



**OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR PEER LEARNING, EXCHANGE, AND COOPERATION FOR THINK TANKS

The deadline for the submission of concept papers is September 30, 2011.

The Think Tank Fund and the East East: Partnership Beyond Borders Program of the Open Society Foundations announce a Request for Proposals to launch a grant competition which will support bilateral partnerships between think tanks in Central and Eastern Europe/former Soviet Union and Southeast Asia, and between think tanks in Central and Eastern Europe/former Soviet Union and Latin America. The objective of this competition is to connect policy analysts and experts to promote global peer cooperation in analysis, debate, and comparative policy solutions.

Globalization processes have changed practices of applied social science and policy-relevant research. While the developed 'western' world retains its leadership role in policy-relevant research, other regions/continents are increasingly becoming laboratories not only for policy experimentation, but also for policy innovation. The purpose of this competition is to stimulate innovation and impact through direct bilateral peer cooperation, and to bring new thinking and innovative dialogue and debate to issues relevant to the Open Society Foundations, including but not limited to,

- Government Policies and Citizen Involvement in Decision-Making
- Responsibilities of Expert/Civic Communities in Good Governance
- Mechanisms for Improving Policy-Making
- Patterns of Regional Cooperation and Integration: The Role of Think Tanks and Civil Society
- Citizen Diplomacy: Harnessing the Potential of Civil Society in International Cooperation
- New Media: New Opportunities and/or Limitations for Citizen Involvement and Activism
- The post-Crisis "New World Order" and Engaging with New Global Players
- Constructing Social Policies in the post-Crisis World
- Balancing Economic Recovery/Growth and Social Equality
- Sustainable Livelihood Development in Communities of Significant Out Migration
- Inclusion, Exclusion, Citizenship, Statelessness: Policy Perspectives and Comparative Analysis
- Discourse(s) on Conflict/post-Conflict: Policies, Approaches and Responses from Civil Society Actors
- Democracy Promotion: Perspectives from Recipients
- Geo)Political Implications of Foreign Aid and Foreign Direct Investment
- "Ideology-less" Societies: Social Contracts, Rise of Populist Politics, and State Structures in the 21st Century
- Engagement with the (post-Authoritarian/post-Colonial) State
- Use and Abuse of Historical/Absent Memory in the Construction of the Nation State
- Use of Transparency and Accountability Tools to Address Citizen Security
- Evaluation of Community Programs to Reduce Violence
- Constructive Engagement between the Human Rights Community and the Citizen Security Community

These issues are not exhaustive or exclusive, but rather reflect issues relevant in countries where these two Programs and entities within the Open Society Foundations are active. Successful applicants will contextualize a problem well and argue the validity and impact of global peer cooperation in addressing the particular issue.

Prospective applicants are invited to contact us with questions concerning whether an issue is of merit and/or for assistance in identifying a partner before submitting an application. In all cases, issues proposed to be addressed should be significant in the policy contexts of the applicants' countries, contribute to the creation of new knowledge, and be designed to have impact in promoting a discourse relevant to open society principles.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications will originate in Central and Eastern Europe/former Soviet Union, Southeast Asia, and/or Latin America. We are seeking joint applications of two or more think tanks, including a partnership memorandum, agreement, and/or supporting letter from the official signatory of the respective organizations. Applications will be facilitated according to a two-phase procedure.

Phase 1 / Concept Paper

Phase 1 of an application is a narrative concept paper of no more than 3 pages, plus any applicable appendices in a single editable document (*.odt or *.doc) to be submitted by e-mail to EE.TTF.application@osf-eu.org. The concept paper is the basis on which a decision to request a full proposal will be made. Applicants will be notified within 45 days of receipt if a concept paper has been accepted for development into a detailed proposal.

The deadline for the submission of concept papers is September 30, 2011.

Applicants are asked to follow this outline for concept papers.

1. Applicant Organization(s)

Please identify the implementing organization(s) and experts, including mission statement, websites, countries in which the organization(s) operate, and policy outcomes and/or projects of relevance to this proposed initiative. Please explain how the organization(s) will benefit from trans-continental peer learning, exchange, and cooperation.

2. Issue

Please identify and describe policies, attitudes, or practices (issues) this initiative aims to address, as well as significance and social relevance.

Please outline comparative experiences and/or approaches in the countries to be engaged in this initiative and if you propose to develop further comparative analysis through this initiative.

3. Context

Please include a description of previous actions and interventions (by the applicants and others) to address this issue nationally, including specific examples of success or failure of actions.

Please describe how this initiative builds on lessons learned, and how trans-continental cooperation will contribute to this work.

4. Activities and Impact

Please include an overview of proposed activities, outputs, results, and anticipated impact of this initiative. Applicants are expected to develop concrete 'policy products' to be delivered within this initiative. 'Policy product' refers, but is not limited to,

- Comparative research study including realistic and tangible outcomes at the end of the study, and if feasible, an advocacy plan and target audiences;
- Policy papers, briefs, newsletters; and/or,
- Events, workshops, conferences.

5. Timeframe and Budget

Please provide an estimated timeframe and budget, including all co-funding secured and/or in-kind contributions, for this initiative.

Phase 2 / Proposal

Phase 2 of an application is a detailed proposal of activities for which support will be requested. Proposal guidelines will be provided when an applicant is notified that the concept paper is accepted. The deadline for a detailed proposal will be 6 weeks from notification that the concept paper is accepted.

The detailed proposal will be the basis on which grant support will be evaluated. Successful applicants will receive financial support for expenses up to \$60,000 USD for an initiative with a maximum duration of 12 months. Successful applicants will have the possibility to extend support for multi-year initiatives. The grant contract will be concluded with the leading organization of joint proposals. Support will not exceed 20% of the lead organization's total annual budget and will not be awarded for initiatives the applicant is already implementing or an applicant's regular activities.

We plan another Request for Proposals to follow **before the end of 2011.**

The **Open Society Foundations** work to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. The Foundations seek to shape public policies that assure greater fairness in political, legal, and economic systems and safeguard fundamental rights. On a local level, the Open Society Foundations implement a range of initiatives to advance justice, education, public health, and independent media. At the same time, we build alliances across borders and continents on issues such as corruption and freedom of information. The Foundations place a high priority on protecting and improving the lives of people in marginalized communities.

The **East East: Partnership Beyond Borders Program** supports peer learning and cooperation among civil society actors and activists in two or more countries. The Program promotes the movement of ideas and spirit of inquiry by convening people with shared interests to work together for sustainable impact locally and internationally. The Program supports long-term initiatives based on (i) sharing experiences, expertise, best practices, and lessons learned as developed by local actors; (ii) convening stakeholders to promote a culture of communication and create new thinking and alternative perspectives; and, (iii) creating space for civil society to reflect on social discourses and reform processes comparatively to add value to local agendas for social change.

The **Think Tank Fund (TTF)** supports independent policy research centers that strengthen democratic processes by identifying political, economic, and social problems, and researching them in nonpartisan and policy-relevant ways. TTF further supports the interaction of policy research centers with governments to advance better policy responses, to involve nongovernmental stakeholders in policy debates, and disseminate their research findings widely. In addition to supporting well-established policy centers, the TTF has paid special attention to nurturing a new generation of think tanks and has underwritten research in topics that have been neglected in Central and Eastern Europe. TTF pursues this mission through grantmaking programs: 1) Core and Institutional Grants; 2) Open Society New Response Projects; and, 3) a nascent operational program, Innovation, Evaluation and Capacity Building of Think Tanks.

Think Tank Fund

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