

2024 Safe Online Global Open Call

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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Application form and process

Is there any application form?

Yes, the application form is available [here](#). The only way to submit an application is via this form. Because of some technical limitations of the form however (there is also no option to edit responses once you submit for example), applicants are encouraged to work on and complete this [offline version](#) of this form, and then input finalized text into the online JotForm before submitting.

What do I do if I have any technical difficulties with the application form?

If you experience any technical difficulties, please contact fund@safeonline.global at least five days in advance of the deadline.

Where can I find the Annex templates?

You can find the link to the annexes at the bottom of the Open Call landing page or access them directly [here](#).

Some questions in the application have word maximums (ex. 500 words). Does this refer to words only or spaces too?

The word maximums refer to the number of words.

What happens if we go over the word limit, can we submit additional appendices, work samples URLs, images, graphs, etc.?

You can submit appendices or additional materials though we can only guarantee that the information provided in the application form and requested documentation (as listed in the application form) will be reviewed.

My organisation is registered on the UN Partner Portal (UNPP), do I need to update our profile or submit documentation on this portal?

No, you do not need to update your profile or submit any documentation through the UNPP to submit your application. Organisations that are selected for grants may be required to register on the UNPP or update their existing profile as a part of the regular UNICEF due diligence process, at a later stage.

Eligibility and required documents

What types of organisations are eligible for this Open Call?

Non-profit organisations, such as civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international organisations, research institutes and academic institutions are eligible. For-profit organisations are also eligible to apply.

Consortia of organizations with different strengths and expertise are highly encouraged. However, the organisation submitting the application will be considered the main grantee, bearing all the contractual responsibilities vis-à-vis Safe Online. Collaboration with other stakeholders such as private companies, law enforcement, government, etc. is encouraged. We encourage maximising synergies across jurisdictions/sectors/communities, as well as awareness of and sharing with existing research.

Are UNICEF country offices eligible?

Yes. See response to question above.

Can current and former grantees apply?

Yes, if their projects align with the objectives and focus areas of the Open Call and they have the technical, financial, and human resource capacity to meet the requirements of this Open Call.

Do current and former grantees have any advantage over organisations that have not received funds from Safe Online?

We assess each project individually based on its merits according the scoring criteria. The scoring

criteria does not allocate any additional points for being a current or former grantee.

Can I submit a Full Proposal for funding as an individual?

No. Individuals cannot submit proposals. The entity submitting the proposal needs to be a legally registered organisation. Consortia are also encouraged to apply; however, the organisation submitting the application will be considered the main grantee, bearing all the contractual responsibilities vis-à-vis Safe Online.

Can you please elaborate on legal registration – is it necessary for all organizations (including partners of a consortia)? Is it necessary in all countries where the project will be implemented?

A legally registered organisation has to be the lead applicant. We consider the country of implementation where the activities take place, or where the coordination/project management (eg HQ) takes place.

Does this Open Call have any geographic restrictions?

This Open Call has no geographic restrictions, though applicant organisations must be legally registered in the country of project implementation. We encourage organisations based in countries that are eligible for ODA assistance along with countries that are under-represented in our portfolio to apply. Please see our [Investment Map](#) for more details on where we currently work.

Can an international organization that has presence in multiple countries submit multiple proposals?

Yes, an organisation may submit proposals to more than one investment pillar, so long as they are legally registered to operate in the country where the project will be implemented.

What do you mean by support letters? Is there a template? What is the best way to demonstrate alliances?

As stated in the Open Call documents, Safe Online has a clear preference for proposals which are able to show active involvement of local partners and authorities in the design and delivery of project activities. Such support can be shared by signed letters from corresponding partners and stakeholders, including but not limited to local authorities and organisations. There is no template for such letters; they are not required at the time of application but Safe Online may request them at a later stage.

My organisation is new and does not have two years of audited financial reports, can we still

apply?

A micro-assessment conducted by the UN or a major donor within the last three years can be submitted in lieu of audited financial reports. If your organisation does not have any of the above types of documentation readily available, provide a description of why audits are not available. Further financial documentation will be requested for the required due diligence, if your project is selected for that stage.

