



Special Call

Funding for a Media Defence Centre in India

Background

Media Defence is a charity based in London which provides legal help to journalists, citizen journalists and independent media around the world. Media Defence's **vision is a world where** journalists no longer face legal challenges that threaten their ability to report freely and independently on issues of public interest, allowing citizens to be better informed and able to hold those in power to account. Media Defence's **mission is to ensure legal protection of journalists and media workers** under threat for reporting on issues of public interest, in the belief that freedom of expression is essential.

As part of our work to help build a strong global legal defence network for independent media, Media Defence provides financial assistance to organisations that have or wish to establish a legal aid unit. Currently, Media Defence can only fund a small number of organisations. Our aim is to expand this network and achieve better local-level access to legal assistance for independent media outlets, journalists and bloggers who lack the financial means to access legal support at commercial rates. Given its conditions for media freedom, Media Defence considers India a priority country for these activities.

Summary

Media Defence would like to partner with one NGO or law centre for the provision of quality legal support for media outlets, journalists and bloggers facing legal threats because of their reporting in India. Organisations interested in applying must either have, or wish to establish, a media defence centre to provide free, high quality legal support in that field.

Objectives

We are offering one 12-month grant of up to GBP 25,000 to organisations with backgrounds in defending and supporting the right to freedom of expression. The grants can be used to set up a media legal defence unit which provides pro bono legal support to journalists, citizen journalists and independent media and/or coordinates networks of lawyers to do the same. The grant funds cannot be applied for strategic litigation.

Media Defence is available to provide legal mentoring, capacity building, and other forms of non-financial organisational support.

Eligibility¹

To be considered, organisations must meet the following criteria:

- The grant is open to NGOs and law centres registered in India;
- The organisation must have a background or demonstrable interest in litigation and/or provision of legal support;

¹ This project is donor-funded. All activities are contingent on a continuation of funding as expected.

- The organisation should have previous experience in the advancement and protection of freedom of expression in India; and
- The organisation must have sufficient administrative and financial capacity to comply with Media Defence's reporting requirements.

How to Apply

Interested organisations are encouraged to submit their full application to the email Emmanuel.vargas@mediadefence.org.

The deadline to submit applications is Sunday 18 October 2020, 23h59 (GMT).

Applicants will be asked to provide the following information:²

- Annex A: Full application form
- Annex B: Application budget
- **Organisation's** name and address;
- The names of the head of the organisation, board chair, and treasurer;
- The total amount of money requested from Media Defence;
- Proof of Registration
- CV of fully-funded project staff and finance staff
- Organogram / Organisational Chart
- List of Trustees / Board of Directors
- Audited Financials and Management letter (last two years)
- **Organisation's Annual (income and expenditure) Budget** for 2021
- A summary of expected outcomes; and
- A summary of proposed activities and outputs.

Timeline

Shortlisted organisations will receive notification that their grant/application will be considered for **approval by Media Defence's board in November 2020**. The grant will start in December 2020 and run until November 2021.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Emmanuel Vargas Penagos, Legal and Grants Officer at emmanuel.vargas@mediadefence.org.

² Please note that as part of the Media Defence's **assessment of the applicant's suitability for a grant**, it will run a due diligence assessment that might include (but is not limited to) checks on the organisation, Trustees, staff and other related parties – these checks are performed as part of Media Defence's **legal obligations** to assess its partners.