

FAQs for the Gender Justice Fund Sierra Leone

Date: 26 March 2024

Please note:

- For support with your application please refer to the application guidance.
- If you are experiencing technical issues, please get in touch by emailing fundinginfo@comicroelief.com. Please allow up to three working days for a response.

DIRECT FUNDING

This FAQ for direct funding includes sections on:

- Your proposal for funding.
- Available funding, and the funding process.
- Eligibility to apply and be awarded funding.

There is also intermediary funding available through the **Gender Justice Fund Sierra Leone** which has different eligibility criteria and a separate set of FAQs on the funding call web page. Please ensure you have read the relevant FAQs and filled out the relevant eligibility questionnaire for the type of funding your organisation wishes to apply for.

PROPOSALS

What do you mean by involvement of people with lived experience?

For this funding call, when we talk about lived experience, we mean communities that have experienced discrimination and injustice based on their gender. Across the charitable sector, meaningful involvement of people with lived experience is a priority, and an approach that needs further development for many organisations. As examples, people with lived experience can be meaningfully involved in developing the organisation's work and priority areas, and/or in the running of the organisation. This can be achieved in several ways, such as consistent and meaningful consultation, ongoing steering or advisory groups led by and communities experiencing discrimination and injustice based on their gender, leadership roles, and involvement as staff, volunteers and trustees.

We want to know how your organisation includes the voices of people you support in shaping your priorities and designing your activities, and future plans you have for reinforcing this good practice.

What do you mean by direct funding?

Direct funding is designed for organisations registered and delivering work in Sierra Leone that directly support communities, nurturing the feminist and women's rights movements, and/or doing influencing and advocacy work.

Why do organisations applying for direct funding need to be led by communities experiencing discrimination and injustice based on their gender?

Comic Relief believes communities living closest to the issues they face daily, are best placed to identify and prioritise what needs to change. These communities need to be front and centre, leading the design of interventions and movements to create lasting solutions and bring about transformational and sustainable change.

Are we still able to apply for this fund to cover our work with women and girls if it is not the only focus of our organisation?

This funding opportunity is designed to support organisations that have gender justice as a central aim and is set up to create change for communities facing discrimination and injustice based on their gender. Organisations must also be part of women's rights and feminist movements in Sierra Leone. However, this doesn't mean that organisation must only work with these groups and your organisations can also work with men on issues such as harmful and discriminatory norms and values. This can be a stream of your work as long as your organisation is a women's rights or feminist organisation and is able to identify your track record in delivering work.

How can we apply as a partnership?

We welcome applications from single organisations or partners of two or three organisations. Partners are entities working closely together to deliver the project, and who are each responsible for managing part of the budget. One lead partner is responsible to Comic Relief for submitting the proposal on behalf of all the partners, and the overall delivery, spending and reporting. All partners must meet the basic eligibility criteria (please also see below on income criteria for partners). Organisations that do not meet the eligibility criteria could still be involved through contracts, for example to provide specific consultancy services.

Do we need to submit a budget as part of this proposal?

No, you will not have to submit a budget during the application process. If your proposal is successful, you will need to send a budget for approval as part of the start-up process. This will be a condition of funding before the first instalment of funds can be made.

Do you look for traditional Key Performance Indicator (KPI) style data in your monitoring and evaluation?

Please note: We will ask for this monitoring and learning information after funding is approved, and not as part of the proposal process.

We ask organisations to identify a small number of outcomes they would like to see as a result of the funding, and we encourage organisations to use their existing data where possible. Funded organisations identify indicators to demonstrate progress against outcomes. For core funding, your outcomes may be broad and speak to the wider work of your organisation.

This process should provide your organisation with its own information to track progress and demonstrate results for internal and external audiences.

Will funding be weighted to organisations with lower income levels?

No, the **Gender Justice Fund Sierra Leone** will not use annual income as part of the selection criteria or prioritise annual income levels as part of the approval process. Organisations need to have annual income between £25,000 and £500,000 in order to apply for **direct** funding.

FUNDING

When will we find out if our proposal will be taken to the next stage?

- Proposals will be shortlisted after the application deadline. You should be told the outcome of the shortlisting stage on 17 May 2024.
- Successful applicants to the fund will be announced in by 12 July 2024.

When will the funding start if our proposal is approved?

