

## Q&A- ACT Pre-Proposal Conference (June 24, 2024)

1. **Are all the documents and information listed in Annex B1, B2 (eligibility table and component 1 on background information), B3 and B4 of the template in the call for proposal required for all members of the consortium or only for the lead organization?**

We only require the necessary documentation from the lead organization. Our process involves selecting a lead organization as a responsible partner, which then must sign agreements with the other organizations in the consortium using its own policies and procedures. We will assess the lead organization's capacity to ensure they have the appropriate policies and procedures to engage and manage sub-partners or other consortium partners effectively.

This assessment will also include examining whether the lead organization has similar assessment practices to ours and understanding their policies and procedures for transferring funds to sub-partners and ensuring those sub-partners report back to the lead organization. Subsequently, the lead organization will report back to UN Women.

In summary, only the lead organization's documentation is required.

2. **In the Terms of Reference under the section "Governance and Management," it is stated that the ACT Programme's Civil Society Steering Committee will be involved. Are the members of this committee appointed solely by UN Women, or does the responsible partner have a role in selecting and assembling this committee?**

The responsible party will not play a role in establishing the Civil Society Steering Committee.

We previously issued an open call for nominations for membership in the Civil Society Steering Committee, and that process is now closed. A specific selection committee is being established to identify the members of this committee. The selection committee will include representatives from civil society organizations, UN Women, and the EU.

The Civil Society Steering Committee will provide strategic guidance, oversight, and act as a sounding board for the civil society platform during its initial phases. However, this role is temporary and will not be ongoing. The committee's primary function is to support the platform as it establishes its own governance and management structures.

3. **How many organization(s) will be selected after review of the proposals for the ACT programme?**

There will only be one responsible party under this call for proposals. However, if the proposals include a consortium of organizations, multiple organizations can be part of that consortium. There is no limit on the number of organizations that can be included in a consortium.

However, please note that we will not be funding multiple responsible parties. There will only be one lead organization, which may work individually or as part of a consortium.

4. **The proposed start date of the project is September, but obtaining government approvals in certain contexts can take 3 to 4 months after signing the contract. This could delay the**

**project's start date to December or even early 2025. How is this potential delay taken into consideration?**

Please note that the proposal is focused on organizations at the global and regional levels. We are unable to fund organizations operating at the country level due to donor funding restrictions. As such, issues related to government approvals at the country level might not be applicable in this context.

Since this initiative is at the global and regional level, we expect the responsible party or consortium to be able to start operating as soon as the contract is signed. This is particularly important because the program's duration is three years, and by the time the contract is signed, only two years will remain.

**5. Can financial audited reports be accepted in place of the required past donor reports?**

If you refer to Annex B-4 of the Call for Proposal on capacity assessment and minimum documentation, you will note that these documents are intended to meet different needs. For instance, in administration and finance, we require the organization's audited financial statements or financial reports. However, in assessing client relationships, we are looking for documentation related to the organization's donors. This includes financial reports submitted to those donors and any narrative reports.

**6. Could you direct where we could access all the necessary documents and requirements?**

Please find the requirements, documentation along with queries and responses [here](#).

**7. Does the lead organization need to distribute funds to the other co-organizations, or can one organization handle operations while another monitors the finances?**

UN Women signs the agreement exclusively with the lead organization, which is then responsible for engaging the other organizations in the consortium using its own policies and procedures.

UN Women also operates under a cash advance policy where we advance funds to the lead organization. The lead organization, in turn, is responsible for disbursing these funds to the other organizations in the consortium. The consortium members will report back to the lead organization, which will in turn report back to UN Women.

The lead organization is solely responsible for monitoring the finances of the co-organizations.

**8. We understand that UN Women seeks a single lead organization. As a coalition, can we provide financial information from the foremost NGOs to demonstrate our capability to manage the entire project? One NGO in our coalition excels in technical skills, while another has superior financial reports. Additionally, another NGO has accounts in a country that offers optimal conditions for transferring funds abroad with minimal tax implications. Would this information suffice to support our coalition's application?**

**Could we discuss how UN Women views these dynamics within consortia, particularly concerning fund transfers which can sometimes be challenging?**

When we sign the agreement with the lead organization as part of our review process, which includes technical and financial evaluations, we focus solely on the lead organization. Our capacity assessment applies exclusively to them. Once the agreement is signed, UN Women transfers funds directly to the lead organization. It is then their responsibility to distribute funds to sub-partners or other consortium members, collect their reports, and provide consolidated reporting back to UN Women.

