Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

NB! In the event of any discrepancy between the text in the Frequently Asked Questions and the call for proposals, the call for proposals text shall take precedence.

1. Eligibility Criteria

Question 1.1. The call for proposals states that all proposals must comply with the OECD/DAC criteria for official development assistance (ODA). Can Norad share guidance, so that we can do a self-assessment of our proposed project against these criteria?
Answer: Part 1 of Norad's *Statistical Classification Manual* outlines the OECD/DAC criteria for ODA eligibility.

Question 1.2. The call for proposals states that the applicant must be a legal entity. What does this mean?
Answer: An independent legal entity is an organisation that has been formally established and registered according to the laws of its country. A legal entity is an organisation that has the legal capacity to enter into contracts, own assets, incur liabilities, and be held responsible under the law.

Question 1.3. Our organisation is a member of a large international confederation. Can more than one of the member organisations of the same confederation submit a separate application?
Answer: Yes, unless otherwise stated in the call for proposals, Norad will accept applications from multiple members of the same confederation or other membership-based association. However, please note that by submitting several applications from different member organisations, the confederation's members will be competing against each other for the same funds.

Question 1.4. Must all consortia members and sub-grantees meet the full list of allocation criteria for applicants as stated in the call for proposals?
Answer: No. Unless otherwise stated in the call for proposals, only the applicant is assessed against the full list of established criteria. However, in terms of capacity and competence to implement the project, Norad will consider the consortium as a whole.
On a related note, Norad doesn't distinguish between consortia members and sub-grantees in legal terms. Norad signs the grant agreement with one grant recipient. All organisations that receive funds through this grant recipient are considered as sub-grantees.

Question 1.5. Is there a limit to the number of sub-grantees in a project?
Answer: No.

Question 1.6. Can organisations not registered in Norway apply?
Answer: The call for proposals will clearly state any restrictions related to nationality.

2. Funding Priorities

Question 2.1. The call for proposals states that "organisations that already have an ongoing agreement with Norad for grants from this scheme or for similar objectives either directly or through an umbrella organisation, will not be prioritised for support." We have an ongoing agreement with Norad for a project with the same objectives. Does this mean that we are not eligible?
Answer: You are still eligible and can apply for funding. However, your project will most likely not be prioritised for funding.

Question 2.2. We believe that an effective means to reach our planned objectives would be through having a small grant mechanism for local partners. Is it possible to include a small grant component, open for applications from local NGOs (as sub-grantees), in the application?
Answer: Yes. If you can demonstrate that this would contribute to the intended results of the project, then having a small grant component is possible. You will need to describe the design of the small grant scheme, including selection criteria, in the application.

3. Application Process

Question 3.1. Can we have a meeting with Norad to discuss aspects of our project proposal?
Answer: Norad will, as a general rule, not have meetings with partners on the content of a proposal as our calls for proposals are mainly competitive. Information about the call and Norad's priorities will be shared on www.norad.no and in the Grants Portal. Should you have any questions that you do not find the answer to on Norad's website, kindly send an enquiry in writing to the unit responsible for the specific call for proposals (see the call for proposals for more details).

Question 3.2. We would like to submit two project proposals. Is this possible?
Answer: No, this is not possible. Each applicant may only submit one application. However, an organisation may submit both an "independent" project proposal AND participate in one (or several) consortium applications as a sub-grantee. The scope of the different applications may, however, not overlap. An organisation may hence, for example, submit an independent application for a project in Nigeria and participate as a sub-grantee in a project in Colombia.

Question 3.3. We represent a group of organisations that have designed a joint project to reach more people with more comprehensive support. Should we apply through one lead organisation or should all apply individually?
Answer: Norad welcomes joint applications from groups of organisations (a consortium). An application for funding for the full project should be put forward by one lead organisation. Norad will enter into a grant agreement with <u>one</u> grant recipient, the lead, to whom all funds will be transferred. The applicant/lead organisation is then expected to enter into sub-agreements with its partners, and flow down key requirements from Norad. The applicant will

be accountable for the entire grant. Necessary costs for coordination may be budgeted as a direct cost.

Question 3.4. Against what criteria will Norad appraise and score applications?
Answer: The criteria are listed in the call for proposals. You can also read more about this topic in the Grants Handbook. Under a competitive call for proposals, all applications will be assessed in comparison with each other. In addition to appraising each application on its individual merits, Norad will hence consider the complete portfolio of projects to ensure that they collectively meet the objectives of the call for proposals. Thus, a proposal may fulfill all the criteria in the call for proposals and be of very high quality, but nevertheless not be selected for funding.

Question 3.5. We would prefer to submit the application in an e-mail as opposed to through the Grants Portal. Is this possible?
Answer: No, applications submitted by e-mail will not be processed. For electronic submissions you must use the Grants Portal, which is a joint application portal for Norad and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Note that you must first create an individual user account and register your organisation.

