

ROBERT CARR FUND
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS 2024
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q. Is this a recurring RFP? What is the funding cycle?

Yes, generally the Robert Carr Fund (RCF) distributes its funding every 3 years. The Fund is currently in the 2022-2024 cycle and the 2024 RFP concerns the 2025-2027 cycle.

Q. How many applications are you going to fund through this RFP?

RCF currently funds 25 grantees (which equals 72 networks). RCF would aim to fund a similar number of grantees during 2025-2027, but this will depend on the level of funding available, the number of applications received, and amounts requested. Actual funding amounts are subject to pending donor commitments, and on the number of successful applications and therefore any amount awarded may be less than which the applicant applied for. Applicants should take this adjustment of awarded amount into consideration when applying and have a clear plan on how to address any shortfall in resources.

Q. Should grantees who also receive Global Fund support explain in their application how their RCF application will not duplicate Global Fund funding?

Yes, it will be helpful to explain complementarity with other funding received, not only in terms of avoiding duplication, but also how RCF support will amplify the results funded by others, e.g. by funding core expenses, addressing gaps, providing technical support, contributing to enabling environment, or in other ways.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS 2024

CHAPTER 2: ELIGIBILITY AND CHAPTER 10: DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Q. Are there any changes to the eligibility criteria compared to previous rounds?
2024: Technically the eligibility criteria remain the same as in previous rounds but have been further refined.

Q. Our network is not registered and we would apply through a fiscal host. Does the fiscal host need to have been a recipient of RCF Funds in the past and/or work in the same field as the network that is applying and/or in the HIV sector? / Q. You mentioned that non registered networks can be considered but must be hosted by a registered entity. Does the fiscal host need to be led by ISP?

The fiscal host does not have to be a (former) recipient of RCF funds. However, the fiscal host will be asked under question 2.8. of the application form to describe its previous experience as a fiscal host. The fiscal host does not have to work in the same field as the applicant. Neither does the fiscal host need to work in the HIV Sector, nor be ISP led.

Q. is it a must for the network to be based at the same country/ region where the fiscal host is located?
No, it is up to the grantee to choose a fiscal host that meets their needs and requirements. The fiscal host will have to submit a number of documents for the due diligence process. However, you should take into consideration that other regulations (employment, taxes, etc.) may apply in other parts of the world. You should then also make sure that the fiscal host chosen understands your country's regulations, regional needs and fits your organizational size.

Q. Shall our consortium apply with a fiscal host for the 3 years, or with a fiscal host for year 1 only and transition then to the lead?

The Robert Carr Fund has no preference for how an organization applies in partnership with a fiscal host, whether this be for the full duration of the granting period or for a pre-determined transitional timeline. When applying under this Request for Proposals in partnership with a fiscal host, the relationship between implementing partner and fiscal host should be clearly outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding, including where relevant any transitional timeline towards moving away from the partnership of fiscal host.

Potential applicants should take into consideration their organizational capacity and needs when considering applying with or without a fiscal host. If the organization applies in partnership with a fiscal host, the project agreement will be between Aidsfonds and the fiscal host for the duration of the grant (01/01/2025 – 31/12/2027). During the grant period, it is feasible to update the partnership between the implementing organization and the fiscal host and for the project agreement to be amended. However, this would be at the discretion of Aidsfonds and would depend on the implementing organization adequately demonstrating the capacity to manage the grant independently of the fiscal host.

Q. When a non-registered consortium applies to this RFP in partnership with a (registered) fiscal host organization who is a member and coordination lead of that network, does that fiscal host need to be a network itself or can they be a non-governmental organization?

The fiscal host does not have to be a regional/global network as defined by the RCF. However, a consortium must be led by a regional/global network as defined by the RCF. Thus, a fiscal host that is at the same time the lead of a consortium must be a regional/global network as defined by the RCF.

INADEQUATELY SERVED POPULATIONS (ISPs)

Q. Do ISPs include people living with disabilities?

While the Fund uses a standard definition for ISPs, it recognizes that there is tremendous diversity of identity and experience even within these groups. Other factors, including gender, race and ethnicity, social and/or economic status and ability/disability status including mental health, can significantly influence rights and access to care even within the same ISP.

