



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Global Media  
Defence Fund

## CALL FOR PARTNERSHIPS (C/FOE/GlobalMediaDefenceFund2020/01)

**Deadline for submission: 10 May 2020 at 23:59 (Paris time)**

### GENERAL CONTEXT OF THE CALL FOR PARTNERSHIPS

Media freedom is under threat around the globe. Last year alone (2019), 56 journalists were killed, as per the [UNESCO Observatory on Killed Journalists](#). Between 2010 and 2019, UNESCO condemned 894 murders of journalists. Additionally challenging is the impunity with which this violence occurs: today, for every 10 murders committed against journalists around the world, nine remain unpunished. Furthermore, independent reporting is also silenced by other types of violations such as harassment, lack of legal rules protecting freedom of expression, economic pressures and intimidations, among them disproportionate and specious legal actions putting the economic burden of the defense onto journalists and media institutions. A legal environment in line with international human rights standards is key for the exercise of an independent, plural and free journalism, an environment facing a variety of threats worldwide. The resulting self-censorship from these threats deprives society of information and further impacts press freedom.

The **Global Media Defence Fund** is a Multi-Partner Trust Fund/Program at UNESCO developed with the goal of enhancing media protection and improving the access of journalists to specialized legal assistance. It was established at the initiative of the governments of the United Kingdom and Canada in the framework of the *Global Campaign for Media Freedom* – and under the overall umbrella of the [UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity](#). It was announced during the first edition of the Global Conference on Media Freedom (London, July 2019).

This Fund complements UNESCO's Multi-Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists and the International Programme for the Development of Communication, as well as UNESCO Funds-In-Trust projects. Its particular niche is legal defense, and part of its activity will consider applications for funding from external organizations (see Fund's Outputs Covered by the Call for Partnerships" below).

Administered by **UNESCO**, the Global Media Defence Fund contributes to a free and safer environment for journalists via **four key approaches or outputs**:

- **Output 1:** *Fostering international legal cooperation, as well as the sharing and implementation of good practices to promote the defense of journalists under attack;*  
(\* )

- **Output 2:** *Reinforcing the operationalization of national protection mechanisms and peer support networks, including by supporting governments and other institutions to develop national frameworks, action plans and legislation relevant to the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity, to ensure journalists' rapid access to legal assistance, bolster their defense and enhance their safety;*
- **Output 3:** *Supporting investigative journalism that contributes to reduced impunity for crimes against journalists, and enhancing the safety of those conducting this line of work;*
- **Output 4:** *Enhancing structures for fostering strategic litigation in order to protect environments where the legal frameworks are conducive to an independent, free and plural media ecosystem.*

The Global Media Defence Fund is jointly implemented by UNESCO with specialized implementation partners (\*\*), including via a grant mechanism. Grants are allocated through annual or biannual call for partnerships open to relevant stakeholders – including civil society organizations, media associations, human rights organizations, rule of law initiatives, investigative journalism networks, and academic institutions, among other not-for-profit entities – on the basis of the Allocated Budget (see “Allocated Budget” below).

Selected implementation partners will undertake initiatives to upscale and/or operationalize actions that enhance journalists' legal protection and their access to legal assistance, in accordance with the terms of the Implementation Partners Agreement (see Project Implementation and Contractualization Process” below).

(\*) This call for partnerships *does not cover* any activities pertaining Output 1, which is implemented in partnership with the International Bar Association (IBA) and the OHCHR.

(\*\*) *Specialized implementation partners* are not-for-profit entities which will receive financing under the Fund in order to implement specific local, regional or international projects that will enhance journalists' legal protection and improve their access to legal assistance. They are entities with a not-for-profit status to which UNESCO has entrusted partially or fully the implementation of programs or projects specified in a signed document (an *Implementation Partners Agreement* – see “Project Implementation and Contractualization Process” below), along with the assumption of full responsibility and accountability for the effective use of resources and the delivery of outputs as set forth in such a document.

