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Team Europe Democracy (TED) Initiative

United for Democracy

Call for Proposals on action-oriented research related to democracy support

2024, Germany

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Call for Proposals

Background

The Team Europe Democracy (TED) is a global thematic Team Europe Initiative (TEI) launched in December 2021 to promote democracy and human rights worldwide. 14 Member States are involved in TED: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, and Sweden. The Specific Objective is to create a coordinated strategic European response in support of democracy that is effectively steered worldwide by the TED Secretariat. The TED Secretariat is represented by staff members of GIZ (lead) and Enabel.

The TED Network (TEDN) is a key output of the Team Europe Democracy Initiative. It is an interface mechanism between the EU institutions and EU Member States (MS) and like-minded organisations and networks, seeking to engage with each other on democracy promotion, and to improve joint programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their strategies and interventions.

The TED Network consists of European Union (EU) institutions, EU Member States and civil society stakeholders. It responds to the need for enhanced communication and coordination among European actors, following up on EU and MS commitments to strengthen the impact of their interventions through evidence-based approaches.

One of the core pillars of the TED Network objectives is to **compile, generate and share evidence-based knowledge and lessons learned**. Hence, TED strives to establish partnerships and provide support to stakeholders such as civil society organisations, think-tanks, research institutions and academia **to implement specific small-scale projects on topics related to democracy support and relevant both for the TED Network and the partner-countries involved**.

What we are looking to support

With this Call, Team Europe Democracy **wishes to expand the knowledge base of practical application of democracy support and strengthening measures**, learning from partners vested in selected focus-countries and allowing TED stakeholders to benefit from said knowledge. With the framework of the call, we are looking to finance **up to 4 projects with a budget between 60.000 to 90.000EUR** with an **implementation period of 8 to maximum 14 months**. To use the financial resources in the most impactful manner, project proposals should avoid any duplication of existing and/or planned projects, initiatives, and/or activities in the respective area of implementation and target region.

For expanding the existing knowledge base TED will support projects that apply action-oriented research, which broadly can be defined as:

A methodology for **collaborative research with practitioners and community partners that can inform practice, programmes and policy related to immediate challenges to democracy while simultaneously contributing to the knowledge-base on a specific topic**. The research process should involve collaboration between partners to identify issues, develop solutions and implement actions.

Impact

The desired long-term impact of this Call for Proposals **is to empower participants to actively promote and protect democratic values within their communities**, fostering a resilient and sustainable democratic culture in their immediate environments.

Proposals submitted by applicants should aim to expand the knowledge base on the practical application of democracy support measures led by non-EU stakeholders. This expanded knowledge is aimed to invigorate TED Network stakeholders to further invest resources in initiatives that have demonstrated success in enhancing democratic processes.

A key objective of the Call is also to create or strengthen alliances between stakeholders at both national and international levels, laying a foundation for the long-term impact described above. The indirect beneficiaries of this Call for Proposals are the broader community, civic groups, and democratic institutions within the environment where the grant-winning organizations operate. By strengthening local democratic processes and governance, these initiatives should also benefit the broader public who gains from improved democratic stability and engagement.

Areas for focus of action-oriented research

The Call is open to different ideas, formats, and conceptual approaches. The expectation is that proposals are to be very concrete with respect to their outputs and deliverables, which must be beneficial to the stakeholders targeted by the proposal. A successful application must clearly elaborate on the direct contribution to the area of focus that has been chosen by the applicant.

Project proposals should seek to create impact ***in at least one, but ideally multiple*** of the following areas identified from the side of the TED Network:

Rule of law and access to justice, with special focus on People-centred justice

Anti-corruption and accountability, with special focus on effective cooperation between government, civil society, and the private sector

Political and civic participation, with special focus on strengthening civic space

Media and digital democracy, with special focus on information integrity

As noted from the focus areas – we are highlighting the need to explore issues from a cross-cutting perspective, abandoning topical silos that might hinder the way towards more efficient and adequate solutions to existing democracy challenges. We are also interested to close the gap between theory and practice, in order to obtain more valuable insights from each individual supported action.

