

# Questions Received and Answers

## Call for Proposals for the development of a new global Violence Against Women Index

**Question 1:** Could you please confirm if there is any flexibility regarding the 7% support cost? Alternatively, is there a possibility to include additional specific costs in the budget that would not fall under this 7% cap, such as fiscal sponsorship fees?

**Answer:**

The 7% support cost is the maximum support cost allowed for programme partners in this project.

Fiscal sponsorship fees cannot be included in the budget as that is a pre-established cost not directly linked to the deliverables.

Please also note that if the organization or the consortia is backed by a fiscal sponsor, the non-profit organization that acts as fiscal sponsor cannot outsource all of the work. They must meet the mandatory requirements including the technical requirements outlined in the call for proposal and be involved in the delivery of some of the work.

**Question 2:** Can private sectors entity apply for this call for proposals?

**Answer:**

Private sector entities cannot be the lead organization applying for the CFP. The lead applying organization must be a Civil Society Organization or academic/research institution.

**Question 3:** What is the scope of countries?

**Answer:**

The index should be a global index covering all countries across all regions globally. However, in cases of data-unavailability for certain indicators/countries there may be a decision to exclude certain components for these countries, following consultation with the VAW Index technical advisory group and with approval of UN Women.

**Question 4:** How disaggregated should the index be, i.e. national, Sub-regional, e.g. East Africa, Regional/Continental, e.g. Africa, Asia?

**Answer:**

The index should be a global index covering all countries across all regions globally. It should provide disaggregation at the country and regional level in addition to the global overview. This should include the ability to compare the different regions and countries, including the scoring/ranking of countries and their performance on the specific components and indicators of the index as well as any other forms of disaggregation defined in collaboration with the VAW Index technical advisory group and UN Women. However, proposals that also include sub-regional analysis would be welcomed.

**Question 5:** For the purpose of developing our budget, could you kindly confirm whether the award ceiling of US\$500,000 is for the development of the global index only?

**Answer:**

The award ceiling is \$550,000 USD. The budget must cover all the deliverables outlined in the section: "2. Description of expected results" of the Terms of Reference included within the call for proposal (pages 4-10 of the call for proposal).

**Question 6:** Location Area: In the Annex B-1, it is stated that the proponent must have a permanent office within the location area. Does the mentioned "within the location area" refer to the location area where my organization is based and has worked with clients, or must it be within Africa and Latin America, as mentioned on page 2 of the document that "ACT will be implemented over three years in two regions initially: Africa and Latin America, with a global component to accelerate impact and position the priorities of women's rights movements in global fora across a wide range of related issues." ?

**Answer:**

The location area refers to the location of the organization's base. The location of the organization's base does not have to be within Africa and Latin America as this call for proposals is part of the global component of the programme.

**Question 7:** I am interested in taking up this consulting opportunity as an individual contributor, pls let me know how to participate in the RFP process.

**Answer:**

This is a call for proposals to identify programme partners (Responsible Parties) for the development of a new global Violence Against Women Index. The responsible party / Programme partner cannot be an individual contributor. Applicants can apply as individual civil society, women's rights organizations, feminist academic or research institution or apply as a consortium of organizations/institutions specialized in conducting research.

**Question 8:** please could you clarify, with regards to the suggested maximum for personnel related costs on a proposal being 20% of programming costs, whether this suggested maximum will be taken into account when proposals are assessed? Due to the nature of the work, it is likely that personnel costs will make up more than 20% of the overall budget. Or, if I have misunderstood this guidance, please can you clarify what the 20% maximum relates to?

**Answer:**

The personnel costs are recommended at 20% of the overall budget. This percentage encompasses the total personnel budget for the entire proposal. The personnel cost will be considered when proposals are assessed. However, given the nature of the work additional technical personnel costs directly linked to technical functions/activities required for the deliverables can be included in the budget if reasonable justifications for these costs are provided.

