

Protection Grant – Application Guidelines

The purpose of the Protect Aid Workers mechanism is to assist humanitarian workers who have experienced incidents, are under immediate threat of harm, or have been arrested and/or are facing legal charges due to their work as a humanitarian. This assistance includes the allocation of grants to humanitarian organisations to cover the cost of protection measures and post-incident support for staff. The aim is to protect staff from further harm, support their recovery and improve their well-being.

Protect Aid Workers has developed these guidelines outlining the eligibility criteria for its grant financing and modalities for submission of grant applications.

1. Eligible individuals and organisations

Aid workers are defined as the employees and associated personnel of not-for-profit) aid organisations that provide material and technical assistance in humanitarian relief contexts. This includes non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and the entities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This does not include UN agencies or governmental entities.

The fund can support any individual, regardless of their position or nationality, who is or was under a formalised work arrangement with an eligible organisation. This includes various contracted staff: employees, volunteers, daily workers, service providers, interns, community volunteers, etc.

The immediate family members of the affected aid worker can also be directly supported. The project defines immediate family as the children, spouse, siblings or parents of a staff member.

2. Which organisations can be lead applicant?

Any eligible organisation can directly apply for the protection grant, regardless of size or certification status. The key requirements are the ability to communicate in English, French, or Spanish, and to demonstrate - through our internal assessment - that the organisation is capable of managing the grant responsibly.

As Protect Aid Workers operates globally and cannot independently verify the track record of every applicant, organisations that are not certified by DG ECHO and with whom we have no prior working relationship or knowledge of their operational track record may be asked to provide a letter of recommendation from a reliable and trusted entity. This may include, but is not limited to, an international NGO, a United Nations agency, a national NGO forum, an embassy, or any other recognised institution with a strong reputation in humanitarian or development work. The letter must be signed at executive level and serves as a means to support our due diligence process and ensure that applicants have the operational capacity and integrity to manage the grant.

Protect Aid Workers reserves the right to refuse any organisation the possibility to be the lead applicant if the minimum conditions are not met. If so, you are invited to call on another NGO

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(preferably certified by DG ECHO) to partner and apply on your behalf. You can contact us at hotline@protectaidworkers.org to request our assistance for your research.

Protect Aid Workers strongly encourages international NGOs to support their national implementing partners that would need support to access the grant.

While Protect Aid Workers aims at processing applications from organisations, individuals can also be directly supported in exceptional situations. This includes:

- Cases where the individual would have been affected by an incident while working for an organisation with which he/she would not have a formalised work arrangement anymore at the time of the application.
- Cases of sexual and gender-based violence and other cases where the individual would feel at risk by applying through their organisation.

3. Eligible cases

The purpose of the mechanism is to assist aid workers who have experienced incidents, are under immediate threat of harm, or have been arrested and/or are facing legal charges due to their work as a humanitarian. In order for the case to be eligible for funding, the applicant must demonstrate the linkage between the incident and the work as a humanitarian worker.

More precisely, Protect Aid Workers can support humanitarian workers that are victims of:

✓ Violence

Protect Aid Workers supports humanitarian aid workers victims of violence or under threat of violence because of or incurred in the course of their duty as a humanitarian worker. Violence is defined as any form of physical or psychological harm that affects the health and/or wellbeing of staff members. It can include beatings, stabbings, gunshot wounds, impact of artillery or bombings, rape or other forms of sexual assault or psychological violence. Protect Aid Workers can also support staff if they are injured in their homes due to general insecurity in the area where they live and work, in recognition that their continued presence in this area is a result of their humanitarian work.

✓ Arbitrary detention

Protect Aid Workers supports humanitarian workers who were arrested, detained, or are/were subject to legal action due to his or her work as a humanitarian. This includes cases where humanitarian workers are arrested on other charges, but there is a well-grounded suspicion or likelihood that these have been brought against the staff as a result of their work as a humanitarian.

Protect Aid Workers can also accept cases where an immediate family member of the humanitarian worker is the victim of persecution due to the humanitarian activity of a family member.

✓ Kidnapping, hostage taking

If a humanitarian worker is kidnapped by a state or non-state actor, known or unknown, and is held against his or her will, Protect Aid Workers can issue a grant and provide support to the family. Requests may be made on his/her behalf through the organisation that employs him/her or any

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other eligible entity that decides to represent him/her towards Protect Aid Workers. The protection grant can also assist the aid worker upon release for his/her recovery.

