

British Embassy Doha invites proposal submissions for the Gulf Strategy Fund 2022 to 2025

Recognising the short timeframe and to accommodate projects in different stages of development, projects should not be scheduled to start before 1 July 2022.

Scope and purpose

The Qatar Gulf Strategy Fund Programme supports implementation of FCDO priorities for Qatar identified in the Middle East and North Africa Directorate (MENAD) strategy. It supports Qatar's ambitious 'National Vision 2030' agenda for modernisation, economic diversification and climate action, while enhancing mutual prosperity by promoting inward investment and creating opportunities for UK companies, especially in the education, climate, culture, tourism, sport and finance sectors.

This call for proposals runs in parallel with the Qatar Country Business Plan development process, and projects will be expected to align with strategic direction.

GSF funding is not intended to support isolated activities, such as a single visit or trade mission. Projects must make a clear contribution to strategic objectives and have a clear outcome, such as unlocking wider progress and moving the UK-Qatar partnership forward in a substantive way. All projects must demonstrate value for money. FCDO defines 'value-for-money' as, 'making the best possible use of our all resources to maximise our impact'. In programme work, maximising impact includes having a robust, evidence-based theory of change demonstrating the causal pathway between the intervention and outcomes that support FCDO strategic priorities.

Proposals may build on the work of current GSF projects in the sectors of climate and biodiversity, education, health, culture, sport, tourism, finance, justice and security, but we also invite concepts in other thematic areas.

We also draw your attention to the MENAD Gender Charter pledge released in September 2021, which calls on Posts to carry out specific and targeted work on gender equality and inclusion, and to ensure gender equality and inclusion is mainstreamed in any programme design and delivery.

BED recognises the challenges of working in a rapidly changing environment, reliant on the schedules and priorities of external actors. This particularly impacts the scheduling of activities and becomes difficult when planning a multi-year programme. We therefore embrace flexible and adaptive approaches as a key component of project effectiveness and value for money.

Funding level and multi-year funding

FCDO is yet to confirm allocations of GSF funding for individual countries over this period, but we are working to an indicative budget of £1 million per year for three years. To improve efficiency our preference is for larger projects in the range of £20,000 – £250,000 per year. Smaller projects can be considered, but we recommend consolidating them with other work in a similar thematic area.

FCDO has made a commitment to GSF for the three-year period 2022-2025, in line with the FCDO funding settlement. This allows us to think strategically and plan multi-year projects that can have a much greater impact. We therefore encourage concepts that demonstrate a long-term, strategic vision and envisage phased implementation and measurable impact.

However, we anticipate that there will be no facility to carry funds forward from one financial year to the next. While we will commit to multi-year projects, funding commitments will be made on a year-by-year basis, with budget for subsequent years considered indicative. Funding commitment for subsequent years will be made on submission of a fresh ABB for each subsequent year of implementation. This process provides an opportunity for Partners to review and adjust their projects and the timing of activities and response to changing circumstances.

Parameters

In awarding and overseeing programme funds BED is obliged to comply with all Cabinet Office and FCDO rules and guidance, including but not limited to those set out in the FCDO Programme Operating Framework (PrOF). Partners should especially take note of the following requirements:

- all project proposals must have a single lead implementer, which holds full accountability for the full project budget. A lead Implementer may in some cases sub-contract project activity to a third party
- FCDO can only pay for costs that are incurred after signature and between the start and end date stated in a funding arrangement or contract. Project start-dates must post-date signature on the relevant MoU, Grant Agreement (GA) or Contract, and no costs may be incurred by projects prior to signing by both parties
- no payment can be made in advance of need. BED will not consider any request from an implementing partner for advance payments
- all new programmes and the projects must align with the Paris Agreement and assess climate and environmental impact and risks, taking steps to ensure that no environmental harm is done
- all programmes must consider and demonstrate how their interventions will impact gender equality, disability inclusion and those with protected characteristics
- all projects involving paid-for communications activity must receive clearance from the Professional Communications Assurance (PCA) team prior to signing a GA / MoU / Contract
- all approved projects will be expected to comply with FCDO mandated

reporting requirements using templates provided, including: (i) Monthly ABB forecasts; (ii) Quarterly Monitoring Reports and (iii) Project closure report

- all projects activities must be completed within the financial year for which the funding is approved. Projects should plan to complete activities by February or very-early March to allow for financial processing to be concluded before the end of each financial year

Process

Proposals will be appraised according to the appraisal criteria below, and submitted to the Qatar Country Programme Board for consideration. BED will expedite the approval process to the extent possible, but cannot approve projects until formal funding allocation is confirmed by FCDO.

Approved projects will then begin the mobilisation process before beginning implementation, including:

- securing any required approvals (e.g. PCA)
- due diligence assessments if required
- preparation and signing of GA / MoU
- competitive bid process (if required) to select commercial providers

Appraisal criteria

Criteria	Explanation	Weighting
Strategic fit	Alignment with relevant MENA Business Plan and Qatar Country Business Plan objectives	25%
Value for Money	FCDO defines 'value-for-money' as, 'making the best possible use of our all resources to maximise our impact'. In programme work, maximising impact includes having a robust, evidence-based theory of change demonstrating the causal pathway between the intervention and outcomes that support FCDO strategic priorities.	25%
Feasibility	Are project objectives realistic in the timeframe? Are stakeholders (Especially within Qatar Government) supportive?	15%
Risk	Is the risk assessment comprehensive and realistic? Are mitigation measures viable? Are any risks (reputational, financial) to FCDO and UK Government within an acceptable range?	15%
Consideration of cross-cutting issues	Are cross-cutting issues, especially gender, climate and disability inclusion, dealt with adequately? Proactively?	10%
Capability of the implementing organisation	Does the organisation have a proven record of performance delivering in this context or similar contexts?	10%

How to submit proposals

The Project Proposal form template is identical to last year's GSF template except the budget and output / activities sections have been adapted for multi-year projects.

The Activity Based Budget template has been adapted to accommodate projects for up to three years duration. For the first year, partners need to calculate budget on a monthly basis. Subsequent years are budgeted on a quarterly basis initially, and will be refined and re-approved in advance of each financial year.

Submit the relevant FCDO contract, Grant Agreement (GA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) template for your organisation's internal review processes (request the appropriate template from the Embassy if you don't have a copy). British Embassy Doha will not enter into negotiation on these beyond the limited areas that we are authorised to approve at Post. If you do not have a copy of these templates, please get in touch as above to request one.

Contact

For any queries or clarification, contact:

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