



EUROPEAN UNION



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Support to national civil society organizations for engagement in human rights advocacy and protection

This Call for Proposals is launched in the frame of the project “Protecting human rights of vulnerable groups in Azerbaijan” funded by European Union and implemented by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 BACKGROUND

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Realization of human rights enables all individuals to shape and determine their own lives in liberty and equality. United Nations (UN) has defined a broad range of internationally accepted rights, including economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, entitled to everyone equally. The nine core international human rights treaties set international standards for the protection and promotion of human rights. Different mechanisms have been established under the UN human rights system to promote and protect human rights, including UN human rights treaty bodies, the Human Rights Council and its Special Procedures, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and other mechanisms. By becoming parties to international human rights treaties, the States parties assume obligations and duties under international law to respect, to protect and to fulfil human rights. UN human rights mechanisms periodically assess the status of implementation of human rights treaties by the States parties and make, through constructive dialogues, recommendations to the States parties on specific human rights and obligations. These recommendations serve to assist the States parties in implementing their international human rights obligations, addressing human rights concerns and enhancing realization of human rights on the ground.

Azerbaijan is a party to and has ratified a significant number of human rights treaties, protocols and instruments, including the core international human rights treaties. In line with the relevant requirements of the core international human rights treaties on national reporting, Azerbaijan government's engagement within the UN human rights system has been significant by preparing and submitting to relevant UN human rights bodies comprehensive State Party reports on measures taken to give effect to its obligations undertaken under such human rights instruments and mechanisms. Additionally, Azerbaijan is a participant to the Universal Periodic Review process and, in 2018, Azerbaijan passed through the third cycle of the UPR, accepting a number of recommendations to improve the human rights situation in the country. Furthermore, in 2013 the Republic of Azerbaijan has extended a standing invitation to UN special procedures announcing

that it accepts requests to visit from all special procedures. Azerbaijan has also demonstrated firm commitment towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Along with other SDGs, Azerbaijan has prioritized SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

Along with the State Parties, civil society organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in mainstreaming international human rights standards and norms in national level. The work of the UN human rights system is underpinned by the participation of the CSOs. The involvement of CSOs at all stages of the work of the UN human rights mechanisms, particularly in human rights advocacy, protection, monitoring and reporting processes, has been recognized by the UN human rights mechanisms as an essential element in the implementation of the international human rights treaties at national level. CSOs engage in the UN human rights treaty bodies' reporting process by actively participating in the national reporting preparations. They can provide useful inputs into the State party reports by sharing their views and assessment of the State party's implementation of a particular international human rights treaty and of the relevant previous recommendations. CSOs can also engage directly in the reporting process by submitting their own reports to UN human rights treaty bodies, and by presenting oral information to the UN human rights treaty bodies at different stages of the reporting cycle. CSOs are also encouraged to submit their inputs for reviews of the States parties' human rights records under UPR process. More importantly, CSOs can make use of the findings and recommendations of the UN human rights mechanisms, including the Concluding Observations of the UN human rights treaty bodies, recommendations from the UPR process, and recommendations contained in country visits of the UN Special Procedures, for shaping their local human rights advocacy and protection activities. Overall, CSOs can engage in the promotion and protection of human rights in various forms and levels. Few examples include human rights education and raising awareness of human rights, capacity building of national stakeholders in various human rights thematic areas, monitoring and assessment of the status of implementation of various human rights recommendations of UN human rights mechanisms in national level, working with national stakeholders on implementation of recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms, advocacy and lobbying for changes to national laws, initiating and participating in drafting of new laws and policies, offering legal assistance to members of vulnerable groups, and other important activities. CSOs can also play an important role in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs, including SDG 16. CSOs can assist the key government entities in setting national targets and indicators for SDG 16, offer data for establishment of a national database on SDG 16, participate in preparation of voluntary national reviews by member states, and raise awareness of relevant SDG targets.

Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is the principal UN structure on human rights, with a unique mandate to promote and protect human rights universally towards full implementation of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards. OHCHR provides technical assistance and advisory expertise in strengthening national capacities to promote and protect human rights. OHCHR, with the financial support of the European Union (EU), has launched a project to support engagement of the CSOs and human rights defenders (HRDs) in promotion and protection of human rights in the country. For this purpose, OHCHR, through its Grants Committee based in Geneva, plans to provide grants to CSOs, which are registered in the country, to undertake and implement projects and activities related to human rights and rule of law.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this Call for Proposals is to strengthen the role and capacities of the national CSOs in promotion and protection of human rights in the country.