**Question 9:** We are requesting clarification regarding the phrase "individual civil society." Can you kindly inform us which of the following examples are correct? Your response will inform our process. **1)** If six individual professionals come together as a team, would they be regarded as "individual civil society?" If so, would they have to apply through an organization, or can the team submit the proposal and specify which members are leading the team and responsible and accountable for ensuring the project's success? **2.** If the team of professionals is not regarded as "individual civil society," can they apply through a women's rights organization, and would the application be accepted?

**Answer:**

Individual professionals or teams of individual professionals cannot apply in their individual capacity. Applicants can only apply as legally registered civil society, women's rights organizations, feminist academic or research institution or apply as a consortium of organizations/institutions specialized in conducting research.

The applying organization will be responsible for the successful delivery of the deliverables outlined in the call for proposal. The personnel costs of individual(s) carrying out activities/deliverables as part of the proposal should be included within the budget submitted by the applying civil society, women's rights organizations, feminist academic or research institution.

**Question 10:** The CFP indicates that “Applicants can apply as individual civil society, women’s rights organizations, feminist academic or research institution or apply as a consortium of organizations/institutions.” If I submit the proposal, as a feminist academic with a Professorial appointment at a University in a specific country, can I submit it as an individual or do I submit it on behalf of my University?

**Answer:**

Individual feminist academics / professionals cannot apply in their individual capacity. Applicants can only apply as legally registered civil society, women’s rights organizations, feminist academic or research institution or apply as a consortium of organizations/institutions specialized in conducting research. In this case we would need to receive an application from the university where the academic is employed. The applying university will be responsible for the successful delivery of the deliverables outlined in the call for proposal. The costs related to the individual feminist academics / professionals that will be working on the delivery of the activities would be included in the budget as personnel cost or technical activities.

**Question 11:** Relatedly, while I will be the project lead, my main collaborator will be another Professor at another institution. We are long time co-authors and collaborators, so I am not sure how to represent the proposal: Do I submit as the lead organization, and just subcontract with her and her University? Or do both of our organizations have to participate as a consortium? Or will one institution submit an application as a lead and the other would constitute a sub-partner? Is there an important difference between a sub-partner and a sub-contractor?

**Answer:**

In this particular case, the lead university/institution would submit the application (only one application should be submitted on behalf of both organizations). The application should clearly indicate which organization is the lead organization and which are consortium members/sub-partners. The collaborating university should therefore, in this case, be listed as a consortium member/sub partner and the proposal should clarify the role of each in the delivery of the expected results.

In the case of consortia proposals, the lead proponent can distribute funds to the sub-partners that are named in the proposal. The lead organization cannot outsource all the activities and funds. Some of the activities must be implemented by the lead organization.

Regarding the definitions and distinction between sub-partner and sub-contractors:

Consortium members that are collaborating in achieving the results are considered sub-partners. Sub-partners mean a Partner of a UN Women Partner that will perform part of the work. A sub-contractor means a service provider, vendor, contractor or any legal entity engaged by a Partner to provide goods or services needed for the performance of the work.

**Question 12:** As I read the guidelines, if I apply with a certain university as the lead institution, I only need to provide the information in Annex B-4 for the lead university. Correct ?

**Answer:**

Yes, this is correct. Only the lead organization needs to submit the documentation and information listed in annex B-4.

**Question 13:** The applying university is a public institution with much information online (Board of Governors, Annual Financial statements, etc). Can I post links to these documents in the required fields?

**Answer:**

All the required documentation must be sent as attachments sent by email to [act@unwomen.org](mailto:act@unwomen.org) and not as links to websites, cloud storage drives, dropbox or other. If the documents are too large for one email applicants may send them in separate emails.

**Question 14:** The CFP provides a timeline for the grant and its related deliverables; is there any flexibility or wiggle room in the timeline for contingencies? Are some things flexible and others inflexible?

