

Application Guidelines for the Women and Girls Fund

General information

Thank you for taking an interest in the **Women and Girls Fund (WGF)**. Everything you need to know about applying for grants under this fund is contained in these application guidelines. Please read them carefully before you submit your application.

Within these application guidelines you will find information about eligibility criteria for accessing the different grants, the various phases of application process, and how your application will be processed.

The Forum for Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA) is the Secretariat responsible for responding to any of your queries regarding the application process and for providing information on the status of your applications.

Address of FAWEMA

Physical address: Area 47/ Sector 3/ Ring Road, house number 50

Postal address: P.O Box 30886, Capital City, Lilongwe 3

E-mail: administration@fawema.org

Website: www.fawema.org

The Women and Girls Fund

The Scottish Government has commissioned Ecorys UK together with its partners, FAWEMA Malawi, FAWEMA Rwanda and FAWEMA Zambia, to undertake **the design, delivery and management** of a Women and Girls Fund (WGF) that will offer grants to Women and Girl-led Organisations (WGLOs) in the three countries. In line with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, the overall aim of the fund is to provide appropriately targeted direct funding to support women and girls/ women and girl-led organisations (WGLOs in Malawi, Zambia, and Rwanda, with the advancement of gender equality and the rights of women and girls as a principal objective. Gender equality is, therefore, the main objective of this programme and is fundamental to its design and expected results. While taking a participatory approach likely sectors include focusing on advocacy and/or core strengthening of women's rights organisations and/or movements across the partner countries.

The overarching objectives of the WGF are:

- To support women and Girls/WGLOs in Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia, to advance Gender Equality
- To establish a participatory funding mechanism to design and evaluate the fund.
- To capture learning of the participatory approach

Definition of terms and concepts – explaining the words we use

Women and girl led organisation: Women and girl-led organisations (WGLOs) are entities that are founded, managed, or predominantly influenced by women and girls. They focus on addressing issues that affect women and girls, providing essential services to, and advocating for women and girls' rights and empowerment. These organisations promote gender equality, and strive to raise awareness about the challenges faced by women and girls. By definition, therefore, WGLOs could include:

- Organisations founded by women and engaged in work on women empowerment and gender equality; and
- Organisations whose Boards are predominantly female but that may be headed by men.

Local WGLO: This would be a WGLO founded and governed locally, i.e., Established and registered in the country and governed by local leadership, with decision-making authority vested in local citizens. International WGLOs will not be eligible to apply, neither will INGOs that have local offices in country registered as local entities.

Emerging WGLOs: These are small, newly established organisations in the early stages of development. They usually have limited staff, budgets, and infrastructure. Their focus is often on establishing credibility, building networks, and securing initial funding.

Intermediate/Growing WGLOs: These organisations are in the process of scaling their operations. They may have a more stable funding base, a growing team, and a defined organisational structure. Their focus is often on expanding programs, increasing impact, and professionalising their operations.

Mature WGLOs: These are well-established organisations with significant operational capacity, strong governance, and diversified funding sources. They typically have a track record of impact and are focused on sustaining their achievements, influencing policy, and leading in their sector.

Advocacy: This refers to efforts by individuals, groups, or organisations to influence decisions, policies, or practices in society to promote social justice, human rights, or the common good. Advocacy is actions intended to influence selected people, governments, private companies or other institutions in order to achieve a desired policy, practice, social, or political change that will benefit particular groups. Advocacy can seek to reform policies and institutions or get good policies implemented or alter power relations and bring about fundamental changes or protect or defend particular groups from adverse changes. It often involves raising awareness, engaging with policymakers, and mobilising communities to bring about positive change. In the case of the WGF, the focus is on advocacy to promote gender equality and women empowerment in any thematic areas. The advocacy work can also be at any level national, local (District level, e.g., changes in by-laws) or at the community level (through work with traditional leaders)

Capacity building/development is an intervention that strengthens an organisation's ability to fulfil its mission by promoting sound management, strong governance, and persistent rededication to achieving results. Furthermore, having the ability to fulfil a capacity building mission means that an organisation has (a) sufficient numbers of staff who possess the necessary knowledge and skills, (b) appropriate and adequate technical and management systems, (c) suitable physical infrastructure, and (d) ample financial and other resources. Thus, capacity building is not limited to training personnel or the provision of technical assistance, but may include overhauling systems, remodelling physical infrastructure, recruiting new personnel, and improving the efficiency of the use of existing resource

Description of the types of grants under the WGF

The *Grants* are project or activity-based grant. The Overall Fund is Non-thematic and as such, the call does not prescribe a particular theme and is open to applications from organisations undertaking advocacy work in different sectors and cross-cutting issues, including **but not limited to** women in leadership, gender-based violence (GBV)

labour/employment, health, agriculture, education, health, environment and natural resources, and governance.