## OUTPUTS COVERED BY THE CALL FOR PARTNERSHIPS

The objective of this call for partnerships is financing local, regional and international projects that will enhance journalists' legal protection and their access to legal assistance –always in line with international freedom of expression/press freedom standards– by advancing **at least one of the following** Global Media Defence Fund's outputs:

- **Output 2:** *Reinforcing the operationalization of national protection mechanisms and peer support networks, including by supporting governments and other institutions to develop national frameworks, action plans and legislation relevant to the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity, to ensure journalists' rapid access to legal assistance, bolster their defense and enhance their safety.*

This output includes initiatives such as:

- Setting up and/or reinforcing legal units within media associations and specialized CSOs;
- Supporting the work of media lawyers' networks and organizations, as well as capacity-building in favor of specialized or in-house media lawyers;
- Supporting new/existing initiatives of pro bono media legal assistance or other initiatives aiming at enhancing legal assistance;
- Establishing and reinforcing existing peer support networks for journalists (\*\*\*), including freelance ones, focused on legal issues.

(\*\*\*) "Peer support networks" include, among others, journalists' unions and associations.

- **Output 3:** *Supporting investigative journalism that contributes to reduced impunity for crimes against journalists, and enhancing the safety of those conducting this line of work.*

This output concerns actions that will:

- Advance journalistic investigation for the purposes of ensuring judicial follow-up and holding relevant authorities –including prosecutors, justice systems and law enforcement– accountable with regard to cases involving attacks against journalists, thereby contributing to ensuring rule of law and reducing impunity for the crimes committed against these journalists;
- Pursue or draw awareness to investigative work that risks being terminated or censored when journalists are attacked, threatened, arbitrarily imprisoned or murdered;
- Ensure that the work of journalists who have been deterred or impeded from further pursuing it, can be continued by peers who will bring those stories to light and make them widely visible;
- Enhance the safety of those conducting investigative journalism (through the creation or reinforcement of existing peer-network supporting mechanisms, for instance).

- **Output 4:** *Enhancing structures for fostering strategic litigation in order to protect environments where the legal frameworks are conducive to an independent, free and pluralistic media ecosystem.*

This output includes, but is not limited to, initiatives:

- Expected to help advance cases with significant strategic potential (strategic litigation), which are likely to result in innovative/progressive rulings related to key/emerging challenges to freedom of expression, with an impact beyond an individual journalist/media outlet.
- Supporting strategic litigation through/by, amongst others:
  - The sharing of related jurisprudence;
  - Encouraging *amicus curiae* briefs in relation to strategic litigation cases before higher courts and regional/international human rights courts;
  - Enabling, promoting or reinforcing legal collaboration between local, regional and international experts, in a way that contributes to reforming

- legal frameworks and improving/sharing jurisprudence conducive to an independent, free and pluralistic media ecosystem;
- Strengthening national/regional associations of lawyers or media lawyers, law school legal clinics, and CSOs focused on supporting the legal practice based on international and regional standards.

This call for partnerships **does not cover** any activities pertaining Output 1, as described above.

## ALLOCATED BUDGET

The indicative total amount available for all three Outputs is **USD \$500,000** (\*\*\*\*). Any grant requested under this call for partnerships must fall between a minimum **USD \$15,000** and up to a maximum **USD \$60,000**. UNESCO may decide to grant only part of the funding requested by an applicant.

Grant funds may only be spent on the activities defined in the corresponding *Implementation Partners Agreement*.

(\*\*\*\*) Future donations to the Global Media Defence Fund may increase the global budget envelope allocated to this call for partnerships after its launch: during the posting, selection and contracting phases. For these purposes, UNESCO may place the highest ranked non-selected partnership proposals on a potential waitlist, to be published along with the rest of the selection results (see “Selection Process” below). In the event new funds do become available, UNESCO reserves the right to allocate them on the basis of the waitlisted applicants’ individual score and of the budget available.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

*Who can apply?*

To be eligible, the applicant must be a **not-for-profit** entity (e.g. NGOs, media or lawyers’ associations, media development agencies, foundations, academic institutions, non-commercial media institutions), and fully respect the following criteria:

- ✓ Legal Status: The organization must be registered as a not-for profit entity that has been active for at least two years.
- ✓ Capacity: All applicants must:
  - Be able to make a minimum 5% financial or in-kind contribution for the implementation of the proposed project;
  - Have the capacity to manage the volume of funds and to implement the agreed-upon activities in an efficient and effective manner;
  - Have a sound financial status;
  - Have the capacity to participate in planning, monitoring and evaluation activities (the latter, if applicable);
  - Prove their capacity to operate in all the target countries/areas;
  - Display basic managerial and record-keeping competencies (including project management and oversight procedures), as well as a commitment to defend and respect human rights, freedom of expression and gender equality;

- Have a gender-sensitive approach;
- Assign a staff to carry out or lead the implementation of the project as focal point.