In the application form you will have the possibility to select - next to the ISPs listed in the definition - 'Other' and you will be asked to provide an explanation for the population which is the focus of your application as to why they can be considered an ISP, in the sense that they face increased vulnerability to HIV and barriers to accessing services.

Q. Do ISPs include children and adolescents living with HIV from 01-19?

At RCF and in this RFP Youth is defined from 18-30.

However, in the application form, you will have the possibility to select - next to the ISPs listed in the definition - 'Other' and you will be asked to provide an explanation for the population which is the focus of your application as to why they can be considered an ISP, in the sense that they face increased vulnerability to HIV and barriers to accessing services.

Q. Do TB communities fall under ISPs?

Further to its mission statement (please see RCF Strategic Plan 2025-2030) 'The Robert Carr Fund invests in global and regional civil society networks to sustain and expand the role of inadequately served populations in the **HIV response** [...]' however as described in the Strategic Plan 't ISPs face multifaceted health challenges beyond HIV, including equitable access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. The global and regional networks supported by RCF advocate for robust health systems capable of addressing the needs of ISPs ... Strengthening health systems for everyone has huge benefits for societal wellbeing, ensuring comprehensive and equitable care and achieving Universal Health Coverage.'

In the application form you will have the possibility to select - next to the ISPs listed in the definition - 'Other' and you will be asked to provide an explanation for the population which is the focus of your application as to why they can be considered an ISP, in the sense that they face increased vulnerability to HIV and barriers to accessing services.

Q. What do you mean by: Depending on the dynamic of the HIV epidemic and the legal status of these populations, ISPs may also include women and girls?

Practically this means that you will have to specify in the application why they can be considered ISP depending on the dynamic of the epidemic. You will be asked to provide an explanation for the population which is the focus of your application as to why they can be considered an ISP, in the sense that they face increased vulnerability to HIV and barriers to accessing services.

Q. I would like for you to confirm that this call for proposals is mainly focused on funding civil society initiatives directly addressing HIV and human rights needs of ISPs as defined in your Strategic plan or on the other hand, this RFP is designed mainly to fund civil society networks per se, especially in human rights?

Please note that the RCF Secretariat is unfortunately not in a position to comment or rule on the possible eligibility of individual organizations. Decisions on the eligibility of applicants in line with the eligibility criteria will be made during the Administrative Screening phase of the review process for which you will have submitted all of your supporting documents.

However, we would like to reiterate that further to RCF's mission and as outlined in this RFP *'The Robert Carr Fund invests in global and regional civil society networks to sustain and expand the role of **inadequately served populations in the HIV response** [...]'*. We would encourage you to review Chapters 2 and 10 of the RFP (2. Eligibility and 19. Definition and further explanation of key terms). Prospective applicants should further take into consideration how ISPs are involved in decision-making in their network and/or consortium, whether it be as members of the Board, staff, or as beneficiaries (Reference Application Form: 3F).

ISP-LED NETWORKS

Q. Is it possible to award non-ISP-led applicants new from the last call? If so why?

No, networks which are not led by ISPs have always been eligible. However, through RCF's new mission statement ISP-led networks have now been prioritized.

RCF mission statement: *'The Robert Carr Fund invests in global and regional civil society networks to sustain and expand the role of inadequately served populations in the HIV response, with a commitment to prioritize ISP-led networks for funding to uphold rights, remove barriers to accessing services, and to contribute to sustainable financial investment in communities and programming'* (please see Strategic Plan 2025-2030).

Notwithstanding its commitment to prioritizing ISP-led networks in this Request for Proposals, networks which are not led by ISPs are also eligible. The Robert Carr Fund recognizes that there are regions where the ability of other ISPs to meet, organize and register organizations may be constrained by legal, political or other barriers. RCF also recognizes that in some contexts some ISP groups experience greater challenges to ISP leadership e.g. prisoners, migrants and children. However, where ISP leadership exists, these networks will be prioritized. Furthermore, non-ISP led networks are eligible but must demonstrate meaningful engagement of ISPs in the work of the organization.

Q. You indicate in the RFP ‘non-ISP led networks are also eligible but must demonstrate meaningful engagement of ISPs in the work of the organization’ – what do you mean with meaningful engagement of ISPs?