**Answer:**

The timeline included in the terms of reference is indicative and may be slightly adjusted based on the initial concept note outlining timeline/complexity of data collection and analysis required for the final indicators of the index and pending agreement and approval of UN Women. All deliverables must be finalized before the end of the partner agreement, but this will be agreed with the selected applicant before signing of the partner agreement.

**Question 15:** When do you anticipate that the funds be awarded?

**Answer:**

We anticipate the funds to be awarded during the first weeks of October, 2024.

**Question 16:** You provide page limits for each component of the application. Shall we follow standard document parameters (12 point font, single spaced, one inch margins)?

**Answer:**

There is not a specific requirement on the font size, line spacing and margins. However, it is recommended to use Calibri (body), size 11, single spaced, 1-inch margins.

**Question 17:** We request clarification on what constitutes a 'research organisation'? My organization is a for profit consultancy company focussing on research and services provisions to public and private entities. For the fulfilment of the 'competencies' section, can you confirm if my organization qualifies as 'research organisation'? In the event my organization does not qualify as a research institution, can it be confirmed that my organization will be eligible to participate in the opportunity by setting up and acting as the lead, a consortium comprised of other entities or organisations listed as 'individual civil society, women's rights organizations, feminist academic or research institution'?

**Answer:**

Please note that only civil society organizations or not-for-profit academic/research institution are eligible to apply for this call for proposals. For profit companies, organizations or research institutions are not eligible to apply. However, in order to participate in this call for proposal, your organization can enter into a consortium of applicants with a civil society organizations or not-for-profit academic/research institution. The lead organization submitting the proposal on behalf of the consortium must be a registered civil society or not-for-profit academic/research institution. In the case of consortia proposals, the lead proponent can distribute funds to the sub-partners/sub-contractors that are named in the proposal. The lead organization cannot outsource all the activities and funds. Some of the activities must be implemented by the lead organization.

**Question 18:** Annex B1: "Does the proponent have a permanent office within the location area?" Can you please confirm where the permanent office location / country must be?

**Answer:**

The location area refers to the location of the organization's base. There is not a specific location/country where this must be as this call for proposals is part of the global component of the programme.

**Question 19:** Annex B1: “Can UN Women conduct a site visit at a customer location in the location or area with a similar scope of work as he one described in this CFP?”. Can you confirm where the customer country location is required to be? Given the global scope of the Index, would a company having offices in two countries be accepted as fulfilling the country location of the permanent office requirement?

**Answer:**

The location area refers to the location of the organization’s base. As this call for proposals is part of the global component of the ACT programme, there is not a specific location/country where this must be. However, please note that private sector companies are not eligible to apply for this call for proposal.

**Question 20:** ‘Data collection and analysis’ Could you please clarify the scope of this specific task? Is the proponent expected to identify, collect, compile and analyse the relevant data from existing available and credible data sources for each of the indicators of the VAWG Index for all countries where this would be possible, or could we foresee piloting the VAWG Index in a selected number of countries in each region?

**Answer:**

Yes, the proponent is expected to identify, collect, compile and analyse the relevant data from existing available and credible data sources for each of the indicators of the VAWG Index for all countries with data availability. In cases of data-unavailability for certain indicators/countries there may be a decision to exclude certain components for these countries, following consultation with the VAW Index technical advisory group and with approval of UN Women.

**Question 21:** As part of the mandatory requirements, you ask for two references certifying the delivery of similar services. Can you please clarify what is considered a similar service? Would research, data collection, and stakeholder coordination qualify? Do the services have to be specifically in the field of violence against women?

**Answer:**

The references should be from previous services demonstrating experience and capacity in conducting research, data collection and analysis on gender equality, women’s rights, violence against women and girls or closely related fields.

**Question 22:** may I please check whether the 7% rate for overheads is absolute and the maximum an institution can apply for?

**Answer:**

The 7% support cost is the maximum support cost allowed for programme partners in this project.