The specific objectives include:

- Strengthening the role and engagement of the national CSOs in both national and international human rights advocacy;
- Enhancing the role of the CSOs in increasing the knowledge of human rights among national stakeholders and population through human rights education and capacity building activities;
- Enhancing the participation of the CSOs in assessment and monitoring of enjoyment of human rights by vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, women, children, IDPs, minorities and other disadvantaged groups;
- Enhancing the role of the CSOs in mainstreaming international human rights standards and norms in national level;
- Addressing capacity needs of the CSOs in carrying out analyses of national legislation and national policies related to human rights and in initiating proposals and recommendations for improvement or adoption of laws, policies and strategies for better realization of human rights in the country.

1.3 TYPES OF PROJECTS and ACTIVITIES

Proposals to be submitted by the CSOs should be related to promoting and protecting human rights in the country and mainstreaming recommendations of UN human rights mechanisms in national level. OHCHR encourages interested CSOs to focus their proposals on the following themes (this is not exhaustive):

- Economic and social rights of vulnerable groups (For example, projects related to enhancement of knowledge of international human rights tools and mechanisms on economic and social rights of vulnerable groups, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; projects related to promotion and protection of labour rights, social security rights, housing rights, rights to education and health; and other projects);
- Women's rights and gender equality (For example, projects focusing on promotion of equality between women and men in public and political life; projects aiming at combatting gender-based violence and gender-based discrimination; projects raising awareness of international human rights mechanisms and tools on women's rights including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and other tools; advocacy for joining and ratification of other international instruments protecting women's rights and combating gender-based violence; and other projects;
- The rights of the child (For example, projects aiming at raising the awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; projects aiming at combatting all forms of violence

against children, including abuse and exploitation, and lobbying for strengthening of national mechanisms in this area; projects raising awareness of international human rights standards on administration of juvenile justice; projects focusing on monitoring of involvement of children in forced labour and informal work;

- The rights of the persons with disabilities (For example, projects aiming at raising the awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities and advocating for improvement of national legislation in line with international human rights standards; projects promoting incorporation of a rights-based approach to disability into national legislation; projects focusing on access to education, health and justice by persons with disabilities; projects focusing on persons with disabilities in institutions; and other projects).

This list is not exhaustive and CSOs can submit proposals focusing on other human rights-related areas.

Types of activities

The following types of activities may be financed under this Call for Proposals (this list is not exhaustive):

- Capacity building programmes, training programmes (including online training and education programmes) and awareness raising activities related to human rights;
- Educational activities including translation, development and designing of various human-rights related teaching and educational publications and promotional materials;
- Human rights research;
- Provision of legal assistance to members of vulnerable groups and victims of human rights violations, including victims of gender-based violence
- Organizing conferences on important human rights topics;
- Drafting of proposals and recommendations for improvement or adoption of laws, as well as drafting of policy papers and strategies related human rights;
- Monitoring of closed type institutions, trial monitoring or observations.

Duration:

The initial planned duration of the proposed project should not exceed 12 months.

Location:

Projects should take place in Azerbaijan. Applicants are strongly encouraged to cover regions and remote areas in their proposals.

1.4 FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO BE PROVIDED BY OHCHR

Financial support should fall within the following maximum amount:

- **Maximum amount: USD 37,500**

Financial proposals to be presented in Annex 2 (Budget) should not exceed the aforementioned maximum amount.

2. RULES FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

2.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In order to be eligible for financial support, applicant/s should:

- a) be a non-governmental organization established in the Republic of Azerbaijan;**
- b) provide, along with the proposal, a certificate of registration in the country;**
- c) be non-profit making;**
- d) submit duly filled standard Proposal Template (Annex 1) and Budget Template (Annex 2) before the deadline specified in this Call for Proposals.**

2.2 SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Applicants eligible under this Call for Proposals must submit their proposals using the Proposal Template (Annex 1) and the Budget Template (Annex 2) attached to the Call for Proposals. Proposals must be submitted in English only.

2.2.1 Proposal Template (Annex 1 – Word document)

Applicants should prepare and submit their proposals using the standard Proposal Template (Annex 1).

The project proposal must be submitted in English only. The project proposal must not exceed 10 pages, but additional information may be provided as attachment.

As specified in the Proposal Template, the project proposal must provide information on the following components:

- Background information on applying organization's profile;
- Applying organization's experience in the area specified in the proposal;
- Project description;
- Project objectives (project objectives should match activities and expected results specified in the proposal);
- List and description of project activities;

- Beneficiaries/target groups – description of beneficiaries and estimated number of beneficiaries;
- Expected results;
- Information on staffing;
- Implementation plan;
- Risk assessment;
- Added value of the proposed project and sustainability;
- Budget requirements.

Incomplete proposal not providing information on any of the aforementioned sections of the standard Proposal Template will not be considered. Inconsistencies in terms of project objectives, activities and results may lead to the rejection of the proposal.

OHCHR reserves the right to seek clarifications from the applicant if deemed necessary.