RCF recognizes that in some contexts certain ISP groups experience greater challenges to ISP leadership e.g. people in prisons and other closed settings, migrants and children. Nevertheless, applicants should demonstrate meaningful ways of engaging populations that face these challenges in their governance (e.g. setting up a Youth Board, include former people in prisons or other closed settings and migrants in the Board), programming and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.

NETWORK AND CONSORTIA

Q. Are there any changes to the definitions of networks and consortia in this RFP compared to previous RFPs?

No, the definitions for networks and consortia remain the same. However, they have been further nuanced and definitions for civil society networks and ISP-led networks have been introduced for the first time (please see Chapter 10: Definitions and further explanation of key terms).

Q. Where can we find the definitions?

For definitions, please see Chapter 10: Definitions and further explanation of key terms.

Q. Can you give a definition of ‘emerging networks’? Can it be not officially registered but its establishment is proven by protocols (minutes) of the meetings?

An emerging regional and/or global network is a network which has been in existence and operation for less than two years. It may not be (currently) registered but its establishment can be proven through minutes, a strategy, website presence or an announcement by founding members.

Q. What is the difference between a consortium and a consortium of networks and which one of the two is eligible for funding?

A Consortium can be a Consortium of networks or a Consortium with other partners - where other types of agencies or organizations with specific expertise may join (e.g. a human rights/legal organization). Both types of Consortia are eligible however the number of regional/global networks, as defined by the RCF, in a Consortium must be equal to or over 50% of Consortia membership (e.g. in a Consortium with 2 members at least one member must meet the regional/global network definition as defined by RCF).

Q. In order to meet the criteria of networks and consortia: does it mean that a national organization domiciled in country A must reach out and create relationships with organizations in country B and C and develop a joint proposal? / Can country CSOs apply? / Can a country network take the lead and work with 3 more country networks/informal groups to form a Consortium? / Can a single organisation with different projects apply?

RCF funds regional and global networks and Consortia. Cross border/multi-country collaborations between national networks or organizations are not eligible. National networks (working and having members in one country) are also not eligible for funding. Aggregates of projects, individuals or professional associations are also not eligible for funding.

In order for a grantee to claim geographical presence or coverage in a region, it must: (1) conduct activities directed at a regional body (e.g. African Union or European Union etc. or a regional process (e.g. Global Fund multi-country dialogue or a regional consultation or a campaign targeting at least 3 countries in that region etc.); AND/OR (2) conduct a sequence of activities over the course of one year in at least 3 countries in the region; AND/OR (3) have active national network members operational in at least 3 countries in the region.

The number of regional/global networks, as defined by the RCF, in a Consortium must be equal to or over 50% of Consortia membership (e.g. in a Consortium with 2 members at least one member must meet the regional/global network definition as defined by RCF).

Q. Does being a global and regional network apply just to the lead organization or to all members of the consortium?

The Robert Carr Fund considers a consortium of networks to be a network-led group of networks, where other types of agencies or organizations with specific expertise may join (e.g. a human rights/legal organization). Thus, the Consortium must be led by a regional/global network as defined by the RCF. Further, the number of regional/global networks, as defined by the RCF, in a Consortium must be equal to or over 50% of Consortia membership (e.g. in a Consortium with 2 members at least one member must meet the regional/global network definition as defined by RCF).

In the application form, you will be asked to describe why the Consortium is composed of these members and what value each individual member of the consortium adds to the shared goal/objective of the proposal.

Q. Would a global coalition of ISPs be eligible?

The RCF Secretariat is unfortunately not in a position to comment or rule on the possible eligibility of individual organisations. Decisions on the eligibility of applicants in line with the eligibility criteria will be made during the Administrative Screening phase of the review process.

Q. Why are national networks not eligible? / Can a national network co-write a proposal with a regional organization (not necessarily a network) and pass the eligibility criteria? / Can a national organization co-write the proposal with a regional/global network?

The Fund was founded in 2012, in response to a severe downturn in the resources available to help global and regional civil society and community networks meet the needs of inadequately served populations (ISPs). Further, the Fund's mission statement is that "The Robert Carr Fund *invests in global and regional civil society networks to sustain and expand the role of inadequately served populations in the HIV response* [...]".

