



CENTRAL EURASIA PROJECT CALL FOR GRANT PROPOSALS

ABOUT US

The Open Society Foundations work to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. Open societies are characterized by the rule of law; respect for human rights, minorities, and diversity of opinions; democratically elected governments; market economies in which business and government are separate; and a civil society that helps keep government power in check. To achieve its mission, OSF seeks to shape public policies that assure greater fairness in political, legal, and economic systems and safeguard fundamental rights. On a local level, Open Society Foundations implement a range of initiatives to advance justice, education, public health, and independent media. At the same time, Open Society Foundations build alliances across borders and continents on issues such as corruption and freedom of information. Open Society Foundations place high priority on protecting and improving the lives of marginalized people and communities.

The Central Eurasia Project, one of the regional initiatives of the Open Society Foundations, aims to promote social progress and human rights in the South Caucasus, Central Asia and Mongolia by developing programs and international campaigns that use policy research and advocacy to shape debates on significant economic, political, social, and security challenges facing the region. Through its grantmaking and operational activities, the Central Eurasia Project supports local NGOs that implement programs and pursue dialogue with governments on issues such as democratic governance, respect for human rights and rule of law, and transparency and accountability. As a regional initiative, the Central Eurasia Project supports programming that engages partners in multiple countries across the region. In addition to the regional work, the Central Eurasia Project manages Open Society Foundation's activities related to the countries in the region without national foundations, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

GRANTMAKING

The Central Eurasia Project uses grantmaking to international and regional NGOs, academic institutions, think tanks and other structures to support their work, help build local capacity, bring international expertise to bear on the region and promote cooperation between local activists and international civic movements. The ultimate goal of such activity is to strengthen civic leaders in the region and to construct support networks for them within international structures and movements. The Central Eurasia Project's grantmaking generally dovetails with its research and advocacy agenda.

The Central Eurasia Project does not limit the amount that can be requested in a grant application and both single and multi-year proposals are accepted. Projects are encouraged to demonstrate funding from multiple sources. With the exception of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the Central Eurasia Project only funds proposals with activity in two or more countries in the region. While applications are considered from organizations worldwide, priority is given to groups based in the region.

In 2012, the Central Eurasia Project funds are available in the following programmatic areas:

Human Rights. The Central Eurasia Project is committed to societal and political integration of marginalized groups in the region. The project supports operations by human rights organizations that protect and promote fundamental political and civil rights, including but not limited to: individual physical security and safety, protection from discrimination, rule of law, access to information, and freedom of assembly, speech and political participation. The Central Eurasia Project also funds activities aimed at building capacity within local human rights organizations to professionalize their work in terms of needs analysis, reporting of human rights abuses and media contacts and campaigning. The Central Eurasia Project also makes funds available for work on human rights issues beyond civil and political rights defense such as social and economic rights.

Labor Migration. Labor migration remains one of the most pressing social and economic issues in the former Soviet Union. The Central Eurasia Project works to address widespread mistreatment of labor migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus on a strategic level to achieve an improved management of rights violations in receiving countries and to mitigate negative impacts of labor migration on the societies in sending countries. In countries that primarily host labor migrants, the Central Eurasia Project funds organizations, think tanks, academic institutions and other structures that work on legal, policy, advocacy, watchdog and research issues. In receiving countries, the Central Eurasia Project funds projects that conduct targeted research and advocacy on a policy level and provide social, legal, and informational assistance to migrant workers in need. The Central Eurasia Project also funds targeted advocacy projects that promote regional cooperation and issue management in sending countries.

Transparency of Western Military and Security Cooperation. Central Asia has emerged as a priority on the map of security interests of Western governments. Security cooperation has included working together with local security services in the War against Terror, as well as on efforts to reform law enforcement agencies and strengthen civil oversight over the security sector in the region. More recently, greater strategic priority has been placed on Central Asia as a transit region for military supply destined for U.S. and ISAF troops in Afghanistan. These trends have led to a substantial increase of Western military and security cooperation with Central Asian governments. Such cooperation faces significant challenges and runs a high risk of contributing to destabilizing political trends in the region. The Central Eurasia Project provides funding for projects that increase the transparency of Western military and security cooperation by monitoring pertinent developments and trends, particularly those that impact wider foreign policy agendas of Western countries towards Central Asia. We are interested in proposals for projects that provide analysis and reporting on Western military and security cooperation's impacts on human rights performance, democratic governance, opportunities and incentives for corruption, lack of budget transparency and distortions in terms of democratic oversight over military and security actors in the region. Think tanks, academic institutions, independent news providers and watchdog organizations are eligible for funding.