Applicants who have already been awarded funding under UNESCO's regular program or under other extra-budgetary modalities (such as the Multi-Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists) may also be eligible to apply for a grant under the Global Media Defence Fund, if they meet the requirements listed above.

Individuals, for-profit organizations and unincorporated associations or networks are not eligible to apply for a grant under this call for partnerships.

*Partnership proposals eligible to be financed by this Fund*

Partnership proposals must have a clear objective contributing to advancing one or more of the Global Media Defence Fund's outputs indicated on Page 2 of this call for **partnerships (Outputs 2, 3, or 4)**. This objective must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (up to eighteen-month implementation), as well as operationally, technically and financially feasible. Proposals should go beyond the level of activities, to target practical change being effected such as through a results-based methodology.

The activities indicated on the partnership proposal must cover a **maximum eighteen months** of implementation.

The estimated budget of the project submitted must allocate at least five percent of the total budget **to communication and visibility actions**, in order to generate and ensure the visibility of the project amongst different stakeholders. Costs related to the participation of the applicants' (or the implementing consortium's) representatives to relevant key events/conferences organized by UNESCO or the Media Freedom Coalition could be included as part of the communication and visibility allocation. Project budgets should be as full, detailed and accurate as possible –based on the template provided on the *Partnership Proposal & Project Information Form* attached to this call for proposals–, as they will be the basis of the funding agreement if a grant is awarded.

Partnership proposals must demonstrate how they will ensure **gender sensitivity** in the implementation of their activities (for instance, by ensuring equal participation by women; by incorporating women leaders, journalists and lawyers; or by considering gender-specific risks in the development of safety programs).

Particular attention will be given to proposals that contribute to enhancing the **safety of women journalists**.

Preference will be given to proposals impacting on:

- Regions/countries where **safety of journalists is more at risk** based on [UNESCO's Observatory of Killed Journalists](#), as well as the assessment by specialized observers on the elements of the indicator SDG 16.10.1 ("Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the

previous 12 months"), as well as attacks that constitute "other harmful acts" (as per various UN resolutions);

- **Africa** (in line with UNESCO's Global Priority on Africa).

**Links** with existent networks, as well as with national or regional initiatives or projects, will be considered an asset.

Partnership proposals coming from, or with a focus on, **Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** will also be given particular consideration.

Special attention will be paid to those initiatives **implementing innovative approaches or enhancing collaboration** between journalists' networks and CSO networks focused on enhancing journalists' protection and/or improving their access to legal assistance (including at a national, regional and international level).

Partnership proposals must be developed and implemented on the basis of a **human rights-based approach**. In addition, partnership proposals should consider that all substantive legal work which will receive (partial or total) funding from the Global Media Defence Fund will be expected to **abide by international standards on freedom of expression and safety of journalists** (as set by UNDHR, ICCPR, relevant resolutions by UN and regional bodies), as well as to be in line with the UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. Partnership proposals must elaborate on implementation modalities with a right-based approach, and include an assessment of risks. An applicant cannot submit more than **one** partnership proposal under this call for partnership and thus, cannot be awarded more than one grant.

## SELECTION PROCESS

Potential implementation partners should send their partnership proposals **by 10 May 2020 at 23:59 (Paris time)**. No partnership proposals –or supporting documents– will be accepted after this deadline.

The grant mechanism is administered and supervised by **UNESCO**, in close consultation with the Global Media Defence Fund's Steering Committee. The Organization will also rely on the expertise of the Communication & Information Sector of UNESCO Field Offices and its local partners during the selection process.

Project selection will be carried out:

- ✓ In adherence with UNESCO rules, regulations and applicable procedures;
- ✓ Respecting eligibility criteria (see the "Eligibility Criteria" section above);
- ✓ Based on three principles: *Best Value for Money*<sup>i</sup>; *Fairness, Integrity and Transparency*<sup>ii</sup>; and *Economy and Effectiveness*<sup>iii</sup>.

