UNOV / UNICRI

Call for Proposals

Guidelines for applicants

Name of the partner project: Assessing and Addressing the Nexus between Organized Crime and Terrorism in Africa

Deadline for receipt of applications: 21 September 2025 – 23:59 CEST

NOTE: This Call for Proposals forms the basis for applying for UNOV/UNICRI funding. It must neither be construed as a partner agreement, nor be regarded as a confirmation of funds awarded by UNOC/UNICRI to any entity. Consequently, UNOV/UNICRI is not liable for any financial obligations, or otherwise, incurred by any entity in responding to this call for proposals. Such costs will not be considered as part of the budget in the event that funding is awarded to an applicant.

NOTE: A grant is defined as a small-scale, non-repayable, non-recurrent (one-off) award of funds to a recipient entity given based on a transparent, fair and competitive selection process for the purpose of undertaking activities that contribute to the achievement of the UN mandates.

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## PARTNER PROGRAMME

### Background

Terrorists benefit from involvement in different forms of criminal activities, including trafficking in arms, drugs, minerals, livestock and fuel. In some regions, terrorist groups collaborate with organized criminal actors for funding purposes as well as to gain expertise in illicit transfer and laundering of proceeds from illicit transactions. At the same time, criminal actors can benefit from the terrorist organizations’ tactic skills and weapons supply.

Africa, particularly the Sahel region, West Africa, the Lake Chad Basin are heavily impacted by the nexus between terrorism and various forms of criminal activities, destabilizing peace and development. Local communities are oftentimes exposed to involvement in informal economies and/or illicit trafficking, which might directly or indirectly affect the broader security situation.

To address the threats arising from the intersection of terrorism and other forms of crime, UNICRI, with support from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, has launched a new initiative to deepen understanding of this nexus and strengthen prevention efforts. Through research, the project will analyze how these threats interact across Africa, guiding targeted interventions. It will also engage key stakeholders in awareness-raising activities, involve civil society to ensure locally effective responses, and provide specialized training for criminal justice actors, equipping them to counter these challenges and share their expertise. By tackling this complex issue, the initiative aims to enhance regional security and strengthen community resilience.

Objectives

This Call for Proposals takes into consideration the importance of harnessing all available resources towards the implementation of activities aimed at meeting the objectives of this partner programme.

The main objectives of this partner programme are:

* Raise awareness about the risks and consequences of illicit activities linked to terrorism;
* Strengthen resilience to resist involvement in informal economies and trafficking networks;
* Empower local stakeholders to take proactive roles in preventing illicit activities and promoting sustainable alternatives.

### Thematic focus and priority issues

This Call for Proposals seeks to provide funding to not-for-profit organisations working in the area of community dialogue and resilience, inclusive, sustainable alternatives in vulnerable communities, conflict prevention and mediation, and prevention of violent extremism whose projects target communities, including youth and women, in Côte d’Ivoire, Benin and Nigeria.

Funding under this Call for Proposals shall be provided to projects that:

* Address local vulnerabilities related to informal economies and illicit trafficking linked to terrorism.
* Implement community-driven solutions that foster resilience and sustainable alternatives to prevent involvement in illicit activities.
* Engage key stakeholders such as youth, women, local leaders, and community organizations in prevention efforts.
* Strengthen local networks to improve collaboration between communities, security actors, and policymakers.
* Demonstrate feasibility and measurable impact, with clear objectives and realistic outcomes.

Indicative activities that contribute to the following will be given priority:

* Community awareness campaigns on the risks and impacts of illicit trafficking and informal economies.
* Economic empowerment programs offering viable livelihood alternatives.
* Capacity-building and training initiatives for local leaders, youth, and vulnerable groups.
* Dialogue and collaboration between communities, security actors, and policy stakeholders.

### Location

The activities are expected to be undertaken in Benin, Côte d’Ivoire and Nigeria. Applicants can submit their proposals for projects targeting one or more of the three countries.

### Duration

All activities financed by this partner programme must be implemented by 30 September 2026.

### Fundamental principles

Applicants are expected to consider the following fundamental principles in designing their project proposals:

* Partnership/collaboration/cooperation with other stakeholders;
* Project design with the potential for replication;
* Sustainability of project activities;
* An approach that values diversity among men and women;
* Initiatives that are innovative and have inventive ideas;
* Culturally relevant approaches in project design and implementation.

### Award amounts

Proposals with budgets up to 20,000 USD will be considered for award. Please note that value for money will be assessed as a part of the rating criteria. The applicants must provide a **realistic and cost-effective proposal**.