Question 3.6. Do sub-grantees have to register in the Grants Portal, or is it sufficient if the applicant registers?
Answer: Sub-grantees do not have to register in the Grants Portal. Only the applicant must do so. The applicant should, however, include the names of known sub-grantees in their application.

Question 3.7. Due to unforeseen events, we were unable to submit the application by the deadline. Can we nevertheless submit the application now, after the deadline?
Answer: Strict deadlines for grant applications are set to ensure a fair and organised process. The Grants Portal will close at the exact deadline stated in the call for proposals, and late applications will not be assessed. Should extraordinary circumstances beyond an applicant's control have prevented timely submission through the Grant Portal, Norad may consider accepting a late submission. In such cases, contact Norad immediately through e-mail on support.grants.portal@norad.no. Norad may decide to provide a workaround to facilitate late submission, however, only if contacted prior to or immediately after the deadline. The extraordinary circumstances must be documented and verifiable.
Tip! Staff related challenges (for example, acute illness) will normally not be considered as extraordinary circumstances that may warrant a late submission. To avoid such last-minute challenges, ensure that several staff within your organisation have access to the Grants Portal and are authorised to submit applications.

4. The Application Form

Question 4.1. Where do we find the application form?
Answer: The application form can be found in the Grants Portal. When you have created a user profile and connected your user profile to your organisation (or registered a new organisation, in case your organisation has not been registered before), you will be able to access the application form. Note that you are required to fill out information both about the project and your organisation. If your organisation has been registered on an earlier occasion, you will need to review and update the information about the organisation prior to submitting the application.

Question 4.2. What are the required documents and attachments that must accompany the grant application?
Answer: Information about required documents and attachments is available under the section for the specific call for proposals in the Grants Portal.

Question 4.3. Are there restrictions in terms of length (pages), font, etc. for the application?
Answer: Kindly consult the application form in the Grants Portal. Text fields have limits on the number of characters. Note that the number of characters is different for the various text fields, reflecting the expected length of the response from applicants.

Question 4.4. Can we submit the application in another language than Norwegian or English?
Answer: No, all applications must be submitted in Norwegian or English. Norad does not accept applications in other languages than Norwegian and English. The Grants Portal has application forms only in Norwegian and English. All the fields in the Grants Portal as well as all project related attachments, such as the results framework (or similar), Theory of Change, budget, risk analysis, etc., must be prepared in either Norwegian or English. Organisational policies, procedures, handbooks and similar documents may be submitted in an unauthorised translated version (using web-based translation tools, such as Google translate or other non-expensive solutions). Authorised/approved translations are not required. Please mark translated versions clearly with "Unauthorised translated copy".

Question 4.5. Could you please clarify what is meant by "Organisation Number" under the section 'Contact Information'?

Answer: This refers to the applicant's official registration number in the country of registration. In some contexts, this is referred to as the "national registration number".

Question 4.6. Our guidelines for protection from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) are included in our staff code of conduct. Do we need to upload the code of conduct twice, i.e. both under the question "Does the organisation have a code of conduct or similar ethical guidelines?" and under the question "Does the organisation have guidelines for protection from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH)?"?
Answer: Yes, we strongly advise that you upload the code of conduct twice. Applicants that do not fulfill the organisational requirements will be rejected.

Question 4.7. The call for proposals requests information (including attachments) that there is no corresponding question/text field or "upload file button" for in the Grants Portal. How do we submit this information to Norad?
Answer: You can add this under the section *Additional Information.* Here, you can both write text and upload attachments. Note that applicants are responsible for ensuring that all information requested in the call for proposals is included in the application.

Question 4.8. Our project is politically sensitive as we operate in a very challenging context. Can Norad refrain from making information about the project public?
Answer: According to Norwegian law (the Freedom of Information Act), everyone has the right to request access to documents sent to/from government institutions. Norad regularly receives requests for access to project related documents from the general public, media, researchers, etc. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, Norad can decide to withhold an individual document, or specific information in a document. It is up to Norad to decide whether this is the case.

Norad can furthermore decide to hold back information such as the name of the grant recipient, title of the project, country of implementation, etc. from publicly available statistics on Norwegian aid, published through OECD DAC, the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and Norad's website.

Question 4.9. The call for proposals requires us to prepare a "knowledge plan". What is this?
Answer: A knowledge plan describes how learning in a project will be used to refine programming and address evidence gaps. You can find more information about Norad's requirements for results and knowledge management in the Grants Handbook.

Question 4.10. What requirements are there for the risk assessment?
Answer: Applicants should consider two types of risks: 1) Risks that may have a negative effect on the achievement of results and 2) Risks that the project itself may have unintended negative consequences on the surroundings. Both internal and external risks should be identified. Risks related to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) and financial irregularities, and risks related to the four cross-cutting issues for Norwegian Official Development Assistance must always be considered and mitigation actions planned for. See further details in the Grants Handbook.

