

Advancing Women's Empowerment Fund

Frequently Asked Questions

Featured Questions

[Can AWEF funding be used as investment capital or other direct support to SGBs?](#)

Unfortunately, no. AWEF funding can only be used for programmatic support. Previous winning proposals have included budget items for administration and program management, case studies, dissemination and marketing, research and design, technology development, travel, workshops, and more. Indirect costs or overhead may also be included.

[Do Indian organizations need to be registered under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act \(FCRA\) to be a recipient of these funds?](#)

Yes. Indian organizations interested in AWEF must indicate that they have a FCRA registration certificate on their application. Organizations without an FCRA certificate are not qualified to apply for AWEF. If your organization is in the process of applying for an FCRA certificate, please indicate what stage of the process you are currently at and when you anticipate receipt of the certificate.

[ANDE lists a few organization types that are eligible to apply, but I'm not familiar with them. What do they mean?](#)

ANDE references organization types in the RFP from our membership categories. While you don't need to be a member to qualify, we use these categories across our work:

- **Capacity Development Providers:** Organizations that provide business development and advisory services to SGBs.
- **Investors:** Funds or financial entities that focus on providing capital to SGBs in developing countries. Investments include debt, equity, and quasi-equity and are generally under US\$2M. In addition, some "investor" members also provide capacity development services.
- **Research and Advisory Service Providers:** Organizations that provide consulting, research and advisory services as the main mission of the organization, as well as associations that provide a service to the sector as a whole.

[Do smallholder farmers or companies seeking less than USD \\$20K in financing qualify as small and growing businesses \(SGBs\)?](#)

A key piece of the SGB definition is that SGBs are small but poised for growth. They are not livelihood-sustaining small businesses which start small and stay that way. If you'd describe the businesses impacted by your proposal in this way, then they qualify.

I. Eligibility

Does my organization have to be an ANDE member to apply?

No, the Advancing Women's Empowerment Fund is open to ANDE member organizations and non-member organizations.

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Does my organization have to fit the definition of a women-led business as provided?

No, organizations applying for the fund do not have to qualify as women-led businesses, per the RFP's definition, however, proposals must address the financing gap faced by women-led businesses in South and Southeast Asia. For the purposes of the fund, ANDE has defined women-led businesses. The definition can be found in the request for proposals, linked [here](#).

Is there a geographic focus for this fund?

The 2019 Advancing Women's Empowerment Fund is focused on South and Southeast Asia. Proposals targeting any of the following countries in South and Southeast Asia are eligible to apply: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. Proposals may include other countries as well but need to focus on at least one target country to qualify.

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Our consultancy firm or organization does not provide direct support to entrepreneurs, but we support other organizations that do support entrepreneurs directly. Do we qualify?

Yes, organizations that support other organizations directly supporting small and growing businesses (SGBs) qualify.

Can the applicant be based outside the region?

Yes, we are not looking at the headquarter country of applicants, but we are evaluating the countries targeted by the intervention.

II. Guidelines to Consider

Can my organization submit more than one proposal?

Yes, an organization may submit or be involved in up to two proposals.

Are proposals addressing the broader issue of gender equality in South and Southeast Asia within the scope of this fund?

ANDE understands the scale of gender equality as a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal and as a broad area of focus for the SGB sector, however, AWEF will only focus on increasing investment into women-led SGBs and closing the investment gap between women-led and male-led SGBs.

Are girls accounted for in the definition of women-led SGBs or women-led businesses?

Women-led SGBs or women-led businesses are defined by ANDE for the Advancing Women's Empowerment Fund as companies **that have a woman in a leadership position with strategic decision-making authority and meet at least one of the following criteria** with a focus on companies founded and led by all-women teams from the local context:

- founded by a team of at least 50% women
- have a woman currently serving in a top leadership role (CEO, Executive Director, COO, etc.)
- 51% or more women ownership

Models supporting youth founding teams that align with this definition do qualify.

What kind of budget line items are allowed?

While there are no overt restrictions on budget line items, we expect that all proposed budgets will be well thought-out, with reasonable amounts under each line-item to carry out the project in a reasonable and efficient manner. Previous winning proposals have included budget items for administration and program management, case studies, dissemination and marketing, research and design, technology development, travel, workshops, and more.

Indirect costs or overhead may also be included in the overall budget.

Cost-sharing is permitted. Proposals can request funding for a subset of a project, not a standalone project. If funding request is for an entire budget, please indicate that. If not, include total projected cost of project and indicate which portion this grant would support. A

list of project funders, including prospective and committed, is required.

In the list of project funding, can we budget for items like contracting TA providers and accounting support?

Yes, however, if the funding required exceeds \$150,000 total note that any additional funding required to make this project successful should be indicated in your proposal.

What does it mean when you ask for information about other project funders for our proposal?

Please see section 5 of the proposal structure. If funding request is for entire budget, please indicate. If not, include total projected cost of project and indicate which portion this grant would support. For example, you could list the total budget as \$5 million, but total requested from this fund as \$150,000. Proposals facing this circumstance will be evaluated based on their ability to implement the project with or without additional funding.