Transparency and Consumer Protection. Poor electricity and hydropower governance has seriously affected the lives of citizens in Central Asia. In recent years, the prevalence of electricity cuts and blackouts in upstream countries has highlighted the shortcomings of relevant institutions and the authorities that manage energy delivery in the region. The core of these shortcomings centers on the lack of transparency accountability in public utilities. Processes involving generation of electricity and its distribution as well as investments in and revenues created by the sector should be open to public review. The Central Eurasia Project funds research that sheds light on the formal and informal set-up of the energy sector primarily in Kyrgyzstan

and Tajikistan, but also in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Pakistan. It also funds networking activities such as conferences, study visits and roundtables between researchers, practitioners, politicians and other stakeholders from the US, the EU and Central Asia. On an operational level, the project provides resources to support organizations that work to enhance electricity and hydropower governance in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Mongolia within the framework of the Electricity Governance Initiative, a network of national groups located in South-East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Africa and South America that seeks to promote better governance in the electricity sector.

Turkmenistan. The Turkmenistan Project will consider funding initiatives that support civic, political and economic rights in Turkmenistan; education, including non-formal, secondary and higher education, and youth community engagement; information initiatives, including improving and increasing access to information; transparency, accountability and good governance related to substantial sources of state revenue from the hydrocarbon sector. Funding is available for activities that monitor and document human rights abuses in Turkmenistan, as well as provide redress for the victims of human rights abuses; education programs that introduce progressive, socially minded teaching methodologies and curriculum, promote access to education, as well as capacity building of civil society initiative groups.

Uzbekistan. The Uzbekistan program principally addresses human rights and rule of law issues. Funding is available for projects focusing on the following themes: implementation and enforcement of constitutional norms and international commitments of Uzbekistan in the field of human rights; freedom of expression and press; child and forced labor; farmer and labor rights; minority rights; transparency and accountability of international assistance to Uzbekistan; and rule of law and equal access to justice as a precondition for business, economic, social and human development. Special attention is given to research, documentation, monitoring and reporting to UN mechanisms on human rights.

Ineligible Activities

The Central Eurasia Project does not fund activities outside the above-mentioned programmatic areas or geographic scope and only funds projects that are of a regional nature. **With the exception of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the Central Eurasia Project will not consider proposals for projects implemented in a single country and benefiting solely the population of that country.** Such project proposals should be addressed to the local foundations in the respective countries.

The Open Society Foundations are prohibited from funding any electioneering, including the support for or, opposition to, political candidates or parties, and from the earmarking of grant funds for lobbying activities in any country. Lobbying is defined as an attempt to influence federal, state, local legislative bodies, or the outcome of referenda and ballot initiatives. This proscription includes attempts to influence treaty ratification by legislative bodies. The prohibition against lobbying includes, but may not necessarily be limited to, communications with legislators or legislative staff that express a view on pending legislation or specific legislative proposals, and communications with the general public reflecting a view on specific legislation or a specific legislative proposal where such communication includes a “call to take action” by the public. If you question whether your project includes lobbying, please contact us.

How to Apply

If you believe that your project meets the above-mentioned criteria, the Central Eurasia Project invites you to submit a one-page letter of inquiry in English summarizing your organization's mission and the proposed project's statement of purpose, main activities and requested budget. Letters of inquiry will be accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year. Letters of inquiry may be submitted in Russian provided that they are accompanied by an English translation.

Upon reception of your letter of inquiry, the Central Eurasia Project will consider your proposed project. Should the proposal meet the Central Eurasia Project's criteria you will be invited you to submit a full grant application within six weeks of receiving your letter of inquiry. Full applications will be accepted in either English or Russian. When submitting your application, anticipate a project start date 4-6 months from date of submission, if approved.

Please send your letter of inquiry via email to cepgrants@sorosny.org. **When submitting your letter of inquiry, please put your organization name in the email subject line.**