Question 4.11. Is it possible to replace (update) documents uploaded under the "Organisation" tab in the Grants Portal after formal submission of the application?
Answer: Organisational data and uploaded documents can only be replaced and updated before submitting the application. Once an application has been submitted, any changes that are made to the organisational data will not be visible to the Norad staff that will assess the application.

Question 4.12. We have noticed that some questions in the application form in the Grants Portal allow for lengthy responses, while others permit only brief answers. Should we interpret the character limits for each question as guidance on the level of detail and length of response that Norad expects?
Answer: Norad welcomes applications that are short and to the point. Should you be able to provide a response that is shorter than the number of characters indicated this is welcome!

Q: In the application form, we are asked to assign one or several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the project. Which SDGs should be selected for a humanitarian assistance project?
A: Interventions with a clear sectoral focus (health, education, etc.) should be coded in line with this focus. For more general interventions, we recommend considering SDG targets 1.5, 11.5, 16.1 and/or 17.2.

5. Budget and Procurement

Question 5.1. Does Norad have any rules related to eligibility of costs, direct vs. indirect costs, and other aspects related to budgeting?
Answer: Yes. You can find information about this in the Grants Handbook on Norad's website.

Question 5.2. Can Norad provide additional guidance on the coverage of staff-related costs?
Answer: Norad will cover salary costs that are necessary, reasonable and in line with the local market/benchmarks. See further details in the Grants Handbook.

Question 5.3. Can we apply for funding to cover the costs for the development of the project proposal?
Answer: No, Norad does not cover costs related to proposal development. Only actual costs of the implementation of the project during the support period, as stipulated in the grant agreement, are eligible.

Question 5.4. What costs are considered indirect costs, and how are these calculated?
Answer: Indirect costs are costs associated with the general administration of the grant applicant's organisation that cannot be directly related to the project. For sub-grantees, Norad will cover reasonable indirect costs, however, unless otherwise instructed these should be budgeted as direct costs.
To calculate the indirect costs, you multiply the total direct costs with the percentage rate for indirect costs. For example, 120 000 000 kr x 7% = 8 400 000 NOK in indirect costs. The total grant amount would then be 128 400 000 NOK.
You can read more about indirect costs in the Grants Handbook.

Question 5.5. How should currency conversions be handled in the budget?
Answer: The currency used in the budget should be the functional currency of the project. i.e. the currency that is mainly used in the project. Please read more about this in the Grants Handbook.

Question 5.6. What procurement rules apply?
Answer: Norad has a set of procurement provisions that apply to all procurement carried out under a grant from Norad. These are included in the grant agreement as Part III. These are "minimum rules" that must be respected. The grant recipient may apply its own internal rules and regulations, provided that these are at least as strict as Norad's procurement provisions. Failure to comply with Norad's procurement provisions is considered a material breach and will render the expenditure ineligible for funding.
The procurement provisions currently applicable can be found here 10. Templates, detailed guidelines for select funding streams, etc. | Norad.no
Please note that transferring funds to a sub-grantee is not considered procurement. Transfer to a sub-grantee is regulated in the Agreement's General Conditions (Part II), Article 11.

6. Audit

Question 6.1. Does Norad require that grant recipients contract an external audit firm to undertake an audit of the project, and if so, how often?
Answer: An annual project audit must be conducted out by an independent chartered/certified or state-authorised public accountant (auditor). Ideally, Norad expects the grant recipient's existing auditor to carry out the project audit. Norad will cover the costs for the audit, so remember to include these costs in the budget.

Question 6.2. Which requirements apply for auditors?
Anwer: The auditor conducting the audit must be an independent chartered/certified or state-authorised public accountant (auditor). As a rule, the audit must be carried out in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISA). Norad encourages changing the auditor every 5 to 10 years.

Question 6.3. What audit requirements apply for funds transferred to subgrantees?
Answer: Norad requires that the *entire* grant is audited, including any parts of the grant that are transferred to sub-grantees, regardless of the amount. This means that the project audit must cover all use of funds under the grant agreement, whether the funds are spent by the grant recipient or by subgrantees. The grant recipient is responsible for ensuring that adequate audit arrangements are in place for all sub-grantees, in line with the grant agreement and applicable audit requirements.

7. Point of Contact for Additional Questions

Question 7.1. Whom can we contact for technical questions related to the Grants Portal?
Answer: Technical questions regarding login and functionalities in the Grants Portal as a technical tool can be sent to support.grants.portal@norad.no

Question 7.2. Whom can we contact for questions related to a specific call for proposals?
Answer: Kindly contact the thematic unit responsible for the specific call for proposals. The contact details will be available on Norad's website. You can also find contact details under the specific call for proposals in the Grants Portal.