Geographical scope

The project concept should base its activity in **one of the following countries of focus**:

Africa:

- Uganda, Zambia, Somalia, Tanzania, Malawi, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Senegal, Tunisia

Asia:

- Jordan, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Philippines,

Latin America:

- Guatemala, Colombia, or Central America as cross-border/regional projects

Moreover, the Call for Proposals also allows for a project which would a) **perform a comparative analysis of multiple countries from the list above, with a clear focus and rationalization for the selection**, or b) **selecting one country as a project anchor point and expanding the scope to relevant neighbouring countries**. In all cases, the concept must be clearly defined, and the rationale for the selection of countries should be thoroughly explained.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for receiving a grant, the **lead applicant must** satisfy the following conditions:

- Applicant is a legal person which is a public entity or a non-profit private entity,
- Applicant is established or represented in **one of the focus-countries listed above** (meaning that the applicant is locally registered with authorities, has local staff and is directly implementing activities in the country),
- Applicant is directly responsible for the management and implementation of the action, both for budgetary and content-processes,

To be eligible to be considered **as a co-applicant**, the following conditions **must be met**:

- Co-applicant is a legal person which is a public entity or a non-profit private entity,
- Co-applicant is established in a partner-country as described above for lead-applicant **or** in an EU Member State,
- Co-applicant is directly involved in the implementation of the action together with the lead applicant and supports the project in all described aspects of the concept-note,

Applicants should have a proven track record and in-depth expertise in governance and democracy, ideally established as one of the organisational forms below:

- Civil society organisations
- Research institutes/academia
- Think-tank organisations

Proposals submitted by a team of applicants are welcome but please note that a maximum of two applicant entities are permitted to submit a joint proposal.

Selection criteria

The grant project concepts will be evaluated according to the four general criteria and specific sub-criteria elements, awarding 10 points per criteria when the concept is fully in line with the described elements – meaning that a project concept can receive maximum 40 points.

General criteria	Specific sub-criteria points
Relevance of Action-Oriented Research Proposal to the Selected Focus Area(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alignment with the proposed research question, the selected focus area(s), and TED’s broader objectives of protecting and promoting democracy. ▪ Clear focus on addressing specific democratic governance challenges in the target area(s), with sensitivity to the national or regional context. ▪ Potential to generate a significant positive impact on democratic processes, governance, and institutional resilience. ▪ Relevance to fostering democratic alliances or networks between local and international stakeholders as an indirect impact.
Quality and Feasibility of proposed Conceptual Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarity and coherence of the proposed methodology, including how the approach is suited to practical application. ▪ Feasibility of the proposed activities, timeline, and budget in achieving the stated objectives within the proposed implementation period. ▪ Robustness of the data collection and analysis methods, with clear mechanisms for collaboration with local stakeholders in identifying and addressing democracy challenges. ▪ Well-defined outputs and deliverables with clear, tangible benefits to targeted stakeholders.
Capacity and Track Record of the Implementing Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated project-implementation experience from the past 5 years with EU Commission, EU Member State, or other international donor funded projects and initiatives for democracy support and governance is considered “proven track record”. ▪ Proven administrative and financial capacity to manage the grant efficiently and in compliance with reporting requirements.
Innovation, Sustainability and Added Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Novelty and originality of the proposed approach, particularly if it incorporates cross-cutting themes or moves beyond conventional methods in democracy support. ▪ Potential for the activity to add value to or extend beyond known practices in democracy support, especially through new insights or methodologies that bridge theory and practice. ▪ Capability for the project to serve as a replicable model or best practice, with outcomes and insights that can inspire similar initiatives across different regions. ▪ Contribution to alliance-building or collaborative frameworks that strengthen the capacity for long-term democratic resilience within the focus country or region.

Selection process & timeline

The application and selection process will be conducted in four steps:

1. **Open call:** All applicants that fulfil the eligibility criteria are invited to submit a proposal between the 11th November and 12th of December 2024;
2. **Review:** All proposals will be first checked by the TED Secretariat whether they fulfil the initial eligibility requirements between the 6th of December and 20th of December 2024;
3. **Selection:** proposals that pass the initial review of eligibility will be graded by the TED Secretariat according to the criteria above to create a shortlist of candidate-projects. This shortlist will then be submitted to a selection team of 3 TED Network members (TED Secretariat representative, EU Member-state representative, EU DG INTPA representative) who will *act as a final selection filter*, grading the shortlisted projects according to the selection criteria, then adding the total amount of points together in order *to select the final candidates by 15th January 2025*,
4. **Preparation and signing of grant agreements:** the selected candidates **are notified by 17th January 2025** and will be required to expand their proposals into full project narratives with a complementary detailed budget by 10th February 2025. After a quality check from the side of the TED Secretariat, the process is handed over to the contracting department and the tentative start of implementation is expected by 1st of April 2025.

The Call is designed as a stand-alone grant to implement projects. Please note that applicants need to comply with “GIZ’s administrative and legal requirements” (see Annex C).

The submission of a proposal does not lead to a legal entitlement to receive any funding. Any possible funding through Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH within the framework of this call for ideas will be granted following and in accordance with an appropriate legal and commercial review, in particular with regard to the public benefit purpose of each project and the non-violation of EU state-aid law. The legal compliance may also require adjustments in respect of the concept of the project proposal submitted as well as the inclusion of corresponding provisions into the contracts governing the use of funding.