In line with the RCF mission statement, this is an RFP for global and regional networks and/or consortia. While national networks are not eligible to apply as a single network, a national network with specific expertise could potentially seek to join a Consortium. A Consortium can be a Consortium with other partners - where other types of agencies or organizations with specific expertise may join (e.g. a human rights/legal organization). However, the number of regional/global networks, as defined by the RCF, in

a Consortium must be equal to or over 50% of Consortia membership (e.g. in a Consortium with 2 members at least one member must meet the regional/global network definition as defined by RCF).

Q. Please can you give me examples of networks?

For networks that are currently funded by RCF please visit [Networks | Robert Carr Fund](#).

Q. What constitutes verification of a Network. Is there a document needed

As outlined in the RFP: *'The Robert Carr Fund considers a network to be a membership of organizations and/or individuals that pool skills, experience, and resources, working towards common goals. A network creates platforms for social action and is sustained through jointly developed governance structures, resources and regular communication.'*

During the administrative screening each application will be checked for application eligibility. The certificate of registration, the organizational By-laws / Constitution and the Strategic Plan that are to be submitted by the applicant are of particular importance during this phase. The applicant also has the possibility to describe its network structure and governance under 3. 'Applicant information' of the application form.

Q. Can a Consortium be founded for this Request for Proposals or does it have to be in existence before?

Yes, a Consortium can be established for this Request for Proposals and doesn't have to be in existence prior to applying.

Q. We are a network in 3 countries and do work also with a global network. Do we have to apply with the global network to be eligible?

As outlined in the RFP: *'In order for a grantee to claim geographical presence or coverage in a region, it must: (1) conduct activities directed at a regional body (e.g. African Union or European Union etc. or a regional process (e.g. Global Fund multi-country dialogue or a regional consultation or a campaign targeting at least 3 countries in that region etc.); AND/OR (2) conduct a sequence of activities over the course of one year in at least 3 countries in the region; AND/OR (3) have active national network members operational in at least 3 countries in the region.'*

It remains up to the network to decide whether to be part of a regional or global network or Consortium application. In the application form the applicant will be asked to describe why the Consortium is composed of these members and what value each individual member of the Consortium adds to the shared goal/objective of the proposal.

Q. We are a regional network and are looking to expand our activities to another region. Would we then be eligible to apply as a global network?

Please note that the RCF Secretariat is unfortunately not in a position to comment or rule on the possible eligibility of individual organizations. Decisions on eligibility of applicants in line with the eligibility criteria will be made during the Administrative Screening phase of the review process for which you will have submitted all of your supporting documents.

In order for a grantee to claim global geographical coverage, it must: (1) conduct activities directed at a global body/institution (e.g. the Global Fund Board/World Health Organization/UNAIDS PCB etc.) or global process (e.g. UNGASS on Drugs/High Level Meeting on AIDS etc.); AND/OR (2) conduct a sequence of activities over the course of one year in **at least 3 regions**.

However, it should be noted that a regional and/or global network looking to work with other regional/global networks could apply as a consortium. The Robert Carr Fund considers a consortium of networks to be a network-led group of networks, where other types of agencies or organizations with specific expertise may join (e.g. a human rights/legal organization). The consortium works together in a coordinated partnership towards a common set of inter-related goals and objectives. The number of regional/global networks, as defined by the RCF, in a consortium **must be equal to or over 50%** of Consortia membership (e.g. in a Consortium with 2 members at least one member must meet the regional/global network definition as defined by RCF).

Applicants considering to apply as a consortium are strongly encouraged to carefully review sample guidance on key elements of strong performance of consortia (based on the analysis of previous consortia performance) or specific challenges, related to the consortia management – see Annex 2 “Lessons Learnt from Consortia Building and Management”.

REGIONS

Q. Which regions are eligible to apply? / What about Asia/SE Asia/Asian countries?/ My question is East and Southern Africa covered too here?/ Asia/SEA Asia is not mentioned/ EECA region was not mentioned, are you seeking application from this region?/ Would an organization/network based within the EU and fulfilling the other criteria to be eligible?

All regions are eligible to apply.

As indicated in the RFP (please see Chapter 4: Funding Priorities for 2021 RFP) RCF welcomes applications which seek to address previously underfunded regions (in the RFC portfolio). These include: Networks and/or consortia from the Middle East and North Africa, West Africa or Central Africa.