However, if the lead organization meets the principle technical requirements and will be involved in some aspects of the implementation, the proposal would pass to the technical evaluation. It is anticipated that in the case of consortia the lead and sub-partner(s) will bring complementary areas of expertise and experience, however, the lead partner cannot only be responsible for finance and reporting. The lead partner also needs to be involved in implementing some of the programme, must be a civil society organization/women's rights organization and must have some prior experience of working on ending violence against women.

**9. Is this an open call for proposals, or is it restricted to those who submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI)?**

Initially, we conducted an Expression of Interest (EOI) phase with the intention of inviting only those organizations that met all the criteria to proceed to the call for proposal stage. However, during the EOI phase, we encountered some issues within consortia. For example, in some cases, the lead member did not meet all the requirements, while in others, a different member within the consortium could have potentially served as the lead. Additionally, there were instances where a fiscal sponsor, who was intended to be the lead, did not fulfill all necessary requirements.

Due to these concerns, we decided to conduct an open call for proposals. This allows organizations and consortia to revisit the mandatory requirements and reconsider their submissions for the call for proposals stage.

**10. Could you comment on the possibility of changing the lead organization. Specifically, can we designate an organization that appears as a partner in the letter of intent to assume leadership of the proposal in the final submission?**

You may have initially applied in response to the Expression of Interest (EOI) with one organization as the lead. Now, as part of the call for proposals, if you wish to change the lead organization, the answer is yes. Your previous submission will not be considered so please be sure to submit all required documents even if some were already provided at the EOI stage.

**11. Apart from sharing indicators for expected results, are we also required to provide baseline numbers and targets for the project period? Also, should the budget cover one year and ten months or two years?**

Yes, it would be beneficial to provide indicative numbers for the baseline and targets. These figures can be adjusted and refined as we progress through the implementation phase.

The budget period should cover one year and ten months. The funding must be spent by the 1st of July 2026, which is slightly less than two years from now, totaling one year and ten months.

**12. How will the selection panel view a consortium where one organization primarily operates at a country level among three organizations?**

If the consortium includes one organization operating primarily at the country level alongside global and regional organizations, this can be considered. However, it is important to clarify that the funding cannot be used for direct implementation at the country level.

We would assess whether the country-level organization has substantial experience in global and regional advocacy and movement strengthening, and if it is connected to broader global and regional networks. Additionally, we would need to confirm with the EU regarding the eligibility of funding for the country-level organization, as there are restrictions and limitations in place. This verification ensures that all expenditures align with donor requirements.

**13. Could you elaborate on your vision for the platform? Is it primarily a dynamic online space, or do you view it as encompassing both online and offline interactions?**

Yes, the online platform is indeed a component of the broader platform. It encompasses more than just its online aspect.

**14. Regarding the Platform, how do you envision the online platform functioning? What components or functions will be assessed? To clarify, how do the online and offline components interact with each other? In the advocacy space, much of the organizing may not be public facing on an online platform. Is there a requirement for the online platform to have a public-facing component, or would the CSO partner collaborate with UN Women using UN Women's existing public-facing platforms to leverage resources? What role do you envision the online platform playing in advocacy development and implementation?**

What we mean by 'platform' is a global civil society network aimed at convening women's rights organizations focused on ending violence against women.

We anticipate that most convenings and activities will occur online due to the global nature of the initiative and resource constraints that may limit in-person gatherings. Discussions and proposals are ongoing about the type of online platform that would provide a safe and accessible space for members to convene, collaborate, and exchange ideas. Regarding offline components and in-person meetings, we envision opportunities for members to gather during key advocacy moments organized by the platform. This may include financial support for member organizations to participate in these gatherings. Additionally, there will be broader opportunities coordinated under the ACT program for such convenings.

**15. How does UN Women contribute to ensuring the sustainability of the ACT platform?**

Regarding the sustainability of the ACT platform, UN Women is committed to actively co-convening and mobilizing resources from the outset to ensure its continuity beyond the current funding period. We will engage with potential strategic partners and donors to mobilize additional contributions for the platform.

