



## FUND FOR LOCAL COOPERATION (FLC)

# GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONS 2024

### Background and objectives

According to the FLC Norm (effective 1 February 2015), the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland grants Funds for Local Cooperation (FLC) to diplomatic missions or roving ambassadors. The FLCs are an instrument of Finnish development policy and can be used to improve the functioning of local civil society and for implementing target-oriented projects.

Projects supported through FLCs must contribute to Finland's foreign and security policy objectives ([see the link](#)). FLC partners are requested to apply in their projects key elements of Finnish development policy and quality standards, namely the Results Based Management (RBM) ([see the link](#)), the Human Rights Based Approach to development (HRBA) ([see the link](#)), and the Cross-Cutting Objectives in the Finnish Development Policy and Cooperation ([see the link](#)).

The FLCs are governed by Finnish legislation, particularly the Act on Discretionary Government Transfers (688/2001), and the FLC Internal Instructions (6/2014) of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Finland. The Internal Instructions set out the main principles concerning eligibility criteria for partners and use of the FLC funds. The local partners implementing FLC projects must abide by the relevant local legislation. As a rule all projects must be implemented by the local partners themselves, and only small procurements of a maximum of 15,000 EUR from external agents may be allowed.

### Eligible applicants

The Embassy of Hanoi encourages especially civil society actors, such as non-governmental organizations and associations to apply for the fund. As per the FLC norm, the fund's eligible partners include local non-governmental organizations, science and technology communities, universities and other educational and research institutions, independent media, public bodies, and cultural institutions (for example, museums, libraries, and theatres), chambers of commerce and commercial associations, organizations engaged in the promotion of export and investment, businesses, cooperatives, interest groups of companies and employees, foundations or religious communities.

### FLC funding cannot be granted to:

- Finnish non-governmental organisations (separate application through the unit in question)
- Projects of friendship associations in Finland (separate application through the unit in question)
- Finnish government agencies or public bodies (separate application through the ICI instrument)
- Finnish municipalities (separate application through the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities)
- Finnish business
- The government, ministries or municipalities of the host country
- An unregistered association or organisation (however, taking into consideration the special circumstances in the host country)
- Support the activities of a political party
- Basic research
- Single cultural events (that have no permanent impact)
- Charity
- Humanitarian aid
- In the form of a grant, scholarship or assistance for the applicant's personal use
- Purchasing land
- A fund
- Building the capital of microcredit systems (however, development projects and training are possible)

### Priorities, funding and project duration

Globally, the FLC supports the goals set for Finland's development policy: eradication of poverty by means of economically, socially and ecologically sustainable development. Development of democracy and the rule of law as well as the strengthening of human rights and well-functioning civil society create conditions for comprehensive sustainable development and are therefore important FLC targets. The FLC should be channelled especially to projects that seek to strengthen the following development policy priorities: i) promotion of human rights, ii) promotion of democratic and accountable society, and iii) promotion of sustainable management of natural resources and environmental protection.

**In 2024, the Embassy looks to finance one or two local initiatives that promote sustainable forest and natural resources management, and climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. The focus should be on strengthening the capacity of small enterprises, farmers and forest owners in the forest sector on the EU Forest Regulation and its implementation, and optimizing and utilizing forest data management systems, such as FORMIS (Management Information System of the Forestry Sector in Vietnam, which is currently managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development).**

**The project(s) should take into account Finland's development policy goals and cross-cutting targets. Special consideration is given to projects that support gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, and vulnerable groups in the target communities, especially persons with disabilities.**

The Embassy has provisionally allocated altogether 186,000 EUR to be granted to 1-2 projects, over a maximum implementation period of 24 months.

### **Application process**

The guidelines and application package is available on the Embassy's website at [finlandabroad.fi/vnm](http://finlandabroad.fi/vnm) or emailed to interested organizations upon request. The information package includes:

- Guidelines for Applicant Organizations (this document)
- FLC Concept Note (in English only)

The information package can be obtained on request to:

*Le Thi Thu Huong, Embassy of Finland, 24th Floor, Lotte Center, 54 Lieu Giai Street, Hanoi, Email: [huong.le@gov.fi](mailto:huong.le@gov.fi)*

With email request, the subject line must be clearly marked as Request for FLC Information.

The Concept Notes with a reference "Proposal for 2024 FLC funding" should be sent preferably in soft copy to [huong.le@gov.fi](mailto:huong.le@gov.fi) and cc [Maija.H.Seppala@gov.fi](mailto:Maija.H.Seppala@gov.fi) or in hard copy to the Embassy of Finland in Hanoi (24th Floor, Lotte Center, 54 Lieu Giai Street, Hanoi) and **must be received before 17:00 on 10 June 2024** (Hanoi Local Time). It shall remain your responsibility to ensure that your Concept Note will reach the correct email address above before the deadline. The Concept Notes that are received by the Embassy after the deadline indicated above, for whatever reason, shall not be considered for evaluation.

The applicant organizations can submit questions related to the call for proposals to the Embassy [huong.le@gov.fi](mailto:huong.le@gov.fi) and cc [Maija.H.Seppala@gov.fi](mailto:Maija.H.Seppala@gov.fi) until 27 May 2024 with a heading "Questions on 2024 FLC funding". The answers will be published on the Embassy's website ([see the link](#)) by 30 May 2023.

### **Selection process**

Eligible applications must meet the compulsory requirements of the assessment criteria described in this document, against which the proposals are assessed.

Those Concept Notes that are considered potential, the Embassy will conduct a feasibility assessment of the proposed project. In case the Concept Note is considered feasible, the Embassy will request the applicant organization to develop a full Project Document using the Application Form (in English only) and submit other supporting documents as specified in the Application Form. Applications must be received in a sealed envelope by registered mail, courier or by hand-delivery at the Embassy address above.

Based on the competitive scoring results, the Embassy will finally approve the best applications for funding. The funding decision is finally made by the Ambassador. Responses are sent to all the applicant organizations including both rejected and accepted ones. The Embassy reserves rights to cut costs which are not justified or do

not follow the UN-EU Guidelines for Financing of Local Costs in Development Cooperation with Vietnam ([see the link](#)). The Embassy may also reject applications for budgetary reasons.

### **Selection criteria**

Both the merits of the applicant organization and the project will be taken into account during the selection process. The previous experiences in FLC projects is an advantage. The applicant organizations are encouraged to find synergies to other Finnish initiatives.

Minimum criteria (only proposals fulfilling will be further assessed):

- The applicant organization is legally registered in Vietnam.
- The project is at minimum human rights sensitive as defined in the Human Rights Based Approach to Development (2015) guideline of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Projects which are assessed as Human Rights blind cannot be funded.

The applicant organization will be judged on its demonstrations that:

- it has expertise and past experience in the area of activity or with the targeted group;
- it shows strong commitment by portion of its financial contribution in the project;
- it has adequate financial management capacity to meet the Fund's requirements;
- it has the capacity to sustain the activity or follow up its results;
- it has a good working relationship with people in the project area.

The project proposal will be evaluated and given more assets if:

- the project has innovative activities or ideas and it takes into account other actors' activities in the project area;
- the project follows the results-based-management approach, i.e. it has a logical results chain and indicators that measure the achievement of project objectives;
- the project's results and objectives (short-term and long-term) are clearly defined, realistic, measurable, and sustainable;
- the selection, participation, and ownership of the project's beneficiaries and the role of project partners are justified and clearly indicated;
- detailed activities with required resources (human and financial), work plan and timeframe are presented;
- the project is cost-effective and an effort has been made to minimize costs.