There is no predefined start date. You will be able to propose a date that reflects when you will start allocating costs. This could be right after an offer letter is signed, or after some start-up and preparation steps e.g. recruitment of staff.

How long will the funding last?

From 3 to 7 years (36 - 84 months).

This fund is designed to provide long term core/flexible funding to organisations to help strengthen their work and invest in their systems and processes. Therefore, we would strongly encourage organisations to consider applying for longer term funding. The proposed duration of the investment will not form part of the decision-making criteria.

What do you mean by flexible, core funding?

Flexible, core funding is designed to support the good work of organisations, and not just projects.

- This could mean core funding of the organisation's annual budget to continue its good work, or funding to expand the work, or to add something new that amplifies the work or its results.

- As flexible funding, it can be allocated for expenses that are harder to fund, such as salaries of senior management or administration, or ongoing costs that are not covered by other grants.

Please note:

- Flexible, core funding has to be used for an agreed purpose, and in an agreed time period.
- Core funding is not the same as unrestricted funding, which you can put in a bank or investment and spend however you want.

Restrictions:

- In the case of **Gender Justice Fund Sierra Leone**, the funding is restricted for use over a period of three to seven years.
- As stated in the funding call, **direct** funding is to be used for the overall purpose of supporting women's rights and feminist organisations.
- A budget will be proposed and agreed as part of the start-up process.
- Comic Relief is a flexible and responsive funder. During the life of the grant, the allocations of funding for specific costs can be adjusted following Comic Relief's process to modify budgets.

How much funding can we apply for?

Between £150,000 and £250,000 for **direct** funding.

If we ask for the maximum amount, will this be looked upon unfavourably?

No. You should apply for the level of funding based on good work you can carry out and your organisation's ability to manage and use funds within the funding period. Funding amount requests do not form part of the decision-making process.

What is the deadline for applications to this fund?

12 noon BST on Tuesday, 30th April. If you are experiencing a technical difficulty that is preventing you from submitting by the deadline please get in touch with us as soon as possible by emailing fundinginfo@comicrelief.com. Please allow at least three working days for a response.

What will be the next steps after submitting an application form?

- If your proposal is shortlisted, your organisation will be asked to submit additional information regarding governance, finances, and approach to safeguarding.
- You will be invited to a meeting to find out more about your organisation, and to discuss your proposal.

Do you fund capital costs?

Comic Relief will not support capital costs over 25% of the total funding request, and capital costs will need to have a strong link to the changes you are aiming to achieve.

ELIGIBILITY

What annual income do organisations need to apply?

To be eligible for **direct** funding, organisations must have an annual income of between £25,000 and £500,000. We will use the income shown on your most recent annual accounts submitted to the relevant authorities, or annual accounts in the process of being submitted at the time of the proposal deadline.

Is the minimum annual income threshold of £25,000 mandatory for every organisation in a partnership application or does this only apply to the lead applicant?

Our income criteria relate to the lead applicant, whose income needs to be between £25,000 and £500,000 for **direct** funding. Partners do not need to fit this income criteria. If the lead applicant's income is between £25,000 and £500,000, but the partner organisation/s is not, that is ok. However, the income of several smaller organisations cannot be combined to make the £25,000 minimum.

My organisation is in the process of becoming legally constituted, can we still apply?

Comic Relief uses the last set of annual accounts submitted to the relevant authority as a basis for whether an organisation is eligible. So unfortunately, you are ineligible to apply if your organisation does not have annual accounts.

My organisation currently receives Comic Relief funding, can we still apply?

Yes, if your organisation still meets eligibility criteria for this fund.

Which countries does this funding apply to?

This call is for organisations registered in and delivering work in Sierra Leone.

Can we send more than one proposal?

To give as many organisations as fair a chance as possible, you can only submit one proposal to each funding call (though you can be named as a partner on any number of applications). Please be aware that we will never read more than one proposal per lead applicant organisation.

Can I still apply if my organisation does not meet the criteria in the eligibility questionnaire?

In this case, unfortunately you cannot submit an application. We can only fund a organisations that meet our eligibility requirements, and we would not want you to spend time completing an application that will be rejected.

We want to submit a partnership bid but the partner is not constituted, can we still apply?

Your organisation can still apply, but you cannot include an organisation that does not have a formal constitution and does not meet other basic requirements including annual accounts. You could still work with that organisation through a separate contract, for instance for providing consultancy services.