If your organisation has a parent organisation, please submit their audited financial reports for the last two years, along with a description of why audits for your particular organisation are not available.

How many CVs should I submit?

This depends on how many key personnel will be working on your project; please provide a CV (2 pages maximum) for each key personnel.

Does our Results Framework need to cover all 3 results areas (enabling environment, supply & demand) of the Safe Online 2023-2025 Results Framework?

Not necessarily, your project could be just specifically focusing on one or some of those areas.

Pillars, topics and objectives

The Open Call has three investment pillars. How many pillars does my application need to apply to?

Each application must select only one investment pillar.

My proposed project has elements relating to more than one investment pillar, what should I do?

Projects that have elements that cut across or apply to more than one investment pillar are eligible to apply. For example, a proposal to the Networks and Systems investment pillar may have some research element, or vice-versa.

On the application form you will be asked to select only one pillar, so identify the investment pillar your project *most* aligns with. The [Technical Notes](#) for each pillar and the [Information and Instructions](#) are helpful documents to assist you in making this determination.

My project has components that cover more than one pillar, how do I know which pillar to apply to?

Review the [Technical Notes](#) for each pillar and the [Information and Instructions](#) document to

identify which pillar your project most aligns with, paying particular attention to the key results and outputs your project proposes to deliver.

Can my organization submit multiple proposals under different investment pillars?

Yes, if the eligibility criteria are met for each proposal. Also, an organisation can be the main applicant in one proposal and part of consortium in another one(s). However, consideration will be given to ensure diversity of grant recipients and it is unlikely that one organisation will be awarded multiple grants.

Is it possible to apply for multiple, complementary synergistic projects (that are intended to be implemented together)?

Every application will be evaluated individually. You may indicate on the application that you have submitted complementary projects, though we cannot guarantee that two separate applications will both be awarded. We also seek diversity in the grants awarded so it is unlikely that one organisation will be awarded multiple grants.

Can I apply for multiple pillars in one application (for example one project on Research and Data for \$250,000 and another project on Technology Tools for another \$250,000)?

Each proposal can only target one single pillar as the main one for their application. Organisations can submit several applications targeting the same or different pillars. The budget thresholds for each Pillar apply to any proposal, irrespective of the activities proposed for funding or if the proposal includes activities that cut across multiple pillars.

Each pillar has several objectives. Is it possible to select more than one objective?

Yes, we ask for you to select a primary objective but you can choose secondary objectives as well.

Do projects have to address all three objectives listed under a pillar?

No. Projects must select at least one primary objective.

Do all activities have to relate to the objective selected?

You may propose activities that are best suited to addressing the problem or gap of your project, some of which may not directly relate to your primary objective. Select a primary objective that *most* aligns with the change the project is seeking to make.

Can we define other objectives for the proposal different from our outcomes and outputs?

Main objectives across the three pillars are broad enough to cover activities to tackle online CSEA and overall child online protection. When it comes to topics of interest within each pillar, you can

propose and justify any other you may deem relevant as per your context and expertise

Are you only interested in proposals that explicitly relating the “Topics of Interest” listed under each pillar or can my organisation submit a proposal that is not listed but relevant to the region we work in?

The “Topics of Interest” bullets are indicative and not-exhaustive. You are welcome to submit proposals focused on other areas, being mindful that it directly relates to at least one of our investment pillars and the Open Call focus areas of innovation and high-impact. Please also take into account the broad strokes provided in the “What we fund / What we do not fund” chart in the [Information and Instructions](#) document.

Is it only child sexual abuse material (CSAM) that you're focusing on?

One of the core aspects of Safe Online’s work is focusing on tackling online child sexual exploitation and abuse, which includes child sexual abuse material. We are committed to making the digital world safer for children more generally, so CSAM has been a big aspect, we recognise – and seek to address – the many manifestations of online harm.

We welcome proposals for projects that show intersections with other agendas and areas of intervention, but there must be a clear linkage with online CSEA and child online protection.

Proposals should explicitly speak to how the particular problem that you are focusing on connects to children's experiences of harm online or children's online safety and well-being.

Do I need to submit a safeguarding policy with my application?

