Call for Applications
Responding To The Covid-19 Pandemic In Southern Africa

PROGRAMMES

CLOSING DATE
22 JULY 2020
The world is facing a huge existential threat induced by the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) that causes COVID-19. This global pandemic represents an unprecedented threat to humanity and has gravely upended life as previously known, evolving from a massive health crisis to an economic and social one with devastating outcomes. The pandemic has unmasked longstanding and deep structural as well as systemic inequalities that have exacerbated a situation that had already condemned many of the people on the continent to a life of exclusion and poverty. Given the demographics of the region, the pandemic has disproportionately affected women, youth and other marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities who have suffered untold hardships through the loss of jobs, livelihoods and spikes in gender-based violence.

The Southern Africa region has not escaped from the tentacles of the pandemic with numbers steadily climbing in all countries – global figures are rising fast and so too are cases in the continent. Economies remain largely in lockdown mode even as gradual easing of restrictions is being effected. Economic growth is expected to suffer catastrophic contractions across the board. National borders remain completely shut down for peoples’ movement since early March. With the region’s states having divested from the health sector pre-Covid-19, health systems across the region remain fragile and under immense strain and pressure as countries fight to contain and defeat the coronavirus.
The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), like many other agencies has not been spared from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. As the numbers of the pandemic surge and states strive to flatten the curves, OSISA has observed a rising heavy-handedness by states who have adopted strict securitized approaches informed by “cut and paste” lockdown measures that are largely context and culturally insensitive. This has resulted in rising human rights violations in a context where citizens’ access to livelihoods has been severely curtailed; squarely compromising OSISA’s own values of promoting open society values by working towards building vibrant and tolerant democracies across the region.

In the context of a rapidly evolving and complex reality in Southern Africa and in a bid to continue promoting open society values, OSISA is re-engineering and re-calibrating its strategic direction to focus on four major themes that represent the overarching mandate of the institution beginning in 2021–2024. These include the following:

1. Confronting and resisting autocracy, corporate power and state capture
2. Promoting just, inclusive, sustainable societies and challenging inequality
3. Promoting and protecting human rights and defending constitutionalism
4. Democratising access to information and promoting digital rights

Taken together, these pillars represent the bedrock of our strategic direction.

It is under the ambit of OSISA’s strategic direction which seeks to confront the power systems, both visible and hidden, the motive forces that undermine human rights and the resultant socio-economic and political disruptions in the region that our response to the Covid-19 pandemic is framed. Under this focused Covid-19 response strategy, OSISA is supporting programmes aligned to the following specific strategic objectives and themes in the fight against Covid-19:

1. Promoting information democracy in Southern Africa
2. Building resilient social services systems that deliver equitable and sustainable universal access to health, education and water.
3. Charting pathways to new economic realities in a new world (Dis)Order
4. Curbing corruption while promoting transparency and accountability
5. Responding to diminishing human rights protections due to increased securitisation, authoritarianism and constitutional reversals.

For a detailed OSISA COVID-19 strategy, please see: www.osisa.org/covid19
Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for an OSISA grant, the following requirements are essential for established organisations, but not mandatory particularly for nascent organisations or social movements:

- Have a mission and implement programmes that are consistent with open society values and the strategic objectives of this Covid-19 call;
- Possess experience and expertise in responding to crises and pandemics;
- Demonstrate the ability to operate in a clear niche and be a significant actor within that arena (demonstrated by a record of producing materials, having conducted research and/or advocacy, and having implemented programmes at a sub-regional, national or region-wide level);
- Demonstrate the ability to operate a well-managed and financially viable operation (demonstrated by the submission of three-to-five years of audited financial statements and a letter of support from an existing donor);
- Sound and strong track record of success and impact on its target population (as evidenced by the submission of independent programmatic evaluations that are less than two years old);
- Strong financial management systems and strong capacity for resource mobilization (as evidenced by the existence of a qualified accountant and/or accounting firm managing the organisation’s finances, and evidence of financial systems in place); alternatively, be open to being assisted to develop financial and operational systems that are in line with good practice and standards. (This will be done either through OSISA or a fiscal agent).
- A clear strategic vision for the organization, and an articulation of how this vision will assist the organisation to address the needs of the population and/or open society issue for which it requires support and funding.

Selection Criteria

Grants will be awarded based on available funding and the priorities outlined in the OSISA COVID-19 strategy. Short-listed applicants may be required to provide more information. We welcome innovative, community-based response initiatives from social movements and organizations targeting among others the most vulnerable groups in society, which include rural communities, the urban poor, persons with disabilities, indigenous groups, LGBTQI and older people.
Application Instruction

1. Download OSISA Concept Note Application Form; Complete it and submit strictly by email to GrantProposalsCOVID-19@osisa.org

Deadline for submission: 16h30 (CAT) on Wednesday July 22, 2020.

Specific guidelines can be accessed on our website through this link: http://osisa.org/grants/

Timelines

OSISA sees these grants as urgent and important in addressing the pressing realities and needs brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. All grants under this call should be processed and paid to grantees no later than the 31st of December. OSISA shall therefore strive to expedite all grants. In this regard, OSISA shall inform applicants of the status of their application no later than three weeks after the closure of this call for applications.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the maximum amount an organisation can apply for?
   1.1 The maximum amount an organization can apply for is between USD250 000 and USD300 000.

2. Can an individual apply for a grant? If yes, what is the limit on the amount they can apply for?
   2.1 No individual applications will be accepted.

3. Are organisations based outside of the eleven (11) countries where OSISA works eligible to apply if they conduct work within OSISA’s geographical scope?
   3.1 Only organizations in and work in the eleven (11) countries where OSISA works can apply.

4. We have previously applied for COVID-related funding and our application was rejected. Can we submit an application under this Call?
   4.1 You can only apply if your project is aligned to this Call.

5. If our application is successful, are we allowed to sub-grant to other organisations?
   5.1 Sub-granting is only allowed if it’s been agreed upon with OSISA.

6. Will we receive an acknowledgement of receipt for our application?
   6.1 Yes, you’ll receive an automated response.
1 Hood Avenue/148
Jan Smuts; Rosebank,
GP 2196; South Africa

Phone
T. +27 (0)11 587 5000
F. +27 (0)11 587 5099

Open Society Initiative
for Southern Africa

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www.osisa.org