

DEMOCRACY OPPORTUNITY SUPPORT FUND - DOSF

Guidelines for Applicants

1.0. Background and rationale

The Democracy Opportunity Support Fund (DOSF) is a flagship initiative of the West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network (WADEMOS) that contribute to advancing and protecting democracy in West Africa. With the support of the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), WADEMOS mobilizes, coordinates, and makes use of the resources, opportunities, and collective power of pro-democracy actors, civil society, social movements, and activists in WA including interactions with regional bodies and instruments, in order to halt the erosion of democracy and advance, defend, and reenergize democratic norms and reforms in the Sub-region. As a co-created initiative, WADEMOS identified the following priority areas for intervening in the sub-region:

- Promoting Peaceful and credible elections
- Protecting civic spaces for engagement
- Protecting front-line democratic defenders/ human rights activist
- Promoting Democratic Renewal and transitions
- Promoting Regional Peace and Security against the increase in terrorism

The DOSF is now established in response to early signs or warning indicators of democracy deterioration within the very fragile socio-political context in the West Africa sub-region and to promote new opportunities for democratic reform and other pro-democracy efforts in the Region

2.0. Objectives

The DOSF supports Network Member's (including recommended individuals and social movements) initiatives to address democratic backsliding and respond to timely needed democratic interventions within the sub-region. It specifically aims at:

- Fostering collective, national, and regional actions and efforts in addressing democratic backsliding in West Africa;
- Strengthening cooperation, and collaboration among network members and within WADEMOS priority areas and interventions;
- Enhancing innovation and creativity among Pro-Democratic actors within the sub-region.
- Improving timely and relevant democratic backsliding interventions within the sub-region

3.0. Guiding principles

- The fund is competitive
- The fund is accessible to Network Members. However, it can be expanded to external organizations or individuals only if the application by that external organization or individual is supported by a recommendation from a Network Member.

- The fund is utilized to support two types of interventions in line with WADEMOS priority areas:
 - Organizational projects from WADEMOS Network Members, recommended organizations or individuals addressing any of the five strategic priorities of the Network
 - Timely-needed and immediate interventions from WADEMOS Network Members, and working groups in response to the democratic reversals in the sub-region.
- Funded Projects and timely-needed interventions are carried out in less than 6 months and only within the ECOWAS territory

4.0. Selection Criteria

Projects are selected by the PMU and approved by the Fund Management Committee based on established criteria

➤ **The concept and the rationale**

It should be clearly stated and aligned to the WADEMOS priority action. Thus, how it advances and support the cause and objectives of WADEMOS at national and regional level.

➤ **The scope and the purpose**

- Regional and national advocacy and activism around the WADEMOS priority interventions
- Regional and national civic mobilization, civic engagement, capacity building, learning and knowledge transfer
- Other innovative democracy promotion initiatives including the use of creative talents to respond to democratic backsliding

➤ **The Budget**

It should be realistic and respect the funding ceiling

➤ **The timeline**

Completion of projects and interventions should not exceed a period of six months.

5.0. Integration of Cross-Cutting issues

Projects that integrate cross-cutting issues are highly encouraged (Gender, Diversity and Inclusion, youth empowerment and outreach, etc...)

6.0. Selection process

➤ **Organizational Projects**

Early every quarter, the call for applications is opened for 6 weeks, during which organizations submit proposals following a proposed template.

After submission of the application, the PMU will conduct the screening process and submit the proposed selected initiatives for final approval to the Fund Management Committee

Feedback will be given at least 2 to 1 week before the end of the quarter

Disbursement of funds is effected at the beginning of the next quarter after the selected organization has signed the grant agreement

➤ **Timely-needed interventions**

Requests for interventions are received throughout the year. Once the request is submitted, the PMU receives it and requests approval for intervention from the Fund Management Committee. Feedback is given to the organization requesting within a period of 2 to 4 weeks. Disbursement of funds can then be immediately effected after the signature of the grant agreement

7.0. Budget Ceiling

The Ceiling for funding is as follows:

- Organizational Projects support: **\$20 000**
- Timely-needed Interventions: **\$10 000**

8.0. Source of fund

The fund is currently operating within the existing budgetary framework of the Network, but at a larger stage, other financing options will be explored. The Network budgetary framework is currently financed by Sida.

9.0. Management of the Fund

- The fund shall be managed by the fund Management Committee
- Funds are transferred upon approval of projects or requests by the Fund Management Committee and signature of a grant agreement between the WADEMOS Secretariat and the implementing organization
- A final report, must be submitted with a financial part showing expenditures. However, the PMU is allowed to establish a system to check the initiatives implementation process
- After completion of the project and receiving the final report, the PMU will send them back to the relevant organization for an ex-post evaluation and potentially additional support.

10.0. Administration and implementation arrangements

The Fund Management Committee is chaired by a Member of the Steering Committee and review progress reports and disbursement requirements as approved in the signed agreement with beneficiaries and partners. The Fund Management Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that the fund is utilized for the purpose described above. The Committee also ensures that expenditures are incurred in accordance with the applicable Financial regulations, rules, policies, and procedures of WADEMOS, for the purpose intended and within the funds earmarked for that

activity and shall draw the attention of the Financial accountant to any proposed commitment or expenditures which in his or her view, is inconsistent therewith

11.0. Audit

The grants disbursed will be subject to internal and external audit procedures of WADEMOS.

12.0. Revision

The WADEMOS PMU and the Steering Committee with mutual consent may revise the above provisions, should circumstances require.

Appendix

1. Application form
2. Activity report template
3. Assessment checklist