to advocate for rights through grant support, technical assistance and mentoring.

47. Q: **Must the project include all the objectives in the RFA or can we work on one objective?**
A. Please review the ASF evaluation criteria to assess how your proposed project meets the RFA goals and objectives.

48. Q: **We have a project that targets Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities that might include more than one city in the North, are we eligible for the ASF grants?**
Proposed projects that include all members of targeted host communities are eligible for funding under the ASF.Applicants must be headquartered in the governorate in which its proposed project will be implemented OR applicants can be branches of national umbrella organizations in the governorate where their proposed project will be implemented. Please refer to the ASF RFA for a description of the program objectives and the activities it supports.

49. Q: **Is it compulsory for the organization's members who are going to work on the advocacy to be Jordanians? Can they be from any other nationality?**
A: A: The ASF aims to strengthen bottom-up social accountability at the community level, increase peoples' understanding of their rights and responsibilities, and empower them to engage with decision-makers at all levels. Today, the profile of communities in Jordan includes a range of stakeholders that vary in age, nationality, gender, and interests. Applicants are highly encouraged to design inclusive projects that respond to community priorities.

50. Q: Is it accepted to implement the project throughInformal Groups and not organizations? Similar to the example given "Sar Waqtha"?
    A: As outlined in the RFA, applicants must be legally registered in Jordan with headquarters in Jordan. Applicants must be headquartered in the governorate in which its proposed project will be implemented <u>OR</u> applicants can be branches of national umbrella organizations in the governorate where their proposed project will be implemented. Informal groups can participate in the project as coalition-members, stakeholders, and partners, as appropriate.

51. Q: Is it compulsory to finish the project in 12 months? Is it accepted to complete the project in less than 12 months?
    A: USAID CIS believes that a minimum of 12 months is required to implement an advocacy initiative, in order to give the grantee time to conduct consultations and research during the preparation phase and measure impact in the final phase of the award.

52. What about the sustainability of the initiative? Does the organization cover the costs of activities after the end of the 12 months' implementation period?
    A. All USAID CIS grants must end by December 31, 2017. If the applicant wishes to continue the initiatives beyond the grant's period of performance, this would be done without USAID CIS funding.

C. Budget-Related Questions

53. Q. Is there a minimum and maximum grant size?
    A: Estimated amount range: JOD 35K – JOD 50K. NOTE: An applicant can apply for an amount that is less or more but if the applicant applies for more than JOD 50K, this must be justified by a comprehensive project design and organization capacity to effectively implement the project and to spend the proposed amount within the defined period of performance.

54. Q:Who covers the applicant's cost during the "qualification period"/pre-grant period?
    A: Applicants will not be reimbursed for the cost incurred in preparation and submission of an application. All preparation and submission costs are at the Applicant's expense. Any expenses incurred before the grant period<u>, including expenses incurred during the due diligence period,</u> are not covered.FHI 360 will not compensate applicants for response to solicitation.

55. Q: Is the project budget separate from the organization budget?
    A. The pre-application form asks for the organization budget to better understand the size and scope of the applicant's operations. Only shortlisted applicants will be requested to produce a project budget (to take place during Step 3 of the competition process: action planning and due diligence).

56. Q: What is the Capacity Building Budget Line for?
    A: Applicants can allocate a percentage of the total project budget for institutional strengthening, technical assistance, or capacity building support for implementation of the proposed initiative and/or to strengthen the applicant in achieving its overall mission. Examples of activities that may be covered under the capacity building component include providing training for the applicant's staff and partners in relevant fields, hiring consultants to enrich program offerings, engaging a third party to support development of an institutional strategic plan, enhancing internal management capacities in the areas of finance, human resources, procurement, etc. International travel for consultants to deliver capacity building services, or staff to participate in capacity building activities outside of Jordan, requires pre-approval and will be considered on a case by case basis.

D. Award-Related Questions

57. **Q: Is it accepted to provide the 5% contribution as a form of volunteer work?**
   A: As described in page 10 of the ASF RFA, "Cost share can also be payments from the Applicant's own funds or the fair value of in-kind contributions, such as space, equipment, the monetary value of volunteers' or staff time, etc."