We also encourage the responsible party and program partners to develop their own resource mobilization strategies to sustain the initiative and we will work collectively with the organization/consortia on sustainability.

**16. On the budget, if working in consortium with partners, do we need to provide all partners' budgets (per year), or have one combined budget?**

It would be beneficial to provide budgets for each sub-partner in addition to the lead organization's budget. This comprehensive approach facilitates our review process and ensures clarity in financial planning and accountability within the consortium.

**17. Should the project implementation plan incorporate the incubation period provided by UN Women? Would advocacy-oriented products produced by one of the consortium's organizations count towards the plan's activities? Or only products collectively created?**

During the incubation period, UN Women will provide significant support during the initial months of setup. However, we expect the budget and implementation plan to include the entire project duration.

Regarding advocacy-oriented products developed by individual organizations, the goal is to create products that align with and contribute to the shared advocacy agenda of the ACT platform. While organizations may develop their own advocacy products, these should ideally be resources that can be shared with and branded under the ACT platform.

**18. If a regional CSO has recently applied for an ACT Regional UNW Call for Proposals, would they be excluded from applying to this ACT Global Call for Proposals? Similarly, would applying for this call affect a regional application that may still be under review?**

If your organization has the capacity, in terms of human resources, to successfully implement both projects if awarded, there are no restrictions preventing you from applying for and managing both projects simultaneously.

**19. Would the costs of those in-person meetings be covered within the budget of the platform implementation, and if so, would they have to follow EU travel cost regulations as the European Commission is the main donor?**

The costs of those in-person meetings would need to be covered within the platform's budget. All meetings carried out within the project implementation period, where such meetings were part of the approved project activities will be covered by the project. The incurrence of any travel costs will be in accordance with an organization's travel policy. The costs must also be reasonable, justified and comply with the principle of sound financial management.

**20. Can we extend the deadline for the Call for Proposal?**

After internal deliberation, we have extended the deadline for the Call for Proposal to July 8, 2024. No further extension will be possible.

**21. Is an organization eligible if it has a history of working to end violence against women, even if this is not its primary mission?**

An organization is eligible, particularly if it is part of a consortium. Being part of a consortium can strengthen its application, especially if its mission does not exclusively focus on ending violence against women. While it may not fully meet all criteria on its own, having a history of working on

violence against women, coupled with partners that prioritize or include it as a main aspect of their organizational mandate, would make it eligible.

**22. Could there be sub-activities for the activities to be added to the table on page 18?**

Yes, the table is adjustable. It is a template that can be modified as needed. In fact, it would be beneficial to include sub-activities under the main activities.

**23. We note that 5% can be allocated for audits. However, parallel audits might be nationally mandated irrespective of whether we receive an external audit in this case, UN Women. Would the cost of these national audits be borne by the lead organization? Alternatively, would there be a 5% increase in funding as required to comply with our national regulations?**

UN Women does not cover the costs of statutory audits required by any government for a specific CSO in their country. The 5% allocated for audits is specifically for audits related to the UN Women component of the funding received by your organization. UN Women organizes and directly pays audit firms for these audits, solely to cover that cost.

**24. What percentage limit of personnel costs applies to the entire consortium, including all partners, not just the lead organization?**

The personnel costs are recommended at 20% of the overall budget for the entire consortium, not just the lead organization. This percentage encompasses the total personnel budget for the entire proposal. Additionally, the call for proposal template specifies that the lead organization cannot outsource all activities to other organizations or sub-partners. Therefore, how these costs are distributed among partners will depend on their respective roles and contributions within the consortium.

**25. How will conflicts, including those related to strategic priorities, between feminist CSOs (consortium or platform participants) and UN Women be managed? What measures will be implemented to ensure sustainable engagement for all participating organizations?**

We encourage the Platform to jointly establish feminist principles with women's rights organizations and all members. Our approach focuses on transparency and equitable power dynamics. When conflicts arise, we prioritize finding common ground rather than letting differences stall progress. The Platform serves as a safe space for inclusive discussions, aiming to build consensus and move forward together despite differing viewpoints.