Q. I am a regional network/consortium covering countries/regions that are not listed in the funding priorities. Can I still apply?

Yes, regional networks/consortia from all over the world and every region in the world can apply.

While the Fund seeks to address previously underfunded regions (in the 2022-2024 RFC portfolio these include networks and/or consortia from the Middle East and North Africa, West Africa or Central Africa) the Fund will also consider other factors in its efforts to achieve a balanced funding portfolio. These include the burden of HIV amongst different inadequately served populations and across different regions, the level of investment and funding gaps across different inadequately served populations and regions, as well as the relative population sizes in different regions.

When specifying which region you expect to achieve your results in the application form 4.2., applicants should take in to consideration that RCF aligns its regions with that of UNAIDS.

CHAPTER 4: FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR 2024 RFP

Q. You indicate in the Funding Priorities to focus on 'A balance between continuity of the current grant portfolio, and support for emerging networks, especially those from previously under-represented populations or networks?' Can you say more about that balance and the balance between funding 'old' RCF grantees vs new RCF grantees?

Request for Proposals conducted by the RCF are open and competitive and all applications that meet the eligibility of this Request for Proposals are welcome. The RCF has set no percentage aside to seek for a balance between new and experienced RCF grantees. However, the Fund has highlighted ISPs and regions that are identified as underrepresented in the 2019-2021 funding cycle to encourage proposals from regional/global networks and consortia that represent these populations and regions with the aim to achieve more balance in the 2022-2024 funding cycle.

The Robert Carr Fund recognizes that programs to address the structural barriers to quality HIV services for ISPs, and to address the social enablers of the HIV response, including human rights, and to strengthen community-led responses, are complex. These programs rarely yield results in the short-term, thus requiring a longer-term investment. Therefore, the Fund is dedicated to continuity in its funding portfolio. At the same time, however, the Fund wishes to support emerging networks, especially those representing populations or regions which are currently under-represented in the funding portfolio.

The Robert Carr Fund has to balance its goal of supporting emerging networks with managing the range of risks and additional administrative support associated with doing so. Therefore, in this funding cycle, the Fund plans to provide a limited number of smaller grants (2-3) for networks which have been in existence for under two years.

Q. Should 'old' consortia include new networks? / Is it a condition? / Is a preference given to Consortia that include new networks?

It is not a condition to bring in new networks. However, the Fund would encourage applicants to consider what they seek to achieve through their scope of work under this request and whether bringing in new voices/expertise would benefit the consortia at this time.

In addition to the Funding Priorities, the Fund desires to support emerging networks, especially those representing populations or regions which are currently identified as underrepresented in the 2022-2024 funding cycle. For this reason, more established networks and consortia are encouraged to consider in their scope of work activities which contribute towards supporting and/or establishing emerging networks whilst being mindful of their own organizational capacity to do so.

Q. Are there restrictions on the number of projects that you are going to support in one region?

This RFP is an open competitive round and is seeking for a balanced portfolio. However, RCF has no targets per region – this will also depend on the number of applications. RCF have in the past funded several networks in a region. It would be important to see how you are seeking to complement each

other and you may also want to outline in the application what your complementary is and/or how you would envisage to work together.

Q. In the RCF guidelines for this RFP 2024, it is mentioned that the regional focus for funding is on Middle East and North Africa, West Africa or Central Africa. Does that mean that a global network which will also include Asian countries will be rejected? Or penalized?

As outlined in the RFP: *'The Robert Carr Fund is open to any applicants that meet the eligibility criteria. However, the Fund particularly welcomes applications which seek to address ISP groups [...] While seeking to address the above, the Fund will also consider additional factors in its efforts to achieve a balanced funding portfolio. These include the burden of HIV amongst different inadequately served populations and across different regions, the level of investment and funding gaps across different inadequately served populations and regions, as well as the relative population sizes in different regions.'*

This RFP is an open competitive round and is seeking for a balanced portfolio. RCF has no targets per region – this will also depend on the number of applications.

CHAPTER 5: BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Q. How should we build our budget? Do you recommend applying for the maximum?

Applicants should build their budget in a realistic manner. It should reasonably serve and cover the planned scope of work and core needs and be within the floors and ceilings for this Request for Proposals 2024. The ISC will decide on the actual amount of funding that successful applicants will receive. This decision will be based on the needs, the quality of the proposals and the size of the resources committed to the Robert Carr Fund by its funding partners.