Organisations do not need to have an existing safeguarding policy in order to be considered eligible. If an organisation does not have such a policy in place, it must be willing to develop one policy within the first six months of a grant, should one be awarded. Entities must also undergo a PSEA assessment and other due diligence assessments run by UNICEF before receiving any award.

It is important to note that it’s not just about having a safeguarding policy – it’s also about ensuring there are procedures in place to put that policy into practice, and that all information on those procedures are easily accessible to practitioners, parents and children. Importantly, any children affected or included in the research also need to be made aware of those procedures and practices, therefore these need to be available in a child-friendly language. The policies and procedures must also address power dynamics within and across organisations, and explicitly understand the role of gender in how we do our work. Acknowledging these factors contribute to

the creation of child-safe organisations.

Safe Online is committed to supporting organisation's efforts to improve their safeguarding capacity and practice. Safe Online allows grantees to include a budget line for safeguarding and protection within their proposal budget (up to 5% of the total direct costs). This can include (but is not limited to) costs for capacity building, policy development, a proportion of costs for specialist personnel, as well as costs associated with managing safeguarding/protection concerns.

Partnerships, consortia and sub-contracting

Can my organisation develop a joint application in partnership with another organisation?

Yes. Joint applications with other organisations that form part of a consortium are encouraged. The application should identify a primary organisation applicant that meets the eligibility criteria as specified and is willing and able to sign a Grant Confirmation Letter with UNICEF.

Are consortium of organisations based in different countries eligible? And if so do all members of a consortium need to be legally registered in each of the different countries?

Yes, all applicants (lead and/or co-applicants) must be legally registered entities within the country or countries of implementation.

In the case of consortia and multi-country or global projects, the lead applicant (the one bearing the contractual obligations vis-a-vis Safe Online) must be legally registered in the country or countries where their project activities and operations will take place. For multi-country projects, applicants will also need to identify at least one legally registered organisation for each of the target countries. In addition to this, applicants may be requested to show letters of support or any other proof of endorsement from local authorities and/or organisations. As per the eligibility criteria set in the Open Call documents and confirmed in the FAQ uploaded on our website, it is required that applicants (lead and/or co-applicants) are legally registered as an entity within the country or countries of implementation. In the absence of legal registration, Safe Online may consider other forms of proof of compliance with the national legislation to operate in the target countries. In addition to this, letters of support from local authorities and organisations may also be required. The lead applicant (the one bearing solely the contractual obligations vis-a-vis Safe Online) shall be legally registered in the country or countries where their activities and operations regarding this project will take place.

What is the budget maximum if a private company is part of a consortium?

If the lead organisation of the consortium is a non-profit, then only the budget limits per pillars

apply (ex. \$500,000 for Networks and Systems, and \$250,000 for Research and Data and Technology Tools). However, when evaluating the budget, we will review the amount sub-granted to a private company (which cannot exceed \$250,000) and we will assess on a case-by-case basis.

If the lead organisation of the consortium is a private company, the \$250,000 maximum applies across all pillars.

Is it possible for an organisation to apply under multiple consortia?

Yes it is possible, if the eligibility criteria are met for each proposal. It is also possible for an organisation to be the main applicant in one proposal and part of a consortium in another. Consideration will be given to ensure diversity of grant recipients and therefore it is unlikely that one organisation will be awarded multiple grants.

What is your policy on sub-contracting and outsourcing work to other organisations?

Sub-contracting is possible, applicants must submit a [Sub-Contracting form](#) for all proposed sub-contracted organisations as part of their application. UNICEF applicants are the one exception as they are not required to submit Sub-Contracting forms.

Sub-contracting is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. In our assessment we look at the proposed activities, structure and capacities of applicant and sub-contracted organisations, relative roles, relative funding allocations, etc. We expect the core team to have the relevant technical expertise to deliver on the project. If that is not the case, the organisation should explain in the relevant section of the application.

The sub-contracting form refers to information about the sub-implementing partners. The template with the questions is provided within the Annex section, so you can see exactly the questions included in this form that need to be addressed.

When the application is submitted by a consortium of organisations, what documentation needs to be provided by all of the consortium partners and what documentation can be for the lead applicant organisation?

The organisation submitting the application should submit all required documentation, such as proof of legal registration, etc. It is not necessary for consortium partners to submit required documentation with the application, though we may request it at a later stage.