✓ **Threats**

If a humanitarian worker received threat to their life or wellbeing, or the life or wellbeing of their family due to their role as humanitarian workers, Protect Aid Workers can support means such as temporary relocation.

✓ **Other cases**

Protect Aid Workers will consider for funding any cases when adverse occurrences stemming from the role of a humanitarian worker led to damage to the physical or mental health of the humanitarian worker.

If your incident does not fit in the above categories, and you are not sure whether it might or might not be covered, please do not hesitate to contact us through: hotline@protectaidworkers.org. Exceptions can be made to the above listed criteria for exceptional cases, where there is a significant, justifiable, and urgent need.

✓ **What the project does not cover**

The following situations are not covered by the mechanism:

- Traffic accidents, petty theft or sickness.
- Cases where the arrest or charges against the humanitarian worker are a direct result of obvious criminal activity or flagrant violation of the organisation's security policy.
- Situations that are not clearly and obviously linked to the individual's work as a humanitarian.

The Protect Aid Workers mechanism as such is not a replacement of insurance. It is strongly recommended that organisations offer insurance scheme for their personnel, covering health, accidents, and where possible, the damages resulting from violence or kidnapping.

The Protect Aid Workers mechanism, unlike insurance, does not offer guaranteed coverage or provide the right to any predefined type of support. The support is punctual and only provided for as long as there are resources available in the fund.

4. Grant budget and eligible costs

Grants are provided for a maximum amount of 10,000 EUR per staff member and their immediate family. In exceptional cases, and subject to strong justification, a higher amount may be approved.

In case the incident involved more than one staff member, the total amount will represent the multiplication of the individual sums.

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The list of eligible costs can include (not exhaustive):

- **Medical support.** Costs related to physical and psychological care following the incident, such as consultations, treatments, medication, therapy sessions, and rehabilitation services.
- **Legal support:** Fees for legal assistance, including lawyer fees, court-related expenses, and other legal services required to defend or support the aid worker in connection with the incident.
- **Relocation and evacuation:** Expenses related to the temporary or permanent relocation of the aid worker or their family, including transportation, temporary accommodation, and basic resettlement needs, when necessary to ensure their safety.
- **Salary coverage:** This refers to the continued payment of the affected staff member's monthly salary by the organisation for a period of up to 6 months following the incident. This support is only eligible if the salary is not already covered by donor funding, in order to avoid double funding. It applies when the employment contract remains active and aims to provide financial stability during the recovery period. In cases of detention or kidnapping, salary coverage may also be extended to benefit the aid worker's immediate family, to help them cope with the financial impact of the incident.
- **Salary compensation:** This is a one-time lump-sum payment calculated based on the individual's monthly salary, up to a maximum equivalent of six months. It applies when the affected individual is no longer under contract with the organisation (e.g. if they are unable to return to work due to the incident). In cases of detention or kidnapping, organisations may also choose to provide this lump-sum compensation to the immediate family of the aid worker, particularly when the contract has ended and the family is left without financial support. Exceptions beyond the six-month ceiling may be considered if duly justified.
- **Death benefits for the family.** In the event of the aid worker's death, financial support of up to €5,000 may be provided to the immediate family to help cover urgent needs and funeral-related expenses.
- **Replacement of assets** damaged or stolen during the incident. This cannot be requested as a standalone cost. It must be part of a broader request that includes direct support to the affected individual(s), in line with our person-centered approach.

Other costs can be covered as long as they are justified to provide an appropriate response and cover expenses related to the protection of the aid worker from further harm.

The grant contract allows for a full flexibility between budget lines. This means that organisations can move money from one response activity to another. Being 100% accurate in the estimation of costs is therefore not essential while you are drafting the budget.



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Direct administrative costs of the grant management can cover up to 5% of the requested grant amount. The costs need to be strictly related to the request and duly specified in the budget lines of the application form.

All expenses incurred with the grant must be charged to actual costs (see section 8 – Financial compliance and reporting system).

5. Eligibility period

Protect Aid Workers' primary objective is to provide financial support in the immediate aftermath of an incident or threat. The fund can also support staff for the longer-term impact of incidents as long as the applicant demonstrates that the needs are still a direct result of the incident.

The project can also re-fund organisations, if they choose to pre-finance or go ahead with a payment, in advance of hearing back from the fund, for instance, when urgent medical care is needed. The start date for the eligibility of costs under the grant will usually be the date of the incident, even if the grant is signed later. However, until you have confirmation in writing from the project, (re)funding is not guaranteed.