**Question 23:** We have posted plenty of on-line material and designed webpages before, but we are wondering about the requirement to work directly with the UN platform. Do you have a web design team that you have worked with in the past who have experience working with your platform? Is there some list of folks who have successfully completed projects with UN women? We are looking for an estimate for the cost of that work and suggestions for a sub-contractor or partner.

**Answer:**

We are unfortunately not able to provide specific recommendations on sub-contractors or vendors that have worked on UN Women's website/platform in the past as we follow open competitive procurement processes for such services. The applying organization may identify a sub-contractor or partner using their own policies and procedures. UN Women will provide further guidance on any technical requirements for integrating the index into our platform.

**Question 24:** Are annexes B-1, B-3 and B-4 to be filled separately by each of the consortium entities, as well as the service providers?

**Answer:**

Annexes B-1, B-3 and B-4 only need to be completed by the lead organization submitting the proposal.

However, the technical proposal must indicate clearly the names of the consortium members (sub-partners and sub-contractors) if applying as a consortium of organizations.

**Question 25:** Since Annex B-5 is not mandatory, is it favorable to be filled in advance or after being granted?

**Answer:**

Annex B-5 (UN Women Partner Agreement Template) should only be completed by programme partners once selected. As such it should not be completed as part of the submission for the call for proposals. The reason the Annex B-5 is shared at this stage is so applicants can see the clauses of the agreement to confirm their acceptance of these should they be selected. Applicants should include in their proposal confirmation of their acceptance of the terms and conditions outlined in the template Partner Agreement or their reservation or objections thereto.



**Question 26:** Can we develop more than one index or should it be one comprehensive index with several indicators? And should the indexes be contextualized for every region, taking into account the different backgrounds and perceptions? If yes, we will be developing more than one index, correct? q If not and we are restricted to develop one index only can we develop several indicators tailored to fit each region's sensitivity?

**Answer:**

This call for proposals is for the development of one new comprehensive global ending violence against women index, containing multiple indicators within several different dimensions. The indicators to be measured as part of the index should consider the inclusion of prevalence data on violence against women and girls, the status of ending violence against women and girls laws and policies, the availability of data on different forms of violence against women and girls, financing for violence against women and girls' prevention and response interventions, funding and support to women's rights organizations and other areas based on further analysis and as determined in collaboration with the VAWG Index Technical Advisory Group, including consideration on data availability and comparability across countries, sustainability in data collection and analysis.

In order for the index to provide comparison, scoring and ranking of countries performance across countries and regions the indicators should be standardized across countries and regions to the extent possible. The final conceptual framework, structure, dimensions and indicators to be included in the VAWG index will be further developed as part of the co-creation process with the VAWG Index Technical Advisory Group and must be approved by UN Women.

**Question 27:** My organization is a country-based organization and interested in submitting a proposal for this attached RFA within your institution. Is this call for my specific country?

**Answer:**

This call for proposals is a global call for proposals for the development of a new global Violence Against Women Index. Proposals focused on country-level interventions are not eligible for this call for proposals.

**Question 28:** We would like to have interest to participate and develop the proposal for Advocacy, Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action (ACT) Programme. So, we need to know if my country is eligible for this fund?

**Answer:**

This call for proposals is a global call for proposals for the development of a new global Violence Against Women Index, as part of the Advocacy, Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action (ACT) to End Violence Against Women Programme. Proposals focused on country-level interventions are not eligible for this call for proposals.

**Question 29:** My organization is preparing a proposal with another organization. We are the lead agency in this consortium, and will submit all the required documents requested, but wanted to check if the organization we are partnering with must also submit the same documents? If no, does UN Women require any supporting documents from subs on contracts?

**Answer:**

The technical proposal must clearly indicate which organization is the lead organization and which partners will be included as sub-partner or sub-contractors. However, only the lead organization must submit all the required documentation requested in the call for proposals.

**Question 30:** My organization is preparing a proposal with another organization. We are the lead agency in this consortium, and will submit all the required documents requested, but wanted to check if the organization we are partnering with must also submit the same documents? If no, does UN Women require any supporting documents from subs on contracts?