Successful proposals will receive the allocated funding in form of a grant agreement for non-German recipients, signed by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

How to apply

Interested parties should submit their project proposal by e-mail in word format to the TED Secretariat (see below). Please make sure that project descriptions:

- Are complete and include all the required documentation as set out below;
- Are exclusively written in English;
- Are clear, succinct, and compliant with the format requirements;
- Are demonstrably not-for-profit and in compliance with [rules and regulations set out by the GIZ/BMZ](#)
- Clearly disclose all previous, ongoing or planned relationships/collaboration (including your sub-recipient’s) with GIZ and ENABEL,

For applying to the Call for Proposals, a legal entity wishing to be reviewed and considered in the Selection phase must include the following documents:

- A completed *Application Form* which contains the core project proposal and outline of project budget (see Annex A);
- Core required documentation for Lead Applicant and Co-applicant, specifically:
 - Registration documents (*Extracts from the appropriate register/formation documents showing the location of the institution's/organization's registered office, public benefit status, nonprofit status and the year it was established*);
 - Statute of the organisation;
 - Annual audited financial reports from the past 3 years;
- Brief description of each organisation which is part of the application – including main area of activity and past experience of implemented projects from the past 5 years (max. 2 pages per organisation profile).

After the Review and Selection phase of proposals (Steps 3 and 4 of the Call), the final selected applicants which are notified, are required to provide:

- Fully developed project narrative based on input provided in Application Form,
- A completed “Project Budget Form”, stating how the funds will be used. The current budget template [can be found here](#). Please follow the “guidelines for budgetary procedures” (see Annex B);
- All additional required documentation required to complete the Commercial Eligibility Process, as specified in the document “GIZ *administrative and legal requirements*” (see Annex C).

Applications will **only be accepted by e-mail** by 12th December 2024, 23:00h CEST to callforproposals@teamdemocracy.eu

Please make sure that you have included all relevant information in your e-mail. Applicants will receive confirmation of their submission by the next working day. If you have any questions, please direct them also at callforproposals@teamdemocracy.eu

Annex A – Call for Proposals Application form

See Annex A attachment, which is mandatory to be fulfilled and submitted to enter the Call for Proposals.

Annex B – Guidelines on budgetary procedures

Please note that a fulfilled excel Budget form is required **only if you have been selected as Final Applicant and notified by the Call organiser**. On this link: [Financing: Contract management and contract processing \(giz.de\)](#) you can find all rules and information about contract management and contract processing for German and non-German recipients.

Consortia applications

Please be informed that in case of consortia applications, GIZ signs contracts only with the lead applicant. The lead applicant is the grant recipient and is responsible for compliance with all rules that are part of grant agreements and the implementation of the co-applicants' activities. The co-applicants shall have a different profile and therefore complement the lead applicant with their specific skills. The lead applicant's budget must include the budget of the lead applicant themselves plus the budgets of all co-applicants to show the total budget.

The budget line forwarding of funds in the lead applicant's budget = total budget is used for reflecting co-applicants' budgets = the lead applicant is responsible for forwarding the respective funds to the co-applicants.

Explanatory notes on budget categories

Regarding the financial management of the grant, the recipient shall always comply with the requirements as stipulated in the Financial Guidelines for the applicable contract which are stated in Annex 3 of the contract and are available under:

1. Staff	<p>Staff - prime cost for employees of the recipient (job title) Only staff from your organization; the evidence for this budget line must be provided in the form of payslips or, in the case of partial financing, in the form of payslips and time sheets.</p> <p>Only direct costs for staff (gross cost for the employer) may be settled. Add-ons such as staff overheads that are calculated pro-rata for staff are not eligible for support.</p>
2. External experts (External services)	<p>Individuals who do not have an employment relationship with the recipient that is subject to social security contributions. These individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are self-employed or employed by a service provider who is not the recipient. • do not receive a salary from the recipient, nor does the recipient pay social security contributions for the experts. • may only be commissioned in compliance with the procurement rules of the agreement
3. Transportation/ Travel	<p>Travel expenditures, accommodation and per diems are eligible for financing but they must be directly attributable to the project. Please list all travel expenditure in this budget category, e.g., for travel of your own staff and travel expenditure of external persons participating in conferences and workshop.</p> <p>Costs are settled based on invoices and/or the recipient's travel expense guidelines and/or statutory provisions, such as the Federal Travel Expenses Act (BRKG). You should not break down the different costs into groups of people.</p>

