

# Frequently Asked Questions

## HLF First Call for Registration

**The Help Localisation Facility, HLF: a locally led fund with and for civil society actors**

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## 1. Who is eligible to apply for HLF funding?

Eligible applicants are:

- Legally registered, locally led organisations or initiatives engaged in humanitarian work in Ukraine.
- Led by individuals who are citizens or permanent residents of Ukraine.
- Operate independently and are primarily accountable to local communities.
- Have been active for at least two years in humanitarian work in Ukraine.
- Have at least two staff members (excluding consultants) with clear roles.
- Have at least one person responsible for MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Learning). This does not need to be a full-time MEAL position; it may be a staff member who carries MEAL responsibilities alongside other tasks, in recognition of the limited capacity of smaller organisations to allocate dedicated staff for this function.
- For single applicant organisations: have an annual organisational budget between €250,000 and €4 million. For contract signatories in a consortium: have an annual budget of at least €1.5 million and no more than €4 million.
- (Specific thresholds apply per grant size, see Question 8.)

## 2. Which types of organisations are NOT eligible for HLF funding?

- Organisations that fall outside the scope of the above criteria and definition.
- Local affiliates, offices, or branches of international organisations.
- Entities that promote religious beliefs, discriminate, engage in political lobbying, or work solely in development without humanitarian focus.

## 3. Can we apply if our organisation works at the community level and has not been involved in the humanitarian coordination bodies until now?

Yes. The HLF welcomes applications from grassroots and community-based organisations, as long as their work aligns with the humanitarian principles and imperative.

## 4. Can we apply if we have previously received funding from an international NGO or UN agency?

Yes. Prior funding from international actors does not disqualify you—in fact, it can be an advantage, as it may have strengthened your experience in working with such donors. However, it is by no means a requirement. What matters is that your organisation is locally led, operates independently, and meets the HLF's eligibility criteria. However, you are not eligible to apply if your organisation is an affiliate, office, or branch of an international NGO or UN agency.

## 5. Can we apply as a new organisation if it was registered recently but its team members have long-standing humanitarian experience?

No. Your organisation must have been legally operational for at least two years, regardless of individual team members' experience.

## 6. We have a strong volunteer base but no full-time staff. Are we eligible?

No. The HLF requires a minimum of two staff members with defined roles and relevant experience. Volunteers alone do not meet this requirement.

## 7. Is a full proposal required at the start?

No. In the Registration and Due Diligence phase, you are only asked to:

- Indicate the grant size you wish to apply for.
- Indicate if you are applying as a single organisation (for €250,000 or €800,000 grants) or as a consortium (for €800,000 grants only).
- Indicate your region and priority thematic areas.

A full proposal is only required if you are invited to the final Project Selection Phase.

## 8. What funding amounts are available?

During the pilot phase (until December 2026), three types of grants will be available:

- €100,000 (project duration: 6 months) – For single organisations with annual budgets of €250,000–€625,000.
- €250,000 (project duration: 8 months) – For single organisations with annual budgets of €625,000–€2 million.
- €800,000 (project duration: 12 months):
  - For Consortia (up to 3 partners): contract signatory's annual budget must be €1,5–€4 million), or for Single organisations annual budgets must be €2–€4 million.

## 9. What is the timeframe until we will hear back, develop the project and start the activities?

The HLF-Process is as following:

- **Registration and Due Diligence Phase** runs until **July 7, 2025**; however, you must submit your Registration and Due Diligence documents by **June 23, 2025**.
- **Dialogue Phase** with selected organisations starts in July and continues until the **beginning of August 2025**.
- **Proposal Development and Submission Phase** with selected organisations runs until **mid-September 2025**.
- **Selection of proposals by the Grants Committee** will be completed by the **end of September 2025**.
- **Project implementation** is expected to begin by the **beginning or middle of October 2025**.

## 10. What if our annual budget is just slightly below or above the eligibility threshold?

The HLF applies budget thresholds as a guideline rather than an absolute cut-off. We understand that budgets can vary from year to year, especially for local organisations. If your organisation's budget is *slightly above or below* the stated range—and at least *one of the last two financial years* falls within the range—we encourage you to register. These cases will be reviewed individually during the due diligence process, which will consider both financial years and assess the overall financial capacity of your organisation in context. We aim to apply our criteria with practical flexibility, while maintaining fairness and consistency across applicants. However, please note that *significant* deviations will affect eligibility.

## 11. What is expected of consortia applying for €800,000 grants?

- Maximum of three partners.
- One organisation will sign the agreement (contract signatory) and must complete the registration.
- All partners must complete due diligence.
- Budget distribution must follow rules:
  - 2-partner consortia: one partner must manage at least 30% of the budget.
  - 3-partner consortia: no partner may manage more than 50%.
- Specific rules apply to consortia regarding the distribution of the 7% Programme Support Costs, to ensure fair and transparent cost-sharing among partners.

The HLF encourages consortia as they are more likely to expand access to funding for organisations that may not otherwise be eligible or competitive on their own.