58. **Q: Is it accepted to partnership with another organization that is willing to pay the 5%?**
   A: Partnerships based on a shared vision and programmatic cooperation are highly encouraged and the partner's cost share contribution is acceptable as long as it is not paid for by the U.S. Government under another grant, cooperative agreement, or contract.

59. **Q: My newly registered organization has been short-listed for a grant, but it doesn't have an audited financial report, what can I provide instead?**
   A:According to Jordanian law, all registered organizations are required to conduct annual external audits. If a recent audit has not been conducted, a revenue and expense statement and balance sheet for the previous financial year may be submitted, in addition to any written financial policies and cost data the organization may have available.

60. **Q: What does the due diligence process include?**
   A: Once Applicants have been shortlisted by the Grant Evaluation Committee and before signing grant agreements, the final shortlisted applicants will be asked to submit full supporting documentation to illustrate that the organization has the technical capacity to implement the grant, as well as the financial and administrative systems in place to adequately account for the grant funds as detailed in the USAID CIS Grants Manual. Shortlisted organizations will be required to complete a financial pre-award assessment and site visits may be conducted by USAID CIS staff to evaluate the organization in these areas. See section III.A. of the RFA for more details (page 9).

61. **Q: Do we need approval for any foreign funding the organization receives?**
   A: The majority of non-profit organizations and companies registered in Jordan are legally required to obtain Government approval of foreign funding. Although grants issued by the USAID CIS are considered to be foreign funding, USAID CIS does not require grantees to provide evidence of such approval. However, it remains the legal responsibility of the organization to obtain the approval and shortlisted organizations are encouraged to apply for approval upon notification to gain time and avoid impacting the project timeline.

62. **Q: Does the USAID CIS require specific reports?**
   A: Yes, grant recipients are expected to submit quarterly and final narrative reports, as well as monitoring and evaluation reports, in addition to monthly financial reports and any other required reporting stated in the grant agreement.

63. **Q: What happens if the grantee fails to submit the required reports or deliverables?**
   A: No payments will be issued until the required reports or deliverables stated in the grant agreement are submitted and approved by USAID CIS. Failure to submit reports may also lead to suspension of the grant and in some cases termination.

64. **Q: What is a fixed obligation grant?**
   A: A fixed obligation grant (also known as a FOG) is a grant mechanism intended to support specific projects where costs are certain and where the accomplishment of grant "milestones" is readily discernible. Applicants should refer to section 6.b. 'Fixed Obligation Grants' of the USAID CIS Grants manual for more detailed information.

65. **Q: Can we include government bodies as part of pressure groups in order to achieve the initiative's goal?**
    A: Yes, depending on the goal that is to be achieved and the role these bodies play in the project. However, persons working in government bodies may not be financially reimbursed for participating in the project, unless they are retired or are currently not receiving any financial remuneration by any government body.

F) Other:

66. **Q: Is there a penalty if the project is not implemented or fails to meet its objectives?**
    A. USAID CIS will monitor the performance of grantees and work closely with them to achieve their project's goals and objectives. Corrective actions will apply as required. This could include a revised program strategy, reduction in scope, suspension and/or termination of an award.

67. **Q: Are there any other grant opportunities to apply to currently? Will there be any other grant opportunities during the next year?**
    A: Please visit our website regularly for information on available grant opportunities
    www.cisjordan.org

68. **Q: What is the benefit to our organizations and what do we benefit from implementing the project?**

    A. Grants issued under the ASF support CSOs to collectively advocate for locally-defined priorities through community engagement and rights-based advocacy. In addition, technical assistance and mentoring will be provided to support grantees in achieving their project goals and to strengthening their organizational capacities.

69. **Q: What is the relationship between USAID and FHI 360?**
    A: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the donor funding the USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program (USAID CIS) which aims at cultivating a strong and vibrant civil society in Jordan through supporting a broad range of civic initiatives. Working at both national and local levels, it supports civic initiatives and advocacy responding to common interests, strengthens the organizational capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) and promotes Government of Jordan-civil society collaboration efforts to address reform and development challenges. USAID CIS is a five-year project (2013-18) implemented by FHI 360, a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions.

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