Actual funding amounts are subject to pending donor commitments, and on the number of successful applications and therefore any amount awarded may be less than which the applicant applied for. Applicants should take this adjustment of awarded amount into consideration when applying and have a clear plan on how to address any shortfall in resources.

Q. For the current RFP, is the USD 1,000,000 an absolute limit – or is there some flexibility available for larger Consortia of 7+ members?

No, the maximum amount a Consortium can apply for is USD 1,000,000 per year, for three years – being USD 3,000,000 in total. Actual funding amounts are subject to pending donor commitments, and on the number of successful applications and therefore any amount awarded may be less than which the applicant applied for. Applicants should take this adjustment of awarded amount into consideration when applying and have a clear plan on how to address any shortfall in resources.

Q. We are considering working with an existing grantee in a Consortium. Is there guidance on the level of overheads allowed for partners?

No, the Fund does not have guidance on the level of overheads allowed for Consortium partners. The work plan and budget of a Consortium, including any overheads, should be reached and agreed upon by all partners of the Consortium amicably. RCF does not place limits on overheads or core costs – applicants should budget for both core and activity costs according to their needs.

Q. Is there a recommended ratio of how much should be budgeted to core and how much to activities costs?

No, RCF does not have a specific criteria or recommendation on core vs. activity budget ratio. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, and RCF encourages applicants to reflect their specific needs when writing their proposal and budget accordingly (e.g. networks with significant organizational strengthening needs might have a higher core vs. activities ratio). However, applicants should not hesitate to budget for core costs as RCF provides core funding to strengthen the institutional and advocacy capacity of regional and global networks and consortia.

Q. Previous Q&A responses make reference to “overheads” – is it possible for partners to include within their core cost budgets some amounts for general (unspecified/undocumented) overheads and/or the building of institutional reserves?

No, unfortunately, it is not possible to include amounts for unspecified overheads and/or the building of institutional reserves.

Q. The current ceiling for funding for an emerging network is USD 150,000 per year over a three year period: total for 3 years = USD 450,000. However, as the most "costly" activities will be implemented during the first year, is it possible to allocate more funds during this first year while we stay within the global amount of USD 450,000 over the 3 years? In other words, is the ceiling of USD 150,000 per year a firm and definitive limit for year 1 (as well as 2 & 3)?

No, it will not be possible to front load the grant by allocating more funds during the first year of implementation. The floor and ceiling amounts per year should be respected in your application. This is due to the fact that RCF doesn't receive all the funds upfront from its donors, the funds are received on a yearly basis and can only be disbursed respecting the ceilings per year.

Further, actual funding amounts are dependent on the availability of funds, and on the number of successful applications and therefore any amount awarded may be less than which the applicant applied for. Applicants should take this adjustment of awarded amount into consideration when applying and have a clear plan on how to address any shortfall in resources.

For some applicants, funding will be granted conditionally with actions on organizational capacity to be adequately addressed in year one of funding, in order to secure funding for year two and three. Conditional grants and action plans are mutually developed between the grantee and the RCF Secretariat.

Q. On the timeframe of projects it says, needs for a three-year period (2025-2027). Can the organisation apply for 6 months as a pilot project?

No, applicants should submit a proposal covering a three-year period: 2025 - 2026 - 2027.

CHAPTER 6: PARTICIPATION IN MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS

Q. Can a fiscal host submit a separate application as well as network/consortium that it hosts?

Please note that a fiscal host is not considered to be the 'applicant' but is accountable under a project agreement if the applicant is successful in their proposal. A fiscal host can be a fiscal host for several networks. However, the rationale for doing so should be provided under 3. Applicant Information of the application form.

Each network or consortium may submit one proposal. No single organization or network may lead more than one Robert Carr Fund-funded consortium.

However, networks may apply as participants in two consortia. If a global or regional network applies as part of two consortia, or both as part of a consortium and on its own, the rationale for doing so (e.g. drastically different sets of core needs or activities proposed under the two applications) must be clearly explained in both applications. Each applicant must demonstrate and guarantee that the same budget items are not applied for in separate applications.