What is your policy on indirect costs for consortia of partners?

The maximum amount for indirect costs is 7% of total direct costs. They must be co-shared by as

many grantees and sub-grantees involved in the implementation of your project. This should be reflected in your budget as part of your application.

Budget and financials

What is the maximum budget of an application?

It depends on the pillar and the type of organisation applying, please see the [Information and Instructions](#) document for complete details.

What is the minimum budget of an application?

No minimum threshold has been established.

Do budget maximums include direct costs?

Yes, budgets maximums are inclusive of indirect costs.

What are indirect costs and is there a maximum?

As per UNICEF rules and regulations, indirect costs are those associated with management results and classified in the management category (i.e. costs which are not associated with specific programmes/projects). Safe Online will accept indirect costs that are 7% or lower, and they must be co-shared by as many grantees and sub-grantees involved in the implementation of your project. This should be reflected in your budget as part of your application.

How much matched funding is required?

Matched funds or cost-sharing is welcome and encouraged (as Safe Online encourages the mobilisation of resources from different funding sources - internal to the organisation or external - for the sake of sustainability and risk sharing), but it is not necessary. We take a number of factors into account when considering matched funds so there is not a required amount or percentage.

How do we indicate matching funding / cost-sharing?

There is a column in the “Budget and Financial Reporting template” to indicate an organisation’s contribution. In this column, input the external (e.g. other grants, government funding) or internal resources mobilised for the implementation of the project. Contributions in-kind are also welcomed, and you can cost them in the Budget as appropriate.

What is the ceiling for staffing budget?

There is no ceiling, this is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Safe Online will assess the suitability

of the human resources as per the different aspects contained in the project proposal, such as complexity of the project, duration, existing partners, and team member's profile and number, among other considerations.

Within the Staff and Personnel Costs, what does the Level of Effort relate to?

The Level of Effort refers to the amount or percentage of working time a specific position will spend in the implementation of the project, irrespective this time is to be funded by Safe Online or any other funding source.

Network and Systems Pillar

How many applications did you receive for Networks and Systems pillar last year?

We received over 100 Network and Systems applications.

What kind of projects should be included in the list of similar projects?

The list of similar projects should include projects your organisation has led on combatting online CSEA or broader online child protection issues. You can also list other projects similar to the core activities you are proposing

Does the creation and development of a Safer Internet Center fall under the Networks and Systems pillar?

A Safer Internet Center would most likely fall under this pillar, though we cannot say for certain without knowing all of the nuances and details of the project.

Research and Data Pillar

What do you mean by “innovation” in the Research and Data pillar?

Innovation can look like different things in different contexts, so we'll offer some broad strokes. This could include the following: applying a new research methodology; combining different methodologies in new creative ways; or adapting an existing methodology to different context(s) - specifying why the methodology or methodologies is best suited to address the specific gaps or barriers in the context(s).

We are also looking for the application of research to real world change, with the generation of actionable / actioning knowledge products. Competitive projects will also build-in the development of commensurate buy-in of stakeholders to take on applications or recommendations. Potential for impact is something we typically assess in Open Calls, though this aspect is all the more important in this year's Open Call, given the focus areas of innovation and high-impact.

For all proposals - under this pillar in particular – we want to support projects that address a gap, so ensure you are well-versed in what evidence, research and data does and does not already exist. Explicitly indicate how your proposal will fill a gap, and build on what already exists (such as Disrupting Harm or other studies) as applicable.

Do all components of the research used or proposed to be developed need to be open access?

Safe Online encourages research projects that are open access, where appropriate to the research and governed by the necessary data and ethical frameworks. If this is not possible given the sensitivity of this research area, please elaborate why in the proposal. Please note the following text in the Grant Confirmation Letter that all applicants are expected to countersign should they be selected as grantees for further clarity: "Except as otherwise expressly provided for in the Programme Document and Budget and/or Grant Confirmation Letter, all intellectual property and other proprietary rights including, but not limited to, patents, copyrights, and trademarks, with regard to products, processes, inventions, ideas, know-how, or documents and other materials which the Grantee develops using the Grant will be managed in a way that maximises public accessibility and