
Writing your UK Democracy Fund grant application

Updated: February 2025

This guidance applies to writing both small (£10,000 and under) and large grant applications.

The UK Democracy Fund has three broad goals:

- **Enabling everyone to vote:** Building support for reforms to ensure a simple, seamless and accessible voting system fit for the 21st century.
- **Extending the right to vote:** Advocating in support of expanding the franchise for 16- and 17-year-olds and settled UK residents from overseas.
- **Increasing participation of everyone in our elections:** Making an effort to raise the turnout of low-propensity voters to improve fairness in our democracy. Low-propensity voters are groups of people who are less likely to register and vote based on analysis of electoral data. These include young people, racialised and minoritised groups and migrants, private renters and the vulnerably housed, and those with low incomes.

More details about the UK Democracy Fund's goals can be found in our [Funding framework](#).

You should indicate at the top of your application which goal(s) your application is working towards.

Only non-partisan applications will be considered.

Please use the questions set out below as headings to structure the body of your application.

a) What is the purpose of your application?

Begin your application with a short summary statement that clearly sets out what funding from the UK Democracy Fund would enable you to do, over what timescale, at what cost, and to what end. Essentially, this is your top-line pitch. It is important that you succinctly articulate what your campaign is trying to achieve and the resources that you need to do it.

b) State (up to) three main outcomes you are seeking in your campaign

Outcomes tell us what changes you want to see from your campaign. Reviewing these on completion helps assess if you have succeeded in achieving your goals. Outcomes are distinct from outputs, which are the more immediate results of your activities.

Find out more about the distinctions between [outcomes and outputs](#).

c) Who are you?

The UK Democracy Fund welcomes applications from a broad mix of applicants: established organisations, small organisations with one or two staff, volunteer-led community-based organisations, cooperatives, and collaborations. It is important not to presume that the Fund knows about you or your organisation, even if you have applied before.

Please briefly describe:

- the overall financial position – including overall annual income or projected income for the year(s) in which the grant is sought and the relevant financial year
- capacity (eg number of paid staff or volunteers)
- the legal status of your organisation (ie whether a registered charity, a registered company, unincorporated association, etc.)
- governance arrangements (ie Board/Advisory group or other management)
- key individuals involved (ie project staff and, where relevant, other key staff or Board/Advisory group members).

d) What do you want to do and how will you achieve this?

This is the core of your application. Please include the following:

Why? (Overall relevance and strategic fit)

Tell us why the issue is important, what changes you want and explain the overall need for and objectives of the project. This should take into account the relevance of the initiative in the context of the UK Democracy Fund's priorities. Please refer to our [Funding Framework](#) and explain how your project will further the Fund's aims.

Why now? (Opportunity)

You should set out the start date for the grant and how long you expect it to take. Explain the timescale for your campaign, including any key moments that will provide either an opportunity or a possible challenge. You should explain why this campaign needs to happen now.

Why you? (Efficacy of applicant)

Tell us about the knowledge, skills and experience available for conducting this campaign, including, where relevant, any established track record, expertise, or other indicators of experience which make you well placed to deliver this work.

How? (Efficacy of approach and potential for impact)

Tell us how you intend to conduct your campaign and the approach you will use at key points to further your goals. Explain how you will influence relevant stakeholders, such as supporters, the media, politicians, partner organisations or government to create the changes required to deliver your proposed outcomes. It is important to think about likely pathways to change – this might be described as your 'theory of change' and gives us an indication of your assumptions and proposed tactics for making change happen.

e) Why the UK Democracy Fund?

It is important to make the case for coming to the UK Democracy Fund. You should set out briefly how the values and goals of the Fund are reflected in your campaign outcomes and why you are unable to source funds for your proposed work elsewhere.

f) How will you ensure that your campaign or project is non-partisan?

The UK Democracy Fund operates on a strictly non-partisan basis. We seek to increase participation in elections, not to influence the outcome of any election. Please set out what steps you will take to ensure that this project or campaign will be non-partisan and not promote a particular political party or policy. (Note, you will also need to include a summary of this detail on the online application form.)

g) Budget

Please provide a breakdown of the budget for your campaign using our [budget template](#). This will be uploaded separately on our online application portal, so you do not need combine this with your written application document.

Ask for the amount required, but be realistic.

Direct costs: The Fund will pay all the direct costs of a project. These should be broken down as follows on the template:

- Staffing costs, to include employer costs, eg NI and pension contributions
- Day rate posts/consultants
- Direct support costs attributable to your project, such as report print/production, venue hire for events, travel costs and project expenses

Overheads/Indirect costs: These are costs that are not directly attributable to a project but support the organisation's overall ability to deliver the project, for example, office facilities/rent and administrative support. The proportion claimed should be linked to how much of your organisation's work this project accounts for. The [budget template](#) will calculate this for you.

Contingencies: You should not include any unallocated or contingency amounts in your budget; instead ensure all amounts are clearly allocated to a specific budget line.

Inflation: Applicants applying for grants with a period of more than 12 months should ensure they consider the potential impact of inflation on their budget allocations, and build it in to their calculations where necessary. Applicants are encouraged to use the monthly [Office of National Statistics CPIH publications](#) to assist with this.

Income from other funding sources: In developing your budget, identify any existing income sources which will contribute to the costs. There is a separate column in the budget template for you to include these amounts.

If you have no other source of funds, you may enter zero or leave this column on the template blank.

Where you have, or anticipate, income towards the costs please identify in the notes column whether this is:

- **Income secured:** funding already available towards the costs of your project.
- **Income anticipated:** pending funding applications or anticipated income from other known funding streams.

The budget template will calculate the total amount of funding to be requested from the UK Democracy Fund automatically. This should match the 'ask' in your written application.

On our website we provide two worked examples to help you build your budget:

- [Worked example with no funding from other sources](#)
- [Worked example where a UK Democracy Fund grant will be supplemented by other funding](#)

Please note that if your application is successful, we will require you to have an organisational bank account into which we will deposit the grant funding. You may need to consider a hosting arrangement for your project should you not have access to an organisational bank account. We can provide advice if required. Be aware that setting up an organisational bank account can be a lengthy process and that waiting until after your grant application is successful to set up an account may result in delays to your funding being released.

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