The partnership proposals that will be selected will be those obtaining the highest total score on the basis of the following evaluation grid:

Partnership proposal – Project information, relevance, elements of particular attention, innovative approach(es), scale of impact,	700 points
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complementarity with other ongoing projects, et. al.	
Estimated budget – Reasonability of costs vs. local standards, UNESCO’s principle Best Value for Money (i)	200 points
Organizational and managerial capacity of the applicant, as well as its financial soundness	100 points
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

The results of the selection process will be notified via email to all applicants, and published on the Global Media Defence Fund page (unless otherwise requested by the applicant, with proper justification) on the UNESCO website.

### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND CONTRACTUALIZATION PROCESS

Selected implementation partners will receive an initial payment worth of 33% of the total grant within the first three months of the contract. The payment of subsequent instalments will depend upon the certification, by the UNESCO Officer responsible for the Implementation Partners Agreement (IPA), of the partner’s satisfactory performance of the work preceding the payment date of each instalment.

The grant agreements for the best ranked applications will take the form of an Implementation Partners Agreement between UNESCO and the grantee, in accordance with the Organization’s administrative rules.

The Implementation Partners Agreement will specify the details related to: total grant amount, payment deadlines, financial management conditions, project implementation, expected timeline, and communication plan. The partnership proposal, as finalized during the preparation of the IPA, will be integrated to the Agreement as an annex.

If there are unreasonable delays in finalizing the Agreement through no fault of UNESCO, the grant offer may be withdrawn and the grant may be awarded to a different applicant.

### SUBMITTING A PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL

You may download the application package (including the UNESCO Partner Identification Form and the Partnership Proposal & Project Information Form) at: <https://www.unqgm.org/Public/Notice/106231>

In order to submit a partnership proposal, please send the filled Partnership Proposal & Information Form, the UNESCO Partner Identification Form and supporting documents (listed at the end of the first Form) to the following email address: [gmdf@unesco.org](mailto:gmdf@unesco.org).

All proposals must be submitted in English or French.



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## CONTACT INFORMATION: UNESCO FOCAL POINT

For more information on this call for partnerships, please send your questions to the following email address: [gmdf@unesco.org](mailto:gmdf@unesco.org).

<sup>i</sup> *Best Value for Money*: This principle is applied at the selection stage to accept the partnership proposals that effectively meet UNESCO's requirements (as stated on the Call for Partnerships) based on an integrated assessment –including technical, organizational and pricing factors– in light of their relative importance (i.e., life-cycle costs and benefits, reliability, quality, experience, reputation, past performance, cost/fee realism and reasonableness). UNESCO's parameters also include social, environmental and other strategic objectives communicated to the grantees. To ensure that best value for money, the process of soliciting proposals and selecting a grantee shall maximize competition, ensure impartial and comprehensive evaluation of proposals and ensure the selection of the grantees whose offers have the highest degree of relevance, realism and whose performance is expected to best meet UNESCO's standards, specifications, statement of works and terms of reference.

<sup>ii</sup> *Fairness, Integrity and Transparency*: Fairness implies being reasonable as well as impartial, and treating all the same way. Integrity relates to aspects of personal and institutional behavior, including qualities such as honesty, truthfulness, impartiality, and incorruptibility. Transparency, the unimpeded visibility and openness of all transactions, ensures that all information on policies, procedures, opportunities and processes are clearly defined and made widely known and available. A transparent system increases the possibility of detecting any deviations from fair and equal treatment, and therefore makes such deviations less likely to occur. Transparency thus protects the integrity of the process and the interests of UNESCO. UNESCO shall be responsible for protecting the integrity of the process and maintaining fairness in its treatment of all potential grantees. Sound selection of grantees (i.e., openness of the process; probity; complete and accurate records; accountability; confidentiality) shall be guaranteed through rules and procedures that are attainable and unambiguous.

<sup>iii</sup> *Economy and Effectiveness*: Economy and Effectiveness refers to the extent to which UNESCO is successful in carrying out its operations, ensuring the right quantity and quality, at the right time, at the right price and to the right place, and also the extent to which the overall costs are minimized in the interest of the overall budget of the Organization. Through this principle UNESCO shall protect the interests of the Member States and Donors in the selection of sub-grantees. Effectiveness helps ensure the interest of the beneficiaries is met through the selection of the sub-grantees that can fulfil their needs.