Q. An organization can lead one Consortium and be part of two additional ones – is that right?

No, an organization can only be part of two applications: an organization can apply as a single network and at the same time be part of a Consortium application, or an organization can be part of 2 different Consortia applications. If an organization is part of 2 different Consortia applications, it can only be the lead in one application.

The rationale for participating in two applications must be clearly explained in both applications (e.g., drastically different sets of core needs or activities proposed under the two applications). Each applicant must demonstrate and guarantee that the same budget items are not applied for in separate applications.

Q. Can you clarify if the fiscal host (i.e., the organisation responsible to Robert Carr/Aidsfonds for all granted funds and fund compliance) can also be a member of the network on behalf of which the fiscal host is applying. We want to make sure that the fiscal host can play a substantive part of implementation (and not simply acting as a pass through to network members).

Yes, the fiscal host can also be a member of the regional network and/or consortia that is applying. In the case of the fiscal host also being a consortium partner, RCF would consider the fiscal host as being part of that application and the organisation can thus only be part of one other application. However, the organisation could still be a fiscal host for several other networks that are applying.

CHAPTER 7: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS REQUIREMENTS

Q. Does the omission of some of the supportive documents play a crucial role? / Can we apply if we have no financial statement? / Can we apply if we have no audit (because further to laws of the country where we are registered charitable organisations are not obliged to submit audits)?

An explanation can and should be provided for any required or requested documents that are not available at time of application. Any clarifications on omissions or updates to documents may be requested of the applicant as part of the rebuttal of the review process. Successful proposals awarded a grant may be requested for updates to documents or provide further documents to support contracting.

Applications led by unregistered organizations should be supported by a fiscal host, i.e. an organization which will enter into the project agreement with Aidsfonds, and bear ultimate responsibility for financial management and reporting to the Fund.

Q. Are supporting documentation required of the Consortium lead only? Or are they required of all Consortium members?

Supporting documentation is required at submission of proposal of the Consortium lead only, and for the fiscal host if the applicant is applying as such. Successful proposals awarded a grant may be requested for updates to documents or provide further documents to support contracting, including for consortium partners.

Q. Is there a template for 'g. Overview of funding received' or is this just a list of funding received from donors over the last two years?

The applicant is being requested to provide a list of funding received from donors over the last two years. There is no template for this overview. A word document or PDF is sufficient.

Q. Will the absence of certain documents (such as, in our case, a fundraising strategy) – even once explained as requested above (in our case, it is in development) – be used to down-score or demerit an application, or rule it ineligible, during the review process?

No, the application will not be de-merited, down-scored or ruled ineligible. If a document is in development the applicant can submit a draft version and/or a previous version and indicate the status of the current document in the explanation. The exception to this is the RCF work plan and budget form which must be submitted an application and in the RCF Budget Form template. This template can be downloaded from the RCF website and from 3 June 2024 via the online application. Work plans and budgets submitted in other formats will not be accepted.

Q. Am I right in understanding that non-lead Consortia partners do not need to submit any supporting documents at the time of the proposal being submitted? Instead, additional documents may be requested from them at a later stage.

Yes, this is correct. Documentation for consortium partners of successful applications may be requested at a later stage ahead of contracting for due diligence purposes.

Q. E. Annual Organisational Report including Financial Report for the last two years

- *Can we upload 4 documents under this request – An annual report for each year and the same with Financial Reports? Or must it be one document?*
- *The financial report, presented to the board, towards the end of each year Oct/Nov is accompanied by the minutes of the board meeting. Do we only submit the financial report or can I submit the full document?*

Can you kindly clarify the following questions regarding documents that need to be uploaded:

- *Checklist of Documentation---When there is more than one document requested under a No. e.g. C, E, F, G etc. Can we upload it as e.g. C1 Strategic plan, C2 Budget 2021-2023?*

It is only possible to upload one file per supporting document. If you wish to submit multiple documents for a supporting document, then these should be combined into one file and be less than 10 MB. Where possible, files should contain only the supporting document requested to help reviewers in finding the correct document quickly. However, applicants will not be penalized for submitting a file where more documents are included.

Q. Kindly explain what is meant by “audit protocol”? Document F

The audit protocol is the terms of reference/guidelines under which the audit process was carried out by the auditing company providing the service. The protocol sets out the audit principles and requirements. Also, it explains how to report the audit findings.