As a general rule in UNOV/UNICRI, awards should not exceed the entity’s annual income for the previous fiscal year.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

### Eligibility of applicants

In order to be eligible for funding, applicants **must**:

* be a non-profit making organisation (CSOs including NGOs, CBOs) registered under the relevant Laws of the country where it will implement the proposed project;
* have been registered for not less than three (3) years;
* be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project, i.e. not acting as an intermediary;
* demonstrate prior experience of at least three (3) years implementing activities in the area of community dialogue and resilience, promotion of inclusive, sustainable alternatives in vulnerable communities, conflict prevention and mediation, and prevention of violent extremism in the targeted country(ies);
* have a bank account in the organization’s names.

### Eligibility of projects

Only projects aimed at achieving the objectives, focusing on the priority issues and meeting all other requirements as outlined under section 1 are eligible for funding under this Call for Proposals.

Projects should be time-bound (have discernible start and end dates), and have a specific, finite objective that does not require further funding to sustain results over time. Costs, activities and beneficiaries of the proposed project must be distinguished from those relating to the applicant’s other operations.

The following types of project proposals are **not eligible** for funding:

* Project proposals concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
* Project proposals concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
* Credit or loan schemes;
* Debts and provisions for losses or debts;
* Project proposals which consist exclusively or primarily of capital expenditure e.g. land, buildings, equipment, vehicles, etc.
* Project proposals which discriminate against individuals or groups of people on grounds of their gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or lack of them, or their ethnic origin;
* Scholarships, sponsorships and school fees;
* Cash donations;
* Political party and religious activities;
* Project proposals which provide funding for terrorist activities;

### Eligibility of project costs

The categories of costs considered as eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and a ceiling for "eligible costs". Note that the eligible costs must be based on real costs based on supporting documents. Costs that do not appear realistic may be rejected.

It is therefore in the applicant's interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under this Call for Proposals, costs must be directly verifiable and traceable to the activities being implemented.

Administrative costs

Administrative costs, i.e. such that are incremental to an entity as a result of undertaking funded activities may be eligible for flat-rate funding fixed at not more than 10 per cent of the total amount requested.

Contributions in kind

Contributions in kind are not considered actual expenditure and are not eligible costs for reimbursement.

Ineligible costs

The following costs are **not eligible**:

* Debts and provisions for losses or debts;
* Interest owed;
* Salary top-ups and similar emoluments to government employees
* Items already financed in another framework, i.e. existing capacity should not be included in the budget;
* Purchases of land or buildings[[1]](#footnote-1);
* Currency exchange losses;
* Taxes, including VAT, unless the Beneficiary (or the Beneficiary’s partners) cannot reclaim them and the applicable regulations do not forbid coverage of taxes;
* Credit to third parties;

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applicants are requested to submit a full project proposal which will be assessed by a dedicated Technical Assessment Panel.

### UN Partner Portal

All applicants must be registered and have a complete and up to date profile on the [UN Partner Portal](https://www.unpartnerportal.org/landing/).

Applicants that are not yet registered should do so by following the instructions at <https://www.unpartnerportal.org/landing/register>. Please note that UNOV/UNICRI will only the completed profiles of shortlisted applicants will be verified under this call for proposals.

Applicants who have previously registered should review and update their profile as necessary.

All applicants should ensure that their profile is complete and includes:

* A copy of original registration (and re-registration if applicable) certificate as evidence for legal credentials of the organization and registration by **21 September 2022**; If the registration certificate is not in English, an **English translation** must be provided by the applicant.
* Audited organizational financial statements **for the last two fiscal years** (in the absence of audited statements, other official documents, signed by an authorised representative and demonstrating annual income will be accepted); If the audited financial statement is not in English, an **English translation** must be provided by the applicant; a self-translation is acceptable.
* Completed PSEA[[2]](#footnote-2) partner self-assessment.

### Application forms

Full project proposals must be submitted in accordance with the instructions in the project proposal application form.

**All applications must be in English.**

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Due care must be taken to complete the application form. Any error or major discrepancy related in the application form (e.g. the amounts mentioned in the budget are inconsistent with those mentioned in the application form) may lead to rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested if information provided is unclear and prevents objective assessment of the application.

Please note that only the application form and the completed annexes will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL relevant information concerning the project.

### Documents to be submitted for application

The following documents must be submitted as part of the application:

* Project proposal application form (template provided in Annex 1);
* Project budget (template provided in Annex 2);
* Signed declaration (template provided in Annex 3);
* Proposals involving partner contributions must include evidence of secure funding

Further documentation may be required from provisionally selected applicants.

Documents may be checked for truthfulness and accuracy of representation through various means, including but not limited to internet searches, formally official confirmation from responsible offices, letters of recommendation, etc.

### Where and how to send the application

The completed application form should be submitted in Word or PDF format. The completed budget template should be submitted in Excel or PDF format.

Applications must be submitted by email to [unicri.cso@un.org](mailto:unicri.cso@un.org), marked “Proposal\_Assessing and Addressing the Nexus between Organized Crime and Terrorism in Africa” in the subject.

Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by mail) or delivered to other addresses will not be considered under this Call for Proposals.

Incomplete applications will be rejected.

### Deadline for submission of applications

The deadline for the submission of full project proposals is **21 September 2025 - 23:59 CEST** as evidenced by the date of receipt of submission email. Any application submitted after the deadline will be automatically rejected.

## EVALUATION PROCEDURE

### Eligibility assessment

All applications will be examined and evaluated by a technical evaluation team. In a first step the eligibility of the applications will be assessed as follows:

* Has the submission deadline been respected?
* Has the applicant created a complete profile on the [UN Partner Portal](https://www.unpartnerportal.org/landing/) (see 3.1 for details)
* Has the correct application form been duly filled and are all requested documents attached to the application.
* Does the application meet all the eligibility criteria as mentioned in section 2 above?

If the first assessment of the application reveals that any of the above questions are negative the application may be rejected solely on that basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

### Technical assessment of full project proposals

The quality of the project proposals will be assessed in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the evaluation grid below. Each subsection will be given a score in accordance with the following guidelines: 0 = information not provided, 1 = poorly meets the criteria; 2 = partially meets the criteria; 3 = adequately meets the criteria; 4 = satisfyingly meets the criteria; 5 = entirely meets the criteria.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Evaluation criteria** | **Weighting** |
| **1. Capacity of the Organization** | **20** |
| 1.1 The organization has a proven track record of providing technical assistance in community dialogue and resilience, promoting inclusive, sustainable alternatives in vulnerable communities, conflict prevention and mediation, and prevention of violent extremism in the targeted country(ies). | **15** |
| 1.2 The organization has adequate experience in project management. There is evidence of successful delivery of projects, funded by a range of donors, over a minimum of three years. | **5** |
| **2. Quality of the Project Proposal** | **60** |
| 2.1 The proposed activities and methodology are clearly defined and are linked to the project objectives (see 1.1) and thematic focus and priority issues (see 1.2), i.e., the proposal specifies not only what activities but also HOW these activities will be implemented. | **10** |
| 2.2 The proposed project focuses on developing inclusive, community-led strategies that address local vulnerabilities, curb illicit economies linked to terrorism, and foster sustainable, collaborative solutions (see 1.2) | **10** |
| 2.3 The proposed project focuses on the priority activities of this partner programme (see 1.2) | **5** |
| 2.4 The proposal must demonstrate a clear and logical response to well-defined needs and activities should be directly aligned with context-specific priorities and challenges. | **5** |
| 2.5 The target beneficiaries have been clearly identified and quantified. | **5** |
| 2.6 Proposal demonstrates a clear, evidence-based pathway to generating significant, measurable, and sustainable benefits for the defined target population | **5** |
| 2.7 The proposed activities and workplan are clearly defined | **5** |
| 2.8 The proposal provides a comprehensive identification of key risks across various dimensions, likelihood of potential impact and feasible mitigation measures for each key risk. | **5** |
| 2.9 Proposal presents a feasible, coherent, and resource-appropriate M&E plan that allows for tracking of progress, measuring outcomes, and assessing overall project impact effectively | **5** |
| 2.10 The proposal demonstrates cultural sensitivity and responds to gender-specific needs. | **5** |
| **3. Value for money** | **20** |
| 3.1 Economy – proposed costs are necessary and realistic; Efficiency - proposed costs are proportionate to proposed activities; and Effectiveness – proposed activities are likely to achieve positive results | **20** |
| **Maximum total score** | **100** |

### Provisional selection

Following the evaluation of eligible full project proposals, a table listing the applications ranked according to their scores is established. A list of provisionally selected applications is developed, taking into consideration the financial envelope available and the geographical reach and balance.

## APPROVAL AND AWARD

Only successful applicant(s) are informed in writing of UNOV/UNICRI’s decision concerning their application.

The following documents will be signed as part of the agreement between UNOV/UNICRI and funding recipients:

* Partner agreement based on the standard UNOV/UNICRI agreement clauses
* Annex A – Project Proposal
* Annex B – Project Budget

## INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Date |
| Deadline for submission of full project proposals | 21 September 2025 – 23:59 CEST |
| Estimated start date /project implementation | 1 January 2026 |

## SUPPORT FOR APPLICANTS

Interested applicants may submit any requests for clarification in writing to [unicri.cso@un.org](mailto:unicri.cso@un.org) by 29 August 2025.

UNOV/UNICRI will prepare written responses to timely clarification requests and will publish these for the information of all potential applicants at <https://unicri.org/> by 9 September 2025. The sources of requests will not be included.

1. Except where necessary for the direct implementation of the project, in which case ownership belongs to UNOV/UNICRI until it is transferred to the final beneficiaries. Any such transfer shall be done in accordance with the internal rules of UNOV/UNICRI. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)