

The logo for Media Defence, featuring the words 'MEDIA' and 'DEFENCE' stacked vertically in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Each word is contained within a black rectangular box. The boxes are positioned over a yellow speech bubble shape that is partially overlapping a white circle on the left side of the cover.

MEDIA
DEFENCE

The title of the guide, 'Funded Partner Organisation Application Guide', is centered within a large yellow circle on the right side of the cover. The words 'Funded', 'Partner', and 'Organisation' are in a bold, black, sans-serif font, while 'Application Guide' is in a black, italicized serif font.

Funded
Partner
Organisation
Application Guide

This application guide is for organisations applying to become a funded partner of Media Defence. You can read about our current funded partners [here](#).

If anything is still unclear, please contact Media Defence's Grants Team at grants@mediadefence.org.

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About Media Defence

Media Defence provides legal help to journalists, citizen journalists and independent media across the world.

Emergency Defence

We ensure quality legal representation is available to journalists and independent media outlets by paying for legal fees, connecting them to a lawyer if they don't have one, and providing that lawyer with pro bono legal support. We also ensure that journalists have access to legal remedies when their right to freedom of expression has been violated, for instance if they have become victims of violence or harassment.

Training

We build local legal capacity with a view to providing journalists around the world with an opportunity to access the best possible legal defence. We do this through training lawyers at our litigation surgeries, which provide lawyers with the tools they need to respond to emerging threats against the media and access regional human rights mechanisms.

Strategic Litigation

We take on strategic cases to challenge unjust laws used to silence journalists and to ensure the law is used to protect rather than persecute them. We seek out cases that offer an opportunity for systemic change (for instance changing a problematic law or practice) that will benefit media freedom.

Funded Partner Organisations

We provide financial assistance and practical support to organisations that either have, or wish to establish, a legal aid unit to provide free, high-quality legal support to journalists, citizen journalists, and media outlets facing legal threats because of their reporting.

The application process

Step 1

Submission of Concept Note

We will publicise a call for applications with specific details of projects we are looking to fund. Interested organisations can submit a concept note, the template for which is made available with the call. The concept note should be sent to grants@mediadefence.org.

Step 2

Submission of Full Application

Our Grants Team will evaluate the concept notes based on the criteria in the call for applications. We will then contact a selected group of organisations to submit a full application, which involves a longer application form and supporting documents.

Step 3

Media Defence Contacts Selected Partner(s)

Our Grants Team will contact all organisations who submitted a full application to inform them of the outcome. Organisations which have not been selected are encouraged to apply for [individual grants](#) to support their cases.

Step 4

Request for Approval

Our Grants Team will be in contact to ask for additional information and, once satisfied, will recommend the organisation to Media Defence's Board, and in some situations, to Media Defence's donor for approval. Following approval, we ask the partner organisation to sign a contract and then award the grant.

What are we looking for?

We provide funding to national media defence centres for the defence of journalists and independent media outlets who need legal assistance to defend their free speech and related rights. The projects we fund focus on legal cases as the primary activity. Media Defence defines journalism as a function shared by a wide range of actors. This includes, but is not limited to, professional full-time journalists and media workers who share information through traditional channels, as well as citizen journalists who may use tools such as the internet and social media for self-publication in print, online or elsewhere

All grants made by Media Defence must primarily further the right to freedom of expression of the media. Under international law, the right to freedom of expression is not an absolute right. Media Defence will therefore not defend hate speech, incitement to violence, or other forms of expression that fall outside the scope of protected speech under international law.

How does Media Defence define a case?

A case means imminent or ongoing litigation. Some calls for applications will stipulate further requirements than below, so please check.

Generally speaking, Media Defence grants may be used to defend the following categories of cases and litigation:

- To provide legal representation to journalists and media against whom litigation is initiated, whether under civil, criminal or administrative law, as a result of or in connection with their journalistic activities.
- To provide legal representation to journalists and media who have been threatened, harassed, suffered violence or whose rights have otherwise been violated as a result of or in connection with their journalistic work.
- Strategic litigation to advance media freedom and implementation of the right to freedom of expression.