Do we need to have identified all potential partner organizations in the RFP or can some be identified later (i.e. indicate number and type, but specific organizations or firms still being finalized)?

Ideally yes, all partners are identified as the implementation timeline is only a year and it can take time to confirm partnerships. That said, if you can't confirm partners, a description of who is being considered or at least the profile of who you are targeting suffices.

Can some of the funding be used for business or partner development?

The proposal for this fund will be evaluated for efficiency in the sense of how these funds are being used to finance an intervention as well as disseminate learnings from that pilot. Any line item needs to support that objectives of the fund.

What is the maximum percentage of services that can be contracted?

Contracting is allowable with no percentage maximum. However, note that the funding through AWEF cannot be used for loan guarantees, debt, equity etc. It is intended as grant capital alone.

Will you factor in the potential for financial sustainability and scalability?

This is outlined on the final page of the RFP. We will evaluate if the proposal presents a clear articulation of the intended impact in the 12-month time period and scalability and sustainability moving forward.

III. Definitions

What does "from the local context" mean here?

ANDE aims to focus, but not require, on women in leadership roles that are not expats but locals/native to the region.

Do smallholder farmers or companies seeking less than USD \$20K in financing qualify as small and growing businesses (SGBs)?

A key piece of the SGB definition is that SGBs are small but poised for growth. They are not livelihood-sustaining small businesses which start small and stay that way. If you'd describe the businesses impacted by your proposal in this way, then they qualify.

How does ANDE define formal enterprises in the context of Advancing Women's Empowerment Fund?

Formal enterprises are registered and regulated while informal enterprises are not

Are we considering women-led cooperatives SGBs?

Yes.

IV. Use of Funds

Can AWEF funding be used as investment capital or for other direct support to SGBs?

Unfortunately, no. AWEF funding can only be used for programmatic support. Previous winning proposals have included budget items for administration and program management, case studies, dissemination and marketing, research and design, technology development, travel, workshops, and more. Indirect costs or overhead may also be included.

What types of SGB support models qualify for this funding?

AWEF is open to any type of model that catalyzes investment into women-led SGBs. An accelerator is an example of a model AWEF will fund, however, there are many others that qualify.

Do proposals for research initiatives qualify?

A purely research driven proposal would not qualify because we are looking to fund the piloting of interventions that tackle the investment gap for women-led SGB's in South and Southeast Asia.

Are subawards or grants to founders eligible budget items?

This falls into funding SGBs directly, so no. Not an eligible budget item.

Can AWEF funding be used to fund working capital (sewing machines, work sheds, etc.)?

Technically, yes, however, budget line items must show a sufficient use of funds to tackle financing for women led business in South and Southeast Asia.

The RFP states that proposals should focus on testing models that catalyze investment into women-led SGBs. What type of investment / finance models are meant here?

We will not be offering examples because we are looking for creative new ideas.

V. Metrics, Evaluation, and Learning

Do we need to meet all bullets noted under the MEL section or are those illustrative and/or can we choose one or two? Do we need to test different approaches ourselves to compare and contrast between them or is that exercise done within the broader pool of grantees and their approaches?

You do need to meet all the bullets. You do not need to test different approaches yourselves.

What percentage of target beneficiaries must be women-led organizations?

Your proposal needs to defend how your organization is tackling the investment gap for women-led SGBs in South and Southeast Asia. There isn't a requirement in terms of number of women-led SGBs impacted. Proposed interventions need to tackle the financing challenges for women-led businesses in the target region.

What types of outcomes is the fund looking for? Successful completion of the program or number of women-led SGBs impacted vis a vis their access to financing in light of the intervention?

The objective of the fund is to provide runway to interventions that have the capacity to address the financing gap for women-led businesses in South and Southeast Asia. A combination of the two is best suited for sustainability and tackling this challenge of a financing gap for women-led SGBs in the region.

VI. Other

Is AWEF focused on targeting international impact capital or local financing, such as through banks?

Ultimately, we are looking to tackle the financing gap for women-led SGBs in the region and we see increased access to both or either types of capital addressing this issue.

Where do I submit my proposal?

There is a link to a form through which you must submit your proposal on the final page of the request for proposals, found [here](#).

What kind of support will my organization get from ANDE?

Winners will receive programmatic as well as monitoring, evaluation, and learning assistance from ANDE, structured around quarterly check in calls and in advance of reporting deadlines.

When will the program start?

Proposals are due early January. Winners notified April 2020. Yearlong implementing timeline to start soon-after winners are notified.

How important is innovativeness?

Incredibly important as this fund recognizes that existing interventions aren't working or scaling to tackle the investment gap, thus we are looking for creative new ideas.

Is there a formal rubric?

No. There is not a rubric. The evaluation criteria listed in the RFP exemplifies how each proposal will be evaluated.

Are you able to provide examples of winning proposals from ANDE challenge funds in years passed?

Navigate to the [Funding](#) section of our website to learn more about the challenge funds we've run in the past and the types of interventions that we've awarded.