2.2.2 Budget Template (Annex 2 – Excel document)

Applicants should prepare and submit their financial proposals using the standard Budget Template (Annex 2). Budget template should be prepared and submitted in English only together with the Proposal Template (Annex 1).

Eligibility of costs:

Applicants should include only eligible costs in their financial proposal to be submitted in the Budget Template (Annex 2).

Eligible costs:

Eligible costs are actual costs incurred the applicant and should meet the following criteria:

- a. They are necessary for the implementation of the proposed project and are incurred during the implementation period;
- b. They are indicated/described in the Budget Template (Annex 2);
- c. They are reasonable, justified and comply with sound financial management requirements;
- d. They are identifiable and verifiable in the accounting records of the applicant;
- e. They comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation applicable to the applicant.

The followings fall within the eligible costs under this Call for Proposals:

The following direct costs are eligible:

- a) costs of staff assigned to the Project;
- b) costs of local consultants or international consultants assigned to the project;

- c) travel and subsistence costs for staff and other persons assigned to the project, providing that they do not exceed UN rates;
- d) operational costs including rental costs, costs related to lease of equipment and assets, office maintenance, utility services fees and other operational costs specifically required for the implementation of the project;
- e) costs of consumables and supplies purchased for the implementation of the project;
- f) costs required for event management (hiring venues), translation, printing, dissemination of information;
- g) costs of IT and communication services specifically used for the implementation of the project.

The applicant should also include in the Budget (Annex 2) a cost for the audit.¹ Audit costs have to be covered by the grant and should not exceed more than eight percent of the project budget. Selected grantee will be responsible for organizing audit by an independent certified public accountant and submit copies of the auditor's endorsement, findings and comments to OHCHR.

Applicants should clearly include the eligible costs in the Budget Template (Annex 2) with their descriptions and by specifying the number of units and rates per units. Costs included in the Budget (Annex 2) should be justifiable, realistic and match prevailing market rates.

Non-eligible costs:

The followings costs are ineligible under this Call for Proposals:

- a) full-purchase cost of equipment and assets unless the asset or equipment is specifically purchased for the project and ownership is transferred to the beneficiary(ies) at the end of the project;
- b) debts and debt service charges;
- c) costs financed by another action or a project;
- d) purchases of lands or buildings;
- e) currency exchange losses;
- f) provision for losses or potential future liabilities.

2.2.3 Deadline for submission of proposals

The deadline for the submission of proposals is **16 August 2021 at 18:00 Baku time**. Any proposal submitted after the deadline will be rejected. Applicants must submit electronic versions of their proposals via e-mail to the following address:

office@unazerbaijan.org

Applicants must write '**OHCHR Call for Proposals**' in the 'Subject' of the e-mail. Applicants are also encouraged to include their full name and contact information in their e-mails. As specified under Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, **proposals must be submitted in English only**.

¹ In line with the rules and regulations of the OHCHR grant management, all grants of US\$ 25,000 and above must be audited.

The electronic format of the files to be submitted should be as followings:

- **Proposal (Annex 1) – Word**
- **Budget (Annex 2) – Excel**

In addition to Annex 1 and Annex 2, applicants should also include the following information in their proposals:

- 1. Certificate of registration in the country;**
- 2. CVs of staff to be paid within the project;**
- 3. Name of proposed audit company and contact details of the proposed auditor.**

Proposals missing any of the abovementioned Annexes and information may not be considered automatically.

2.2.4 Information sessions on the Call for Proposals

OHCHR will organize up to three online information sessions to address applicants' questions related to this Call for Proposals and rules for submission of the proposals.

Information sessions are planned to take place on 15, 22 and 29 June. Additionally, weekly information sessions will be organized in July. Applicants willing to participate in information sessions should send e-mail to following address:

raliyev@ohchr.org

When sending e-mail, applicants must include the following sentence 'Participation in information session on OHCHR Call for Proposals'.

Applicants can also send their questions related to the Call for Proposals no later than **6 August 2021 by 18:00** to raliyev@ohchr.org. OHCHR has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

Any updates on the Call for Proposals will be posted on azerbaijan.un.org and on Facebook page of UN in Azerbaijan: <https://www.facebook.com/UNinAzerbaijan>.

2.3 EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Evaluation will be a multi-stage process including:

- Pre-screening, pre-evaluation and pre-selection by an Evaluation Committee comprising representatives of OHCHR and EU;
- Final evaluation and approval by OHCHR Grants Committee based in Geneva.

2.3.1 Pre-screening

During the pre-screening, proposals not meeting the eligibility criteria specified in Section 2.1 will be rejected and not considered for further evaluation.

The followings will also be examined to decide whether proposals can be considered for further evaluation:

- Compliance with the deadline set for submission of proposals: Proposals submitted after the specified deadline will be rejected automatically;
- Completeness of proposals: Proposals which are incomplete or do not provide information required in Section 2.2 will be rejected. Incorrect and inconsistent proposals will also not be considered for further evaluation.