Q. Just to make sure I understand correctly. Am I right to assume that the Fiscal Host should only present the documents listed on page 21 of the RFP doc if the grant is awarded?

If an applicant is applying in partnership with a fiscal host, the fiscal host documents are **required** at **application** to support due diligence. An explanation should be provided for any **required** or **requested** documents that are not available at the time of application.

Any clarifications omissions or updates to documents may be requested of the applicant as part of the rebuttal of the review process. Successful proposals awarded a grant may be requested for updates to documents or provide further documents to support contracting.

Q. You ask for a Strategic Plan (including the financial plan for the duration of the strategy) and also for a Fundraising Strategy. We have a newly developed Strategic Plan and are currently developing a Fundraising Strategy for it. However, we are not sure what you mean by a financial plan in relation to the Strategic Plan. If you require us to provide both, could you please clarify the difference(s) between these two documents? It would also be useful to know how much detail you require for each document.

When referring to a ‘Strategic Plan (including financial plan for the duration of the strategy)’ RCF would be looking to receive a costed Strategic Plan - a Strategic Plan that has a budget with estimated costs. The difference between the Strategic Plan and the Fundraising Strategy is that the Strategic Plan should lay down what results will be achieved and estimate the costs in doing so and the Fundraising Strategy should lay down how resources will be mobilized to achieve the results. As per the usual content, each document should include background information, strategy, expected results, work plan & budget, among any other information deemed necessary.

An explanation should be provided for any required or requested documents that are not available at the time of application. Any clarifications on omissions or updates to documents may be requested of the applicant as part of the rebuttal of the review process. Successful proposals awarded a grant may be requested for updates to documents or provide further documents to support contracting.

CHAPTER 9: PROCESS FOR APPLICATION REVIEW

Q. Eligible applications will be reviewed by a set of two or three independent expert reviewers. Can you expand a little more on the composition of the independent expert reviewers?

The independent expert reviewers are independent from any governance body of the RCF. They are not part of the RCF's Program Advisory Panel (PAP). The reviewers are identified through an open call for expression of interest that is to be launched shortly. The reviewers are chosen based on their regional and/or ISP expertise. All of them review applications voluntarily and will have declared any potential Conflict of Interest.

Q. Why do we have to submit the application in English? Through translation, our mission and vision does not get fully understood. Don't you think you put non-English-speaking organizations in a disadvantaged position to apply?

While we strive for diversity within the RCF Secretariat and our Governance bodies (ISC and PAP), we, unfortunately, do not have the capacity to review applications in multiple languages or support the networks adequately in multiple languages if awarded.

Please rest assured that proposals are not reviewed based on their level of English accuracy or penalized there for lack of. Further, translation and language capacity building can be budgeted for in the application to support the work of regional and global networks and the Consortium of networks in their work.

Q. We have been applying several times and passed the eligibility phase. However, we have never been successful and awarded a grant. We feel disadvantaged because reviewers may not be able to fully understand our organization if they don't speak French.

We are not in a position to judge on previous rounds and/or proposals. Please note that RCF RFPs are usually open calls and highly competitive. Through these requests, RCF is also striving for a balanced portfolio.

Please rest assured that proposals are not reviewed based on their level of English accuracy or penalized there for lack of.

Eligible applications are reviewed equitably by both independent expert reviewers, and by the Program Advisory Panel (PAP) of the RCF following the review criteria as communicated as part of this Request for Proposals 2024 (Chapter 9. Process for Application Review). Independent expert reviewers will review and provide feedback and questions of clarification to the applicant to support the strengthening of the applicant's proposal and to be addressed by the applicant in the rebuttal phase ahead of the Program Advisory Panel (PAP) review. During the PAP review meeting to develop funding advice to the International Steering Committee (ISC) of the RCF, both the independent expert reviews and rebuttal responses, and the PAP members' reviews will be discussed for each application. Based on these discussions, PAP members will provide scores and comments about the strengths, experience, and capacity of the applicant networks(s)/consortia and the strengths of the proposed work toward the intended outcomes and impact areas identified in the Theory of Change. The ISC considers the funding advice and recommendations of the PAP and makes the final funding decision.

The review process undertaken under this RFP and by the Robert Carr Fund is in accordance with the [Grant Application Regulations](#) of Aidsfonds.