Refunding is also possible for expenditures related to the incident response already implemented by the organisation. All costs presented to the fund must have incurred within less than one year before the application submission date.

6. Grant application process and supporting documents

As soon as an aid worker has been affected by an incident or is under immediate threat of harm, you can contact hotline@protectaidworkers.org to obtain information to seek advice for support.

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Organisations are requested to complete the grant application form on our website www.protectaidworkers.org, ideally as soon as possible after the incident.

Supporting documents should ideally be submitted together with the application form to allow for a faster and smoother review process. However, in urgent situations, some documents may be provided later during the verification phase.

To facilitate processing, supporting documents are grouped into three categories:

- i. **Organisation-related documents** – to verify the identity and reliability of the applicant organisation.
 - **Letter of recommendation.** Required only for organisations that are not certified by DG ECHO and with whom Protect Aid Workers has no prior working relationship or knowledge of their operational track record. The letter must be signed at executive level by a reputable entity (e.g. international NGO, UN agency, NGO forum, embassy, etc.).
 - **Registration certificate.** Required only for organisations that are not certified by DG ECHO and with whom Protect Aid Workers has no prior working relationship or knowledge of their operational track record.
 - **Board members details.** Full names, dates and countries of birth of board members, which are required for a standard compliance check against international sanctions and watch lists (using Bridger software). This is a routine step to ensure that Protect Aid Workers complies with donor regulations and international legal obligations.
- ii. **Incident- and individual-related documents** – to confirm the incident and the link between the affected person and the organisation.
 - **Internal incident report** prepared by the organisation, and any other supporting documents that help demonstrate that the incident occurred (e.g. media reports, police reports, third-party testimonies, etc.) and show the impact on the individual (e.g. medical diagnoses, prescriptions...).
 - **Proof of contractual or working relationship** between the organisation and the affected aid worker (e.g. employment contract, etc.). If available, a recent payslip is highly appreciated, especially in anticipation of potential salary coverage or salary compensation requests, as it helps estimate and justify the related budget lines.
 - **Death certificate** (in case of fatality). If unavailable, a sworn statement from the NGO (template available).
 - **Proof of family relationship** (e.g. family record book) when family members are direct beneficiaries. If unavailable, a sworn statement from the NGO.
- iii. **Financial documents** – to enable payment and verify budget-related information.
 - **Your organisation's bank details**, including the bank's address, the IBAN number and the SWIFT code, signed and stamped recently by the authorised executive and the bank.



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- **Justification of budget costs:**

- *Refund costs.* If the budget includes costs that have already been incurred and are being submitted for reimbursement, it is highly appreciated that invoices and corresponding payment receipts be provided at the time of application. This helps accelerate the review and approval process. If not immediately available, they may be submitted during the verification phase.
- *Estimated costs.* When the budget includes significant projected costs, it is appreciated that quotations be submitted at the time of application. These documents help us assess the reasonableness of the requested amounts and facilitate faster validation of the budget.

When the application is submitted by an international organisation on behalf of a local partner, the lead applicant is expected to do its own verification and vetting of the cases presented to the fund. Nonetheless, upon suspicion of fraud, abuse of the resources of the fund, or false information, Protect Aid Workers reserves itself the right to make a double verification.

For grants where there is an **urgency** to receive rapid confirmation of funding, tick “yes” in the **emergency request box**. Please only answer “yes” rapid approval of the grant **is essential** to safeguard the wellbeing and safety of the affected staff or to provide immediate support after a serious incident.

You will receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your application within 48 hours (working days). Then, the duration of the process will depend on the case’s complexity and the partner’s capacity to provide all the required information.

In case of rejection, the Case Manager will inform you of the reasons for the decision. If you do not receive information on the rationale of the rejection, you have the right to request it from the Case Manager. If you are concerned that your application may have been unjustly rejected, or if you believe that you have not been treated correctly by the Protection of Aid Workers Project Team, you can appeal to the vetting committee through the following email address: vettingcommittee@protectaidworkers.org

The vetting committee consists of representatives from the programme consortium. It serves as the complaints mechanism for the project. Additionally, its members regularly meet to review

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anonymous cases that were rejected and cases that were funded, to verify continued alignment with agreed criteria and to adjust criteria where needed.