**Answer:**

The technical proposal must clearly indicate which organization is the lead organization and which partners will be included as sub-partner or sub-contractors. However, only the lead organization must submit all the required documentation requested in the call for proposals.

**Question 31:** How should sub-partners apply the 7% support cost policy? That is, should it be applied to salary and wages, to all costs, to none of the costs?

**Answer:**

“Support Costs” mean those indirect costs that are incurred to operate the Partner as a whole or a segment thereof and that cannot be easily connected or traced to implementation of the Work, i.e., operating expenses, overhead costs and general costs connected to the normal functioning of an organization/business, such as cost for support staff, office space and equipment that are not Direct Costs. Costs such as proportional public services (e.g., electricity, water, phone, cellular phones, internet) are typically considered part of support costs, as they contribute to the normal functioning of the organization or business. Indirect costs like bank and external accounting fees are also generally categorized as support costs, as they facilitate the operational efficiency and compliance of the organization. Please refer to [**Component 6 of the CFP**] for the limits: (i) *“If the partner has a Support Cost Policy that specifies a rate, the partner can include this rate to not exceed a rate of 7% (ii) If the Partner does not have a Support Cost Policy, the partner must provide a break-down of support costs (not exceeding a rate of 7%).”*

**Question 32:** We plan to apply for funds primarily for research personnel and travel. Research personnel costs would include course buyout costs for Dr. Name, post-doctoral fellow salaries, research assistant salaries, consultant funds for specialized expertise and translation of key materials, and a salary or stipend for the PI. Do you anticipate any issues with any of these categories of cost?

**Answer:**

These costs are acceptable for inclusion in the budget as long as they relate to personnel/costs that are directly linked to the achievement of the deliverables/activities.

**Question 33:** My question now is about the deadline is it till August 18 or Monday August?

**Answer:**

The submission deadline is: 23:59 EDT (NY Time) on the 18 August 2024.

**Question 34: References:** On page 12 of the Terms of Reference (TORs), there is a section about required references. Are these the same references mentioned on page 24? If not, could you please explain the difference between the references required on these two pages?

**Answer:**

Yes, the references listed on page 12 (Annex B-1) are the same as on page 24 (Annex B-4).

**Question 35: Support Letters:** Are support letters permitted as part of our application? If so, is there a limit to the number of support letters we can include?

**Answer:**

Letters of support are not required but are permitted to include as part of your application. We would recommend not submitting more than two letters of support.

**Question 36:** As stated in page 10 of the RFP (Proponents must include an acceptance of the terms and conditions outlined in the template Partner Agreement or their reservations or objections thereto) :

36A - Does The Signed Partner Agreement have to be signed by all partners in the consortium or only by the lead?

36B- Where can I find the details about how to register on the Partner and Grants Agreement Management System Platform (OneApp), and once registered where do we submit the signed agreement?

**Answer:**

The UN Women partner agreement is only signed by the lead organization. However, please note the partner agreement should only be completed once programme partners are selected.

As such it should not be completed or signed as part of the submission for the call for proposals. The reason the UN Women Partner Agreement Template (Annex B-5) is shared at this stage is so applicants can see the clauses of the agreement to confirm their acceptance of these should they be selected. Applicants should include in their proposal confirmation of their acceptance of the terms and conditions outlined in the template Partner Agreement or their reservation or objections thereto.

Registration on the Partner and Grants Agreement Management System Platform (OneApp) is not carried out by programme partners, but by UN Women. As such applicants do not need to register on the platform as part of their application.

**Question 37:** I want to apply for the proposal but I don't have this list below, but I can provide the rest this is my first time to seek for grant.

- List of main suppliers/vendors of organization and copies of their contract(s) including evidence of their selection processes (Mandatory)
- List of main clients/donors of organization (Mandatory)
- Two references for organization (Mandatory)
- Past reports to clients/donors of organization for last 3 years (Mandatory)

**Answer:**

All mandatory documents must be submitted as part of your proposal for it to qualify for this call for proposals.