2.3.2 Pre-evaluation

OHCHR will carry out pre-evaluation of the applicants based on the following criteria:

- Experience in human rights and rule of law, particularly in areas specified in the Proposal (Annex 1) – 25 points;
- Relevance of the proposal to the objectives specified in the Call for Proposals and to the needs and context of the target groups and country – 30 points;
- Capacity to deliver, in terms of project management, including financial/accounting competence – 15 points;
- Effectiveness and sustainability of the proposed project – 15 points;
- Budget completeness and cost-effectiveness – 15 points.

Evaluation Grid

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Maximum Score</i>
1. Experience in human rights and rule of law, particularly in areas specified in the Proposal	25
Does the applicant have sufficient and proven experience in human rights and rule?	10
Does the applicant have sufficient expertise in the area/areas specified in the Proposal?	10
Has the applicant implemented similar projects and activities in the area/areas specified in the Proposal?	5
2. Relevance of the proposal to the objectives specified in the Call for Proposals and to the needs and context of the target groups and country	30

How relevant is the proposal to the objectives of the Call for Proposals?	10
How relevant is the proposal to the needs and context of the target country in the area/s specified in the Proposal (Annex 1)?	10
Have final beneficiaries and their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address the needs appropriately?	10
3. Capacity to deliver, in terms of project management, including financial/accounting competence	15
Does the applicant have experience in project management and implementation?	5
Does the applicant have sufficient staff to implement and deliver?	5
Does the applicant have sufficient management capacity and resources to handle the financial management/accounting?	5
4. Effectiveness and sustainability of the proposed project	15
Has the applicant defined project activities clearly and are activities directly linked to expected results?	5
Is implementation plan clear?	5
Is the project likely to have a positive impact on its target groups/beneficiaries?	5
5. Budget completeness and cost-effectiveness	15
Has the applicant reflected and described all activities in the Budget?	10
Are costs specified in the Budget are within reasonable limits?	5
Maximum total score	100

2.3.3 Pre-selection:

As a result of the pre-evaluation conducted on the basis of the above-described evaluation grid, OHCHR, jointly with a representative of EU, **will pre-select CSOs collecting the highest scores.** In the next step, OHCHR will send the proposals of the pre-selected CSOs for the review of the OHCHR Grants Committee based in Geneva.

2.3.4 Final evaluation and approval of proposals by OHCHR Grants Committee

Final decision on approval of proposals will be made by OHCHR Grants Committee based in Geneva. OHCHR Grants Committee will further review proposals of the pre-selected CSOs mainly focusing on the following criteria directly related to the pre-selected CSO: (i) legal status; (ii)

financial viability; (iii) experience in the required field, and (iv) capacity to deliver, in terms of expertise and management, including financial/accounting competence. As a result, OHCHR Grants Committee will make final decisions on the approval of submitted proposals.

2.3.5 Registration of grants agreements by the selected CSOs

Following the approval of the proposals by OHCHR Grants Committee, OHCHR will provide grants agreements to selected CSOs for registration with national authorities. The selected CSOs will be responsible for registering grants agreements with national authorities in the country, in accordance with the requirements of national legislation.

Provision of financial support to the selected CSOs will be subject to submission of a notice/proof of registration of grants agreements by the selected CSOs to OHCHR. The selected CSOs will be required to present to OHCHR a notice/proof of registration of grants agreements with national authorities **within a two-months period** after receiving grants agreements from OHCHR. Grants agreements not registered within the specified period will be annulled by OHCHR and no financial payments will be made to the concerned CSOs.

OHCHR retains the right to keep a reserve list of other CSOs, not selected during the pre-evaluation, to replace a CSO/CSOs who will not present a notice/proof of registration of grants agreements within the specified period.

2.3.6 Notification of decisions

Only pre-selected applicants will be informed in writing of OHCHR’s decisions on their proposals.

Indicative Timetable

Process	Indicative Timetable
Information sessions	15, 22 and 29 June 2021 (Additional sessions will be organized in July)
Deadline for sending questions to OHCHR regarding the Call for Proposals	6 August 2021
Deadline for submission of proposals	16 August 2021, 18:00 at Baku time
Evaluation Process	August – September 2021
Notification of decisions to pre-selected CSOs	September – October 2021
Registration of grants agreements by pre-selected CSOs with national authorities	A two-month deadline for registration of grants agreements by pre-selected CSOs with national authorities

3. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Proposal Template (Word document);

ANNEX 2: Budget Template (Excel document).

As requested in the Proposal Template, applicants should also attach to their Proposal the following information:

- a) Certificate of registration in the country;**
- b) CVs of staff to be paid within the project;**
- c) Name of proposed audit company and contact details of the proposed auditor.**