Responsive Fund 2025-26

United Kingdom
Humanitarian
Innovation Hub

Guidance for funding applicants

The UKHIH's Responsive Fund is designed to address evolving humanitarian crises with agility and impact. It aligns with UKHIH's broader mission to support humanitarian innovation and collaboration across sectors. For more information about UKHIH's work, please visit our https://www.ukhih.org.

This guide provides prospective applicants with essential information on eligibility, application requirements, and assessment criteria.

Please note: UKHIH operates a separate funding mechanism, the **Responsive Fund – Syria**, which is designed specifically to support innovative approaches addressing the urgent and evolving humanitarian situation in Syria. This other fund prioritises research and innovation around coordination, data collection and analysis, local capacity building, and sectoral needs within the Syrian context. Full details are available via our website or by contacting information@ukhih.org. This general Responsive Fund is **not** intended to fund work in or for the benefit of Syria. For our Syria Responsive Fund, please see here.

Purpose and Scope

The Responsive Fund aims to:

- Respond swiftly to evolving crises and humanitarian needs
- Support innovative, problem-led approaches to shared humanitarian challenges
- Facilitate sector-wide learning and capacity building
- Convene actors around emerging challenges

Potential project outputs include pilot innovations, events, tools or resources, small-scale research, ideation processes, or other convening activities.

UKHIH will consider proposals that respond to:

- Humanitarian responses prioritised by the sector: OPT/Gaza, Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Haiti, Myanmar, and Ukraine.

Other contexts may be considered where there is compelling evidence of emerging or escalating humanitarian needs but where that context is not yet classified by the UN or other classification frameworks.

Who Can Apply?

We welcome applications from networked humanitarian actors, including:

- National or global levels of the humanitarian cluster system (applications may be submitted by a leading organisation representing a cluster).
- Humanitarian agencies that are members of clusters, working groups, and other humanitarian coordination mechanisms.
- Membership or network organisations supporting joint learning and action.
- Entities involved in humanitarian coordination at national or local levels.
- Partnerships formed in response to a clearly defined and shared humanitarian problem.
- Partners involved in UKHIH's Systems Innovation Partnerships or Humanitarian Rapid Research Initiative.

The fund prioritises networked humanitarian actors because they are often well-positioned to identify shared challenges, coordinate responses across stakeholders, and generate collective learning. These actors typically have strong situational awareness, established relationships, and strategic oversight, which enhance their ability to respond effectively and support broader impact.

Please note that each organisation may submit only one application. Where appropriate, we encourage collaboration with other actors. Certain agencies may be prohibited from applying due to donor regulations. Please see

Application Process

The deadline for applications is Friday 27 June 2025, 17:00 (BST).

Applicants are encouraged to apply by the above deadline. If all funding is not allocated during this initial phase, a second phase may be released. However, applicants are encouraged to apply to this first phase. Early engagement is encouraged but not required. Please note that due to a high level of interest in this opportunity, UKHIH is unable to host discussions with applicants ahead of submissions.

Application Requirements

Applications must demonstrate:

- **Problem Definition:** A clearly defined, shared humanitarian problem
- **Scope of Work:** Activities achievable within 1–4 months
- **Outputs and Outcomes:** Anticipated results and impact
- **Stakeholder Interest:** Interest from relevant actors able to act on findings
- **Communications and Engagement:** A plan for sharing outputs and engaging stakeholders
- **Partnerships:** Proposed or potential delivery partners
- **Budget:** A detailed and realistic budget

We are seeking short-term initiatives that can be realistically concluded within 2–6 months. Only proposals that can complete all activities by the end of 2025 will be considered.

Successful applicants should also have a clear plan for communicating project outcomes. UKHIH will work closely with funded organisations to coordinate communications activities.

Project Readiness and Grant Conditions

To ensure timely delivery, successful applicants will be expected to begin activities within one month of receiving a funding decision. Applicants should review UKHIH's standard grant agreement to confirm that its terms are acceptable. This includes readiness to meet Elrha's due diligence requirements.
https://www.elrha.org/support/r2hc/on-boarding/

Applicants must also ensure they have the capacity to begin promptly. Ideally, this includes pre-identified staff, established partnerships, and access to key resources.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed on:

- **Context:** Humanitarian responses prioritised by the sector
- **Collaborative Approach:** Involvement of networked actor or other forms of multi-actor collaborations where feasible
- **Uniqueness of Initiative:** Limited duplication with existing donor-funded initiatives
- **Impact Potential:** Likelihood of meaningful contribution and learning
- **Stakeholder Involvement:** Involvement of affected populations or humanitarian actors
- **Local Leadership:** Preference for locally led or civil society-led initiatives in LMICs
- **Broader Sector Relevance:** Consideration of systemic challenges such as climate change, power imbalances, and ethical practice

Funding Details

A total of £100,000 is available for the 2025/26 financial year. There is no fixed number of projects or specific funding level per project. Applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. As a general indication, UKHIH expects to fund 2 or 3 projects. Proposed projects should not exceed £60,000.

All grant activities must conclude by 31 December 2025.

Co-funding: Proposals integrated with other donor-funded initiatives are welcome but not essential.

Evaluation and Selection

Applications will be subject to:

- **Initial Screening:** Completeness and eligibility
- **Technical Review:** Review by the UKHIH Advisory Committee
- **Specialist Input:** Additional input where necessary on complex topics
- **Objective Evaluation:** Assessment against criteria

Cost Assessment

- The proposed costs will be assessed against a range of value-for-money factors, including the extent of capacity devoted to the work, day rates, and overhead costs.
- Applicants should refer to UKHIH's Eligible Funding Guidelines for details on what costs can be included in the budget. Please note that overheads should not exceed 10% of the total project costs

Due Diligence

All funding is subject to successful completion of Elrha's due diligence checks to ensure compliance and feasibility.

Next steps

For more information or to discuss your proposal, please contact the UKHIH team at Information@ukhih.org. All applications should be sent to the same email address by Friday 27 June 2025, 17:00 (BST). Please use the subject line *Application: Responsive Fund – General.*

We look forward to receiving your innovative proposals!