**Question 38:** for which country [is this call for proposals]?

**Answer:**

This call for proposals is a global call for proposals for the development of a new global Violence Against Women Index. Proposals focused on country-level interventions are not eligible.

**Question 39:** Could you please inform me of the date when this call for proposals opened/was published? Additionally, could you confirm that the new deadline is August 18th and that a feminist NGO from a specific country would be an eligible candidate?

**Answer:**

The call for proposal was published on the 15th of July. The proposal submission deadline is: 23:59 EDT (NY Time) on the 18 August 2024. There is not a specific location/country where the applying organization must be from, as this call for proposals is part of the global component of the ACT programme. Feminist NGOs that meet all the mandatory requirements on page 12 and the competencies on pages 10-11 of the call for proposal are eligible to apply.

**Question 40:** Since the university has a budget of nearly a Billion dollars, it is pretty hard for us to provide a comprehensive list of all vendors and suppliers (per Annex B-4 under the “Procurement” tab). Am I reading this right? Our procurement processes are incredibly complex and fragmented. I would have trouble doing this even for just one Faculty....

**Answer:**

The applying organization does not need to provide a comprehensive list of all vendors and suppliers. Only a list of the of the main suppliers/vendors of the organization and copies of their contract(s) must be provided.

**Question 41:** Is an organization which has a status of a private research institute eligible to participate as a lead organisation?

**Answer:**

Private for-profit research institutions and companies are not eligible. Nonprofit private universities and research institutions are eligible to apply.

**Question 42:** In reviewing the guidelines for the Results-Based Budget and Q&A document, we wanted to follow up and seek clarification on the recommended 20% limit for personnel expenditures. Given that deliverables of this RFP are primarily delivered via the actions of people (creation of concept note, staffing and convening of technical advisory group, data collection, website development, etc), we wanted to understand how the recommended maximum of 20% for personnel is meant to be understood. For example, do “personnel” in this instance mean only staff members of the consortium that would be working on this project (implying specific contracts with service providers for deliverables may make up the remaining necessary human capital for a project like this)?

**Answer:**

The personnel costs are recommended at 20% of the overall budget. This percentage encompasses the total personnel budget for the entire proposal. It is correctly understood that this relates to the personnel of members of the applying organization or consortium. However, given the nature of the work additional technical personnel costs directly linked to technical functions/activities required for the deliverables can be included in the budget if reasonable justifications for these costs are provided. In addition, the use of service providers / sub-contractors to carry out specific deliverables/activities would not count towards the recommended 20% personal cost.

**Question 43:** In addition, is there existing guidance as to which expenditure category the audit and M&E allocations belong to? These allocations may not be relevant for each result but for those where they would apply, is there one category where they fit based on the definitions of expenditure categories UN Women uses?

**Answer:**

Audit and Monitoring Costs can be captured within the Results-Based Budget as 'Other Costs' specifying that it is for Audit costs and Monitoring and Evaluation costs respectively. Audit costs should be 3-5% of the total project budget and Monitoring and Evaluation costs should be 3% of the total project budget.

**Question 44:** In the RFP instructions there were several budget items prescribed, and some thresholds established (i.e. personnel costs to top 20% of budget, and others) that would typically be closer to NGO program budgets than to consultancy projects.

Could we propose an alternative itemization that focuses on the phases of the project and the associated technical expertise required at each stage?

**Answer:**

The financial proposal must be received in the format included in the call for proposals. The results-based budget requires proponents to budget per Result/output area. Each result area can be indicated as a phase, as long as each phase has clearly specified deliverables related to the expected results outlined in the terms of reference.

The budget line items within each of the result areas are general categories intended to assist in thinking through where money will be spent. If a planned expenditure does not appear to fit in any of the standard line-item categories, list the item under other costs, and state what the money is to be used for.