

Call for bids: supporting Women, Peace and Security in Iraq

Background

CSSF Iraq

The Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) is a cross government fund that supports and delivers activity to tackle instability, prevent conflicts and respond to fragility. The CSSF operates in 70 countries, including Iraq.

The CSSF Iraq programme delivers against 3 outcomes:

1. The threat posed by terrorist actors is reduced by a coordinated state led security and governance apparatus.
2. The state is more accountable, evidence-based and responsive with sufficient institutional capacity to deliver essential services; and
3. Active citizens are able to access and engage with the state to increase representation and influence the ways in which their needs are met.

CSSF Iraq has made a commitment to Women, Peace and Security (WPS) programming under its 'Building Stability Programme' (2021 to 2024). It is important it does so, for a number of reasons, not least, because Iraq is a focus country of the UK National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS (18 to 22) and the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI).

The Global WPS Agenda and the UK National Action Plan (NAP)

The UN Security Council adopted the WPS Resolution 1325, in 2000. The objective of the resolution is to promote and fulfil women's human rights and achieve gender equality, as part of efforts to build more peaceful and stable societies for all. The WPS agenda is founded on an understanding that people experience violent conflict differently according to their gender, with women and girls being particularly affected.

The UK National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS sets out how the UK Government will integrate gender perspectives to build security and stability, protect human rights of women and girls and promote their meaningful participation in conflict prevention and resolution. The strategic outcomes of the UK NAP on WPS are:

- women's decision making
- peace keeping
- preventing and responding to gender-based violence
- humanitarian response
- security and justice
- preventing and countering violent extremism and
- strengthening UK capabilities

CSSF Iraq Women, Peace and Security project: details

Despite the essential role of women's rights organisations (WROs) in the safeguarding of women and girls' rights and security through service provision, policy, and advocacy, there remains a significant gap in international donor support to WROs in Iraq. Lack of funding to WROs working on WPS in Iraq and the Kurdish Region of Iraq (KRI) was a key finding of Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) commissioned research by GAPS in 2019 (The 10 Steps: Turning Women, Peace and Security Commitments to Implementation) and its recommendation that funding for women-led Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) should be a priority. This concurs with findings and recommendations from a scoping exercise conducted in 2020 to inform the development of WPS programming under the CSSF-Iraq portfolio.

With this call, CSSF Iraq want to scale up support (technical and financial) to WROs in Iraq and the KRI working on the WPS agenda via a grant-stream approach, managed by an experienced not-for-profit organisation with proven expertise working with WROs/CSOs in Iraq and the Middle East North Africa Region.

Objectives of the Scope of Work

The CSSF Iraq programme team is seeking bids for projects that can support and strengthen grassroots and women-led CSOs in Iraq and KRI working across multiple themes relating to WPS through the issuance and management of a grant scheme, to be delivered alongside capacity building, network and alliance building.

The grant scheme would be open to CSOs in Iraq and the KRI, with grants managed by the successful applicant. It is envisaged that grants would range in size and scope, to be determined by the successful applicant.

The key facets of the grant scheme would be to provide:

- flexible, multi-year funding focused on enabling the CSOs to define their own priorities under the WPS agenda that meet the identified needs of women and girls in the communities they serve
- tailored capacity building and technical support to CSOs
- strengthened coordination and networking across CSOs

We would like to receive bids which deliver or contribute to the following desired objectives:

- empower women's organisations in Iraq and KRI to advance a localised WPS agenda and sustain progress towards gender equality
- strengthen women's meaningful participation in Civil Society

Project budget and duration

CSSF Iraq is looking for proposals to deliver up to a 3-year grant agreement valued at up to £2.7 million, allocated accordingly: FY21/22: £0.7 million; FY22/23: £1 million; FY23/24: £1 million. Once the project is established there is potential for an increase in funding.

Assessment

We would welcome bids from not-for-profit women's rights organisations.

The successful applicant will have previous experience working in Iraq and/or KRI, with deep, relevant thematic experience on Women, Peace and Security, and an understanding of the necessity of supporting local WROs to implement self-defined WPS priorities. It will have the technical and organisational capacity to manage a grant-scheme with different funding streams and to provide tailored capacity and technical support to CSOs of differing organisational strengths and capabilities.

Bids will be assessed against the following criteria and weighting:

- strategic fit: Alignment with the stated objectives, underpinned by organisational alignment to feminist values and approaches, and demonstrated experience, expertise and reach to take forward activity on Women, Peace and Security (25%)
- project design and viability: based on a good contextual analysis and understanding of the women-led CSO operating space in Iraq and KRI (and required project responses therein); a realistic description of activities including methodology and capacity to adapt to the security context and to restrictions and other impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (25%)
- project monitoring, evaluation and learning: framed against considered, achievable outcomes and outputs and a grounded Theory of Change (ToC) and M&E strategy (15%)
- partnerships and donor engagement: capacity to build meaningful, collaborative partnerships, based on mutual respect, shared endeavour, and supportive, open communication with sub-grantees and CSSF Iraq/the British Embassy Iraq (10%)
- value for money: financial soundness of the proposed activity, demonstration of economy and efficiency of costs (10%)
- sustainability: clear consideration of how to sustain project benefit(s) after project completion (5%)
- risk management, gender and conflict sensitivity: A clear understanding and approach to risk management and to gender and conflict sensitivity (10%)

Requirements

- the FCDO requires applicants to have the necessary legal licenses to operate in time for the start of the grant award, at the local level within Federal Iraq and/or in the Kurdistan Region

- applicants should have sufficient financial resilience and a proven track record of transparently and effectively managing donor funded projects of similar scale. Specifically, Bidders should have previously received a direct fund of at least \$500,000 for a one year spend
- CSSF will conduct a due diligence assessment on the successful potential partner including reviewing safeguarding measures
- the project will be delivered through a Grant Agreement and therefore the organisation cannot profit from the received grant funding. See [further information/guidance](#) on what that agreement might look like
- additional project documentation will be completed by the successful bidder/s, following the award

Bidding process

- complete the project bid in the [Project proposal form](#) (ODT, 44KB) and [CSSF FY21-22: finance reporting template – ABB](#) (ODS, 28.6KB) in English
- proposals that do not meet the criteria and are not completed using the required forms will not be accepted
- completed forms should be sent in standard format with the subject title “CSSF Iraq WPS Project: [XXX – name of the implementer]”, to BaghdadCSSF.CallForBids@fco.gov.uk
- please also familiarise yourself at an early stage with the standard ‘Grant Agreement Template’ and ‘Guidance for Bidding Organisations’ documents

Please contact BaghdadCSSF.CallForBids@fco.gov.uk with any questions or queries.

Initiative timeline:

Dates	Activity
07/04/2021	Announce request for submission of Bids
16/05/2021	Deadline for bidders to submit Bids
05/2021	Post announcement on outcome of Bids
05/2021	Due Diligence Assessment, Grant Agreement and financial arrangements completed