Advancing Women's Empowerment Fund

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Q&A Webinar
Navigating Zoom

Welcome
Feel free to ask the host and panelists questions

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Webinar Overview

**Part 1:** Intro to the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) and the Advancing Women’s Empowerment Fund (AWEF)

**Part 2:** Navigating the Request for Proposals

**Part 3:** Frequently Asked Questions

**Part 4:** Open Q&A
Intro to the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) and the Advancing Women’s Empowerment Fund (AWEF)
The Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) is a global network of organizations that propel entrepreneurship in emerging markets.

ANDE members provide critical financial, educational, and business support services to small and growing businesses (SGBs) based on the conviction that SGBs will create jobs, stimulate long-term economic growth, and produce environmental and social benefits.

Our 290+ members work in over 150 countries and have supported more than 91,000 SGBs to date.
Advancing Women’s Empowerment Fund (AWEF)

In 2019, ANDE announced an exciting partnership with USAID and the Visa Foundation to launch the **ANDE Gender Equality Initiative**, which aims to support women entrepreneurs in emerging markets.

The initiative’s first activity, the **Advancing Women’s Empowerment Fund**, will identify the best strategies to get investment capital into the hands of women entrepreneurs in emerging markets.

ANDE seeks **proposals** to pilot, test, or expand scalable solutions that tackle the financing gap for women-led SGBs in South and Southeast Asia to create learnings and insights for uptake by the broader SGB sector.

ANDE intends to support a minimum of eight proposals for this round, from a total funding pool of $1.2 million. Submissions should be for activities of **up to 12 months** with a maximum total request of USD **$150,000**.
Definitions

Small and Growing Businesses (SGBs) are defined by ANDE as commercially viable businesses with five to 250 employees that have significant potential, and ambition, for growth. Typically, SGBs seek growth capital from $20,000 to $2 million. A more detailed definition can be found here.

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
Navigating the Request for Proposals
What We’re Looking For

ANDE seeks proposals to **pilot, test, or expand scalable solutions** that tackle the financing gap for women-led SGBs in South and Southeast Asia to create learnings and insights for uptake by the broader SGB sector.

We encourage submissions employing creative solutions to the financing gap that fit any of the following categories:

- **More gender transformative approaches to delivering acceleration services** including recruitment, selection, cohort and program design or other elements seen as constraints to the success of women entrepreneurs

- **Supplemental services delivered independently or in coordination with traditional accelerator programs** including tailored consulting services, bespoke matchmaking, investment facilitation, mentorship or other approaches to address gender deficits in traditional acceleration

- **Novel approaches to addressing systemic constraints** that result in less investment being received by women entrepreneurs

- **Initiatives that support informal enterprises** converting to formal enterprises
Successful proposals should include the following:

- **A clearly articulated theory of change** (in narrative or graphical form) that outlines how the approach represents a solution to the constraints and barriers to investment capital for women-led businesses.

- **A Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) plan** including illustrative core quantitative and qualitative outcomes and indicators, data collection methods and intended mechanisms for determining the level of contribution of activities to observed changes. We anticipate outcomes/indicators will be both at the grantee-level (e.g. increase in organization’s capacity/resources to support women-led SGBs) as well as at the entrepreneur/women-led businesses level (e.g. increase in investment received, improved business performance etc.)

- **An outline of any activities and channels** that the applicant intends to use to disseminate findings and learnings from the project
Eligibility

**Qualified Applicants:** SGB service providers such as Incubators, Accelerators, Investors, Capacity Development Providers, and Research and Advisory Service Providers are qualified to apply. Donor Agencies, Foundations, and Corporations are not qualified to apply. *If your organization provides grant funding, you are not eligible to apply.*

**Geography:** SGB service providers with programs in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam will be considered.

**Activity Requirements:** Submissions should be for activities of up to 12 months with a maximum total request of USD $150,000. Proposal budgets will be evaluated for efficient use of funds.
Guidelines to Consider

**Number of Submissions:** Organizations may form a consortium and submit a joint proposal. An organization may submit or be involved in up to two proposals.

**Language:** Only proposals submitted in English will be considered.

**Proposal Template:** Please follow the proposal template provided when drafting your proposal. It can be found on the AWEF website and is linked [here](#).

**Submitting your Proposal:** Proposals should follow the template provided and must be submitted via the form linked in the RFP.
**Timeline**

- **Tuesday, November 26, 2019**: RFP Released
- **Thursday, December 5, 2019 | 11:00 AM EST**: Webinar to answer applicant questions
- **Wednesday, December 11, 2019 | 9:30 AM IST/11 AM BKK**: Webinar to answer applicant questions
- **Friday, December 20, 2019**: Deadline to send clarifying questions (as needed)
- **Wednesday, January 8, 2020 | 11:59 PM EST**: Submission deadline
- **By end of April 2020**: Winners notified
Find the following resources on the AWEF webpage (https://www.andeglobal.org/page/awef):

- **Request for Proposals**
  NOTE: the link to submit proposals can be found on the final page of the RFP
- **Proposal Template**
- **Frequently Asked Questions**
- **Webinar Recording and Slides**
Frequently Asked Questions

Does my organization have to be an ANDE member to apply?
No, the Fund is open to ANDE member organizations and non-member organizations.

Can my organization submit more than one proposal?
Yes, an organization may submit or be involved in up to two proposals. If you are applying in collaboration with other organizations, please list the organization names in alphabetical order as requested in the proposal template.

Is there a geographic focus for this fund?
The 2019 Fund is focused on South and Southeast Asia. Proposals targeting any of the following countries are eligible to apply: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. Proposals may also include other countries but need to focus on at least one target country to qualify.

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, many others also qualify.

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.
ANDE lists a few organization types, 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 their main mission, as well as associations that provide a service to the sector as a whole.

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 supports other organizations directly supporting small and growing businesses (SGBs) qualify.

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

For the purposes of AWEF, ANDE defines women-led SGBs or women-led businesses 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.

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.

Are proposals addressing the broader issue of gender equality within the scope of this fund?

ANDE understands the scale of gender equality as a UN 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.
Frequently Asked Questions

What kind of budget line items are allowed?
While there are no overt restrictions on budget line items, we expect all proposed budgets to 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.

• Cost-sharing is permitted. Proposals can request funding for a subset of a project, not a standalone project. If the funding request is for an entire budget, please indicate; if not, include total projected project cost and indicate which portion this grant would support. A list of project funders, including prospective and committed, is required.

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 circumstances will be evaluated based on their ability to implement the project with or without additional funding.
Frequently Asked Questions

**Are proposals for launching a new business eligible for this fund?**
Year founded is not considered in the evaluation criteria, however, an organization's feasibility to complete the project in the timeframe will be considered.

**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.

**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.
Frequently Asked Questions

Do we need to meet all bullets noted under the MEL section or are those illustrative and/or can we choose one or two? In particular, 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.

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 aren’t able to confirm partners, a description of who is being considered or at least the profile of who you are targeting suffices.

Can AWEF funding be used as investment capital?

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 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.
Please click here to read additional FAQs

Please submit via the question box.