## 12. What is expected from consortia beyond formal partnership agreements?

Under the HLF, a consortium

- is defined as a *collaborative arrangement* under which maximum three partners work together towards a *common goal guided by a shared vision and clearly defined roles*. One of the partners is signing an agreement with the HL (contract signatory) carries the full legal and financial responsibility for the consortium project. However, *each consortium member contributes meaningfully* to the project's design and implementation and to *creating a common vision* for the consortium and to supporting mutual accountability.
- should be built on mutual need and complementary activities.
- will involve 'sub-granting' by the contract signatory to the other partner(s) under their joint project proposal, but a consortium under the HLF is *explicitly not intended to function as a purely administrative or transactional 'pass-through' funding arrangement*.

As a result, the HLF Grants Committee will prioritise authentic partnerships, added value, mutual learning, and strong internal coordination over merely formalised agreements— these qualities will be recognised in the evaluation process.

### 13. Can we request less than the maximum grant amount within each category?

Yes. You may request less than the ceiling amount for your grant category.

### 14. When can we register?

The Registration and Due Diligence phase for the first round opens on 10 June 2025 and closes on 23 June 2025. Grant sizes available in this round are €250,000 and €800,000.

Due diligence review will be completed by 7 July 2025.

Please note: Full proposal documents are not required at this stage. You will be informed whether you are invited to the next phase.

The separate round for the €100,000 grant size will take place later in the year.

### 15. What kind of documentation is required during the Registration and Due Diligence Phase?

You will need to provide:

- Charter and/or any other document describing the appointment of the board and related processes
- Scan of the original extract from the USR
- Scan of the original extract and/or other document certifying the non-profit status
- A scan of a bank statement or a generated online bank statement showing the organisation's account
- Latest Report from State Tax Service of Ukraine
- Organizational governance documents
- CVs of key staff members.
- Information about previous similar projects and contact details of donors
- Reference letters from donors (only if available, this is not a requirement)
- A preliminary indication of your intended project region, grant size, and HLF priority area.

The due diligence requirements are proportionate to the size of the organisation, with lighter thresholds applied to smaller organisations registering.

Please note: Project proposal documents are not required at this stage.

### 16. Where does the HLF fund?

Staying true to its locally led model, the HLF in its pilot phase running until December 2026, prioritizes funding according to needs identified by partners. Severe needs may exist among conflict-affected populations in areas that are not fully reflected in national or international data. Therefore, in line with the principles of impartiality and a needs-based approach, the HLF will provide funding across all geographic areas of Ukraine where humanitarian needs are clearly demonstrated by the partner and where project implementation is possible in terms of access, safety and security.

### 17. What are the HLF priority areas for funding?

The HLF supports flexible, needs-based humanitarian work. Priority areas include:

- Safe, Protected and Healthy Lives
- Safe and Dignified Temporary or Transitional Accommodation for Displaced and Vulnerable populations
- Winterisation and Seasonal Vulnerability
- Inclusive Learning and Education in Emergencies
- Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) is encouraged across all priority areas.

Projects do not have to align strictly with humanitarian clusters but must clearly address humanitarian needs. Please see the HLF-website for more detailed information: <https://help-ukraine.org.ua/projects/programa-lokalizatsiyi-help-hlf/>

## **18. Can we include funding for organisational capacity strengthening?**

Yes. All grants can include Organisational Capacity Strengthening Funding, which is:

- Optional, but strongly encouraged.
- Fully flexible – partners decide whether to include it in their project, how much to allocate, and what to focus on.
- Can be used for areas such as: strategy, governance, financial management & sustainability, MEAL, safeguarding, protection, staff safety & security, communications, and internal systems, among others.

For consortia (€800,000 grants), the HLF budget explicitly allows for including costs that support consortium (capacity) strengthening—such as partnership development, cross-organisational learning, or a joint project kick-off workshop.

## **19. How much of the grant can be allocated to organisational strengthening?**

There is no fixed percentage. You decide the amount, based on what is strategic and realistic for your organisation as long as it is clearly supporting the overall humanitarian mission of your organisation and is balanced with funding used for your humanitarian work. The HLF encourages you to invest meaningfully in this area but leaves the decision to you.

## **20. What kind of capacity strengthening activities are NOT allowed?**

Funding cannot be used for:

- Personal development unrelated to the organisation.
- Excessively high-standard or luxury costs.
- Activities lacking clear organisational relevance or feasibility within the project timeframe.

## **21. How will applications be evaluated once they make into the final Project Selection Phase?**

If you are invited to submit a full proposal, applications will be assessed based on:

- Alignment with HLF priorities.
- Experience and local presence.
- Needs-based relevance.

- Program quality and accountability.
- Coordination and collaboration.
- Inclusion and community engagement.
- Cost efficiency and feasibility.
- (For consortia: added value, mutual learning, internal coordination.)

Bonus points are given to:

- Community-led, survivor-led, or grassroots organisations.
- Consortia, for €800,000 grants.

## 22. Will funding be available beyond the first HLF funding of my organisation?

No. Funding is not renewable within the pilot phase (ends December 2026). Plan your activities accordingly.

## 23. If we are not selected in this round, can we apply again later?

The HLF pilot phase runs until December 2026; if not selected in this round, future opportunities may depend on new funding availability (yet to be determined).

## Still have questions?

Please revisit the HLF information page: <https://help-ukraine.org.ua/projects/programa-lokalizatsiyi-help-hlf/> or get in touch with us: [hlf@help-ukraine.org.ua](mailto:hlf@help-ukraine.org.ua)