Examples of cases:

- A criminal case in which there has been an act of prosecution, such as a search, an arrest or indictment;
- A civil case in which a writ of summons has been filed; and
- Acting as an amicus curiae.

Forms of assistance to clients that do not constitute a case and therefore usually cannot be supported by Media Defence:

- Advocacy, such as writing a letter to a government body;
- Visiting someone who is detained at a police station without representing them in a subsequent trial;

- Submitting access to information requests; and
- Legal consultations/advice.

During the application process, we are looking for:

Organisations which:

- Are independent and non-governmental
- Are dedicated to defending and supporting media freedom
- Have sufficient administrative and financial capacity to manage funds appropriately and report on case progress
- Include legal capacity within the organisation, a realistic prospect of developing legal capacity or have a clear plan to outsource legal capacity

Projects which:

- Fit within Media Defence's mandate of providing legal defence to the media
- Either will set up or continue the work of a national or regional media defence centre
- Respond to a demonstrated need in the country or region concerned
- Increase the geographical coverage of our support
- Are likely to have a high impact on media freedom

In addition, we would assess:

- Whether there are other donors who could fund the applicant
- The value for money of the project

This list aims to provide you with an understanding of our partner grants. We will assess each application in a holistic way to determine its suitability. You can learn about our current funded partners [here](#).

Please note there may be additional requirements depending on the call for applications.

What does the application process require?

Concept note

The concept note is designed to be a brief outline of your organisation and proposed project. It should reflect the information requested in the call for applications and on pages 3 and 4 of this guide.

Full application

The full application consists of the following:

- A more detailed application form which elaborates on the concept note, including more in depth information about the organisation, finances, proposed project and monitoring and evaluation.
- In addition to a completed application form, Media Defence will request further information from your organisation, including:
 - Partner pre-award assessment tool (see page 7 of this guide)
 - Proof of registration
 - Organisational chart / organogram
 - Total organisational budget for current fiscal year and for the year in which the project will be implemented and the extent to which this is funded
 - Two most recent audited financial statements
 - CV for any finance staff responsible for this project and any project staff fully funded by Media Defence
 - Project budget (using the template provided by Media Defence)
 - Please ensure that you complete all parts in yellow and read the instructions on the first tab.
 - Note that Media Defence only covers indirect costs of up to 10% of the project activities. The addition of the indirect cost cannot result in the budget being higher than the maximum amount stated in the call for applications.

Please note that as part of our assessment of the applicant's suitability for a grant, we 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. This due diligence and grant compliance may include additional checks as required by Media Defence's donors.

Additional information

What is generally not covered?

In addition to litigation, Media Defence may fund some supportive activities. However, litigation must be the primary purpose of the project. We do not fund training of journalists or employment-related litigation. In general, we do not fund the training of lawyers unless this is specified in a call for applications.

Media Defence grants cannot be used to support cases that are directed at furthering the political interests of any political party.

Please also check the call for applications for any additional or specific requirements.

How much funding is available?

Media Defence's funding for partner organisations can be up to £30,000 per year. However, some grants will be for a smaller amount, so please check the call for applications.

How many cases should we include?

You should provide the number of cases that you think you will realistically be able to undertake per year, this can either be internally or by outsourcing legal support, or both. We will generally prioritise applications where legal work is undertaken in house.

How long will the process take?

The process should take around three months between the concept note to awarding of the grant. However, in cases where approval from our donor is required, this timeline may be extended.

The due diligence processes can sometimes take longer, depending on regular communication from the applicant organisation and whether there are additional requirements from Media Defence's donor.

Useful documents

Below are the links to documents available on our website to help you when writing your application:

- [Media Defence Terms and Conditions and Practice Standards for Legal Practitioners](#)
- [General Grant Terms, Conditions and Understandings](#)
- [Monitoring and Evaluation: Guidance for Applicants](#)
- [Media Defence Partner Code of Conduct & Ethics](#)
- [Media Defence's Anti-Money Laundering Policy](#)
- [Media Defence's Anti-Bribery Policy](#)