4. Procurement of materials and equipment	Expenditure for materials, equipment or miscellaneous purchases can be listed in this category. Please name budgeted expenditures precisely and show clearly how they have been calculated. It is imperative that the procurement guidelines (Annex 4 of the Agreement) are observed, and compliance with these guidelines must be documented: GIZ procurement rules
5. Other costs/ Consumables	Other expenditure for the project, such as publications, translations and IT services can be listed in this category. Please name budgeted expenditure precisely and show clearly how they have been calculated. Requirements for the award of contracts for goods and services: It is imperative that the procurement guidelines (Annex 4 of the Agreement) are observed, and compliance with these guidelines must be documented.
6. Funds for direct support of third-party beneficiaries	This budget line should preferably cover in-kind contributions, i.e. contribution of materials and equipment, to third-party beneficiaries. In the case of financial contributions, proof of payment has to be regulated. The selection process for the third-party beneficiaries has to be described in the project description.
7. Pro-rata local project costs (e.g. IT, research)	Pro-rata local project costs are only eligible if an auditor - contracted by the recipient - provides evidence of these costs before the contract is concluded. In this case, the settlement is made on a percentage or flat rate basis according to the audit document. If an audit report is not available before conclusion of the contract, local project costs must be substantiated as direct costs with individual receipts
8. Administration costs	The administration costs should be 0% and are normally covered by the recipient's own contribution. GIZ can cover a small portion of such costs in cases where the recipient is unable to do so. The type and amount of these costs may be examined by an auditor. The contract management section must be informed if the administration costs do not pertain to all budget lines 1-7.
9. Forwarding of Funds	Funds may be forwarded to third-party recipients only if this is contractually agreed and the funds are budgeted in the budget line 'Funds for direct support to third-party recipients.' In this category (in the recipient's budget) the sums of all grants that will be forwarded to implementing partners (sub grants to final recipients) will be calculated by an automated function of the budget template. The recipient shall ensure that the terms and conditions of the agreement are applied equally to the contractual relationship between the recipient and the final recipients.

Annex C – GIZ Administrative and legal requirements

The direct beneficiary of the grant must be a corporation (legal entity/juridical person), i.e. it must have an independent and verifiable legal personality. This can be assumed if the recipient is legally independent and has legal competence and capacity. Having rights and obligations means that the recipient has the legal capacity to conclude contracts in its own name. Therefore, natural persons (although these also have their own legal personality) and partnerships or associations that do not have legal capacity cannot be taken into consideration as direct recipients of financing, even if they sometimes act as executing agencies for public benefit projects.

If you have been notified by the Call organiser that you are a Final Applicant, in order to check the legal and commercial eligibility the following documents are required:

➤ **Registration documents**

Extracts from the appropriate register/formation documents showing the location of the institution's/organization's registered office, public benefit status, nonprofit status and the year it was established.

➤ **Statute of the organization**

➤ **Public benefit status**

Please explain how the intended use of funds within the project context according to the project proposal is for public benefit in at least one developing country.

➤ Documents that provide information on procedures **for bookkeeping and accounting** and proof of usage of electronic bookkeeping system within the organization.

➤ Confirmation of a working **time recording system** for employees (if it does not exist, a statement for setting up a manual recording system, i.e., timesheets, etc.).

➤ **Contract award and procurement procedures** applied by the organization (a document explaining the regulations you have in place and if this is according to state rules)

➤ For grants >100.000 EUR it must be established whether **internal and external controls** are in place within the organization of the potential recipient. A brief description of the following principles should be added

- The principle of transparency
- The cross-check principle
- The principle of separation of functions
- The need-to-know principle
- For grants <100.000 EUR the principle of transparency and the cross-check principle must be observed.

➤ **Annual financial reports, which have been audited by an independent external auditor** for the last three years

➤ A declaration if you had **earlier experience** with GIZ. If yes, please provide the contract number and financing volume of the received grants. If no, please state the name of other donors and the financing volume of the received grants.

➤ **A self-declaration on legal compliance and anti-corruption. Please use the following text:**

- *"I hereby confirm that no allegations have been made or investigations carried out in the last five years in relation to the organization, members of its executive bodies or executive managers concerning breaches of the law, corruption, or other offences (e.g., fraud, misappropriation, breach of trust). In addition, we confirm that an effective system for preventing and combating corruption is established and consistently implemented."*

➤ **A self-declaration on accurate and reliable Information provided. Please use the following text:**

- *"I , _____, hereby confirm that all Information provided in our Project proposal for the application for financial support to implement project activity under Team Europe Democracy is accurate and reliable."*

Signature: _____ Date: _____