7. Grant contract and compliance checklist

The grant contract will be signed between Protect Aid Workers and the organisation that is the main recipient of the Protection Grant. The latter will be responsible for the implementation of the grant received and will be held financially liable (in case of disallowed cost, etc.) for the total amount received.

As per DG ECHO rules and regulations, [DG ECHO-certified partner](#) will become Co-Partners of the project, and other organisations will become Implementing Partners (C.f. [Humanitarian Aid General Model Grant Agreement](#)). For reasons of financial accountability, the main recipients should keep all relevant supporting documents for a period of 10 years. In case of audit, they remain individually responsible for justifying the cost incurred towards DG ECHO.

Protect Aid Workers is due to ensure comprehensive and compliant financial reports to DG ECHO. Therefore, grant recipients need to establish and operate, throughout all phases of the implementation of the programme, a reliable system for collecting, recording and reporting financial transactions. They will need to keep supporting documents related to these transactions to justify all actual costs incurred generated by the response to the incident. The accounting procedures must therefore permit a direct reconciliation of the costs in respect to the protection grant programme with the corresponding supporting documents.

The compliance and reporting requirements include:

- A final narrative and financial report
- Bank statements, showing receipt of funds transferred by Protect Aid Workers
- Expense ledgers
- Scans of original invoices and payment receipts, which can include:
 - **Payment receipts** from suppliers and services providers when the grant is used to cover third-party expenses such as medical care, legal services, transportation, accommodation, or other external services. These receipts should confirm that the service was delivered and paid for, and must correspond to the items listed in the approved budget.
 - **Payslip** when the grant includes salary coverage or salary compensation. A recent payslip helps verify the staff member's salary level and supports accurate budgeting of the requested amount.
 - **Cash receipts** by the beneficiaries when the grant is used to provide direct financial assistance to the affected individual or their family
 - **Travel documents** (e.g. boarding passes, visas) for relocation or evacuation
 - **Proof of new address** (e.g. rental agreement, etc.) in case of relocation
 - **Procurement documentation** for material support items exceeding €5,000 in value

8. Data protection

The applying organisations are invited, where feasible, to obtain the consent of the data subject (i.e. the individual who will ultimately benefit from the grant), which will serve as the primary basis for the processing of personal data within the project. It will be obtained in a manner that is freely given, specific, informed, and unambiguous. The consent can be obtained orally or in written from the data subject. The consent can be obtained orally or in written from the data subject ([consent form template](#)).

Many cases submitted to the Protect Aid Workers project involve highly sensitive information, impacting the privacy and safety of affected staff. The project has implemented several measures to safeguard data:

- Access to full case details is limited to a minimal number of team members.
- Approved applications will not be attached to the grant agreement but will be referenced only by the date and time of receipt by the team to limit access.
- The project and the applicant will each appoint a single individual responsible for communications.
- All data protection practices adhere to the General Data Protection Regulation (EU GDPR).

Additionally, Protect Aid Workers ensures further data security through the following means:

- Original case data (non-anonymised) is accessible only to three designated individuals involved in case management among the team.
- Application data is fully anonymised and identifiers removed before sharing with finance or contract management staff.
- Data used internally for learning and evaluation will also be fully anonymised and stripped of identifiers.
- Only fully anonymised and aggregated data summaries are shared externally.
- External auditors, as designated by the grantor or donor, may access unedited source data under strict conditions, following a signed confidentiality agreement.
- Appropriate measures are in place to safeguard IT systems and protect data integrity.

In managing personal data, we adhere to the highest standards to ensure the following:

- **Data subjects:** Individuals have rights to access, correct, delete, or restrict processing of their data, object to processing, and withdraw consent at any time.
- **Purpose of Data Processing:** Data is processed to assess eligibility for grants, manage grants, provide support services, and facilitate project operations.
- **Data Collection Sources:** We collect data directly from individuals, their representing NGOs, and through publicly available sources for due diligence.
- **Basis for Processing:** Processing is based on public interest, vital interest of the data subject and others, legitimate interests for safety and well-being of workers, and consent.
- **Types of Data Collected:** Contact and personal information, employment details, incident-related information, financial and health information necessary for grant management.
- **Data Sharing:** Data is shared internally and with partner organisations under strict confidentiality protocols, solely for project administration and application evaluation.
- **Data Retention:** Data is retained only as long as necessary to fulfil processing purposes, not exceeding 5 years post-case closure, unless legal requirements specify otherwise.