1. Advocacy, organisational capacity building and research grant

Under this call for proposals, applicants can submit applications to undertake advocacy projects combining various types of activities: (a) advocacy activities; (b) research activities; and, (c) activities aimed at organisational capacity development. Applicants must however demonstrate the centrality of the advocacy intervention in the proposal, with research and capacity development activities playing a reinforcing secondary role.

- **Centrality of advocacy work:** When completing the Concept Note, it is important to keep in mind that advocacy work is to be at the centre of the project.
- **Research activities:** Research to enhance the evidence needed to undertake the advocacy can and should be included as part of the proposal.
- **Capacity development activities:** If the applicant also seeks grants for capacity development activities, the application must be able to show how the proposed capacity development activities enhance organisational performance and benefit the implementation of the proposed Initiative. The WGLO should have undertaken an organisational assessment (an assessment template will be provided at proposal stage) and developed a capacity building action plan. Proposed capacity building activities should be from the developed action plan.

However, applicants are not bound to submit proposals combining the three types of activities. Applications seeking grants to carry out solely advocacy work will also be accepted, provided the applicant can prove that it has sufficient capacity to carry out the planned activities.

The WGF recognises that the WGLOs are at different levels of growth and the funds are therefore offered as follows:

TIER 1: Emerging WGLOs	Emerging WGLOs are requested to submit proposals with a budget of up to MWK 35,880,000 (GBP 16,250)
TIER 2: Intermediate/Growing WGLOs	Emerging WGLOs are requested to submit proposals with a budget of up to MWK 59,616,000 (GBP 27,000)
TIER 3: Established/Mature WGLOs	Emerging WGLOs are requested to submit proposals with a budget of up to MWK 88,320,000 (GBP 40,000)

The advocacy grants can be used over a maximum period of two years though it is expected that smaller grants would be used within one year. At the end of the first year, extension or renewal of the agreement is subject to overall performance.

2. Organisational capacity development grant

WGLOs wishing to build their capacity in a given area identified through the administration of the organisational assessment process can apply to funds from this grant. A WGLO that has experience in building the capacities of other WGLOs in areas of interest or that would like to build the capacities of WGLOs in an area noted as important for their advocacy work can apply for a grant to build capacity of WGLOs. Applicant must demonstrate that the capacity building proposed is based on a capacity assessment undertaken by the WGLOs

The capacity development grant can be used over a maximum period of one year though it is expected that smaller grants would be used within six months.

3. *Swift/rapid response grants*

The Swift Response Grant is a specialized funding mechanism designed to enable WGLOs to act promptly in addressing urgent advocacy issues. This grant provides rapid financial support to equip organisations with the resources needed to respond effectively to time-sensitive challenges, opportunities, or crises that require immediate action. It is intended to bolster advocacy efforts that demand quick mobilisation, strategic interventions, or critical engagement to influence policy, protect rights, or address emerging societal concerns.

The swift response grant can be used over a maximum period of six months though it is expected that smaller grants would be used within three months.

The call for proposals

The Women and Girls Fund is seeking **Concept Notes** from Women and Girl Led Organisations wishing to access the Advocacy grant and undertake advocacy work promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. **This is the first call and will only give out Advocacy grants to WGLOs.** All other types of grants (Capacity Development, Swift/rapid response and Research grants) will be made available in the second call for proposals in the second quarter of 2025.

Eligibility Criteria

Concept Notes are invited from WGLOs. The following institutions are eligible for funding:

- **Network organisations** – WGLOs that are umbrella organisations and/or membership-based organisations.
- **Individual organisations** – WGLOs operating as independent entities. They may or may not be members of a network organisation.
- **Branches of a larger organisation** – WGLOs that are a branch of a larger WGLO may apply only if they demonstrate that they function independently from their headquarters.

Individuals and the following organisations are not eligible to access funding:

- Government institutions and semi-government institutions
- International organisations registered locally
- International WGLOs
- Political parties
- Organisations promoting a religious agenda
- Organisations running on a for-profit basis

The following criteria are mandatory and have to be met by the applicant, as non-compliance results in rejection of the application. The organisation must:

- Be a **Women and girl led organisation**
- Be non-governmental
- Be a local emerging, intermediate/growing or mature WGLO
- Registration: The organisation must be legally registered in Malawi.
- Be a non-profit organisation
- If registered, have a bank account operated by more than one signatory
- **Geographic Focus:** The initiative must target any communities, and districts in Malawi.

- **Focus on Advocacy:** Concept notes and Proposals must focus on advocacy initiatives that address gender equality and women empowerment.

Phase 1: The Concept Note

Accessing the Concept note form

Concept Note forms will be available in hard copy from FAWEMA and can be downloaded from the FAWEMA website www.fawema.org or send request through administration@fawema.org

Completing the Concept Note forms

It is crucial to complete the forms accurately and free of typographical errors. Applicants should write clearly and concisely, adhering to the specified word limits. All statements must be typed in English; hand-written submissions will not be accepted.

Seeking clarification from the Secretariat

Questions about the Call for Concept Notes may be sent to FAWEMA. Questions should be sent to the following e-mail address: administration@fawema.org

Answers to questions or clarifications which may be relevant to other applicants will be published on the various websites. Replies will be given no later than five (5) days before the deadline of receipt of Concept Notes.

Submitting the Concept Notes

Alongside three (3) copies of the Concept Note the applicant organisation must provide two (2) copies of the registration certificate.

The envelope must indicate the full name and address of the applicant WGLO as well as content of the document (Concept Note/Advocacy grant)

The Concept Note and supporting documents must be submitted via the email address below or in a sealed envelope by registered mail (or courier service) or hand-delivered at the address below:

Postal address:	<u>P.O Box 30886, Capital City, Lilongwe 3.</u>
Address for hand delivery or courier service	FAWEMA offices in Lilongwe, Area 47/Sector 3/ ring road, house number 50
Email address	wgf.malawi@ecorys.com

Applicants must verify that their application is complete, as incomplete applications will be rejected.

The deadline for receipt of Concept Notes is 21 February **2025, 17.00 hours (5 pm)**. Applications received after the stipulated date and time will not be accepted by the FAWEMA Secretariat unless justifiable reasons are given for the delay. The Secretariat will acknowledge the receipt of each application and generate a reference number upon submission.

The assessment process

Concept Notes will be assessed by the Secretariat. There are two sets of criteria - mandatory and technical criteria. If any of the mandatory eligibility criteria (as mentioned above) are not met, the application will be automatically rejected.

The Concept Note will also be assessed against a set of technical evaluation criteria. The Concept Note will be given an overall score of 100 in accordance with the breakdown below. The scores will be added up and **applicants scoring fewer than 55 points** will be rejected and not invited to submit a full application. Applications will be evaluated based on:

1. Organisational capacity and experience (10 points)
2. Relevance and centrality of the advocacy issue (30 points)
3. Feasibility and clarity of the Concept (30%)
4. Clear gender equality and/or women empowerment focus (10 points)
5. Clear indication of impacts on women and girls (10 points)
6. Incorporation of intersectionality (disability, age, social status issues (10 points)

Note that applicants must meet minimum scores in all sections and sub-sections. Actual scores will be added up and only applicants **scoring a minimum of 55 points** and above will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Applicants **scoring fewer than 55 points** will be rejected and not invited to submit a full proposal. They will be informed in writing about the reasons for not inviting them to submit a full application. They may however be offered Capacity Development Support through the Secretariat.

Applicants will be informed of the pre-selection or rejection decision through the Secretariat within two (2) weeks of the submission deadline. The Secretariat cannot be held liable for any delays.

Note: Administrative costs should not exceed 10% of the total budget.

Phase 2: Full proposal

Preparing and submitting the full proposal forms and organisational self-assessment

Guidelines and full proposal forms will be sent alongside notification letters to pre-qualified organisations. The notification letter will also indicate the deadline for submission of full proposals. Guidelines will also be made available on the WGF and the FAWE websites.

All pre-qualified applicants that proceed to this stage will also be required to undertake an organisational self-assessment to determine the adequacy of their financial and management systems.

Applicants will then be required to submit their full proposals including supporting documents within 14 days of the date of notification.

The assessment process

Full proposals will be evaluated by the Grants Review Committee, with a primary focus on technical eligibility during this phase. A critical factor in the evaluation is the adequacy and quality of the proposal.

Award of contract and implementation

Following final approval by the Grants Review Committee, the Secretariat will notify all successful applicants in writing, informing them of the Committee's decision and inviting them for final discussions on contract details. The names of successful applicants will also be published on the WGF website. Unsuccessful applicants will receive written notification of the decision.

A start-up workshop will be organized to familiarize all successful applicants with the values and operations of the WGF.