

The WOW Fund

Frequently Asked Questions

General

What is the WOW Fund?

The WOW Fund is an £1.8 million fund, designed to strategically support long term change in women's economic empowerment. The Fund will support selected initiatives that can deliver catalytic impact and/or contribute to global knowledge on how to economically empower women and further the Action Agenda of the UN High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment (UNHLP).

The WOW Fund is one of four components of the WOW programme, which aims to enhance the economic empowerment of 300,000 women working in global value chains by September 2020. The WOW Fund will contribute to this goal by funding initiatives that will have a catalytic impact or that will make an important contribution to global knowledge on women's economic empowerment in key thematic areas:

- Recognising, reducing and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work;
- Improving outcomes for women in informal work;
- What works to improve women's land tenure security.

How does WOW understand women's economic empowerment?

In WOW, we define women's economic empowerment as *the process whereby all women strengthen their voice and capacity to make and act on economic choices; expand their opportunities to fulfil their potential; and gain recognition for their contribution, paid and unpaid, in households, at work, and wider society.*

We see women as the agents of their own economic empowerment via different, inter-linked pathways. Women's economic choices and agency expand through building knowledge, skills and capacities, securing access to safe and decent work or sustainable livelihoods, increasing their control over assets and resources and through engaging in economic decision making at work, in households and communities.

For women to make these gains requires enabling conditions such that all women can participate and benefit equally, without fear of violence or retribution, that they can organise collectively to claim their economic rights and have access to remedy where their rights are violated.

Ultimately, women's economic empowerment also requires wider social norms change and transformation of institutions and power relations. Unpaid work and care needs to be recognised in households, communities and by companies, and economic decision makers and actions taken to reduce and redistribute this work. Action is also needed by men, by companies and policy makers to address gender unequal and discriminatory beliefs, norms, stereotypes and practices, particularly gender-based violence, at home or at work.

We see women's economic empowerment as intrinsically linked to their broader social and political empowerment and as a pre-requisite for equitable and sustainable development.

What type of impact are you expecting to see from grant recipients?

The WOW Fund seeks to achieve and demonstrate direct impact on women, and to contribute to global knowledge and learning on the three priority themes it aims to tackle.

How big is the Fund? What size grants will you provide?

The Fund will disburse up to £1.8 million in grants, over the next 4.5 years. Whilst we expect grants will vary in size, we do not expect a single grant to exceed approximately £500,000. Given the relatively small size of the fund, in selecting initiatives we will consider the overall balance of investments and expected impact at the portfolio level, in addition to assessing individual proposals.

What time period does a WOW Fund grant cover?

Grants may be funded for different periods of time within the lifetime of the fund, but we would expect grant duration to be between 2 and 3 years. Applicants should plan for funds to be available in January 2019.

Eligibility

Who can apply for grants from the WOW Fund?

The WOW Fund will seek to fund any organisation able to deliver projects that address systemic barriers to women's economic empowerment. This can include civil society organisations, NGOs, networks, national or international NGOs, social enterprises or membership organisations, government and international agencies (including UN Agencies) and research institutions. In line with the UNHLP approach, the WOW Fund will favour partnerships between different categories of actors.

The WOW Fund will **not** provide funding to private sector companies directly. Whilst companies cannot be direct recipients of WOW grant, organisations may partner with companies as part of a consortium where the CSO, NGO or other lead organisation is the grant recipient.

To be eligible for funding from the WOW Fund, organisations must meet the following criteria:

- Partnering organisation is capable of delivering projects that address systemic barriers to WEE
- The initiative proposed aligns with one or more of the Flexible Fund priority areas (Unpaid care and work, informal work and land tenure)
- The initiative proposed includes activity in a DFID priority country (see below *What countries do you fund projects in?*)
- The initiative would not occur without DFID support, at all, as fast or with as much benefit for poor or marginalised women. The initiative does not duplicate other programmes.
- The initiative proposed is consistent with any relevant DFID strategies

The WOW Fund team will also conduct due diligence on all potential grantees before approving grants. Organisations seeking funding will be required to demonstrate they have relevant policies in place, and the capacity to manage funds effectively and transparently.

What countries do you fund projects in?

The WOW Fund will support initiatives which include activity in a DFID priority country. This includes: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, South Africa, South Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Grants may be regional or focus on multiple countries, however geographic scope should be proportionate to the scale of the grant, to ensure impact in the project.

What types of activities/ projects will you fund?

The Fund will provide grants to support a range of activities that further the UNHLP Agenda, linked to the above themes, including:

- Pilot projects designed to generate evidence about ‘what works’;
- Scale up of existing initiatives;
- Building networks and learning/ influencing partnerships that can support wider change;
- Research, learning and knowledge generation that is action-based, policy-focused, and with a clear line of sight towards impact. We will not fund purely academic research initiatives.

What types of projects will the WOW Fund support under the land tenure theme?

The WOW Fund is open to receiving Concept Notes which link land tenure and women’s economic empowerment issues in both urban and rural contexts.

What is considered as informal work?

One of the three WOW priority themes is informal work. Following the definition used in the UNHLP report, we consider informal workers to include employees who are not covered by social protection arrangements and/or do not enjoy labour rights through their work – whether working in formal or informal enterprises - as well as own account workers and employers operating informal sector enterprises. For further details please see Appendix Table 1 in the UNHLP first report, [Leave No One Behind: A Call to Action for Gender Equality and Women’s Economic Empowerment](#).

Is there a requirement for cost sharing /matched funding?

Whilst there is no eligibility or minimum requirement for projects to provide matched funding, the WOW Fund welcomes concepts from organisations that can provide matched funding for their initiatives.

What types of expenditure can grant funds cover / not cover?

The WOW Fund will provide grants subject to ODA spend restrictions. In addition, grant financing may not be used to lobby the UK government.

Whilst there are no restrictions on grant spend on assets, these will need to be crucial to the delivery of the grant and the applicant will need to make the case for the spend and justify the value for money of such a purchase. Any assets would remain property of DFID.

There are no specific restrictions on grant funding use to cover overheads or indirect costs, however these must represent value for money, be vital to delivering the proposed initiative. WOW will not subsidise or cover overheads on wider activities not essential to the project.

Fees covered by grant funding must represent value for money.

Can I apply for funding for an existing project?

Yes. The WOW Fund is open to Concept Notes for existing projects that are seeking to scale up or expand, as well as new initiatives.

Can I make or participate in more than one application?

The WOW Fund will provide a maximum of one grant per organisation – whether directly (as lead partner) or indirectly (as a consortium partner). Organisations are welcome to submit or participate in more than one Concept Note but should be aware that the same organisation cannot benefit from two WOW Fund grants.

Can we partner with other organisations?

Yes. In line with the UNHLP approach, the WOW Fund will favour partnerships between different categories of actors.

Is there a requirement for partners to be proposed at the Concept Note stage?

We would expect organisations to name their proposed delivery partners for the project they are seeking funding for at the Concept Note stage. Full details of formal partnership arrangements and of how activities and resources breakdown between partners can be provided at a later stage.

Do organisations proposing work in India require their own FCRA registration?

FCRA registration is required for organisations receiving grant funding from DFID for work in India.

Does the Fund allow for financial support to third parties?

Third party financing is possible if to meet its objectives, a project requires the use of downstream partners to deliver the activities. Whilst there are no specific restrictions on amounts, the WOW Fund will need to conduct due diligence on all downstream funding recipients before grants are agreed.

Making an application

What is the application process for WOW Fund grants?

The WOW Fund will run a two-stage application process:

- Stage 1: Concept Note

Interested applicants submit a short Concept Note outlining their project and the requested funds following the Concept Note template and guidance provided. The WOW Fund team will review all Concept Notes and select a shortlist. Applicants on this shortlist will be invited to submit full Proposals.

- Stage 2: Full Proposal

Applicants who have submitted shortlisted Concept Notes will be invited to submit full Proposals, which will be developed in liaison with the WOW Fund team. Further guidance will be given at Proposal stage. Once finalised full Proposals will be subject to further technical review and due diligence checks. Those Proposals which are approved will be awarded a Grant Recipient Agreement for funding.

What support do you provide to applicants during the process?

The WOW Fund team is available to answer questions or provide guidance at the Concept Note stage. At the Proposal stage, a member of the WOW Fund team will be assigned to you as a focal point and will provide feedback based on review of a draft Proposal during the application process.

How long should my concept note be?

The guidance in the template gives an idea of the types of information and level of detail needed under each section. Use your judgement, however, for the main narrative sections (2.3, 2.4 and 2.6-9) we advise writing between 200 and 400 words.

Can I receive feedback on my Concept Note / Proposal?

We will not provide direct feedback on Concept Notes during their development, but will be available to answer questions and provide guidance on how to complete the template. All applicants will be informed on the outcome of the selection process. During the Proposal stage, your assigned focal point will provide you with feedback, including through one review of your draft proposal.

What are the deadlines for applying?

Indicative timelines are as follows:



How do I submit a Concept Note?

Detailed guidance for completing your Concept Note can be found in the Concept Note template and guidance document. The submission instructions are as follows:

WOW Fund Concept Note Submission Instructions:

- The WOW Fund is open for applications
- Review the information note and concept template and guidance
- Check that your organisation/initiative meets the eligibility criteria
- Complete the Concept Note template, following the guidance provided
- **Submit to veronica@sddirect.org.uk by 23.59 (UK – BST/GMT+1) on 30th April 2018**

Where can I access a Concept Note template and guidance?

Following the WOW Fund launch webinar, you will be able to access more information including the launch materials, Concept Note template and Information Note for Applicants on the WOW website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/work-and-opportunities-for-women>

For any questions about Concept Note submission, please email the WOW Fund Coordinator, Veronica Martinez Tamayo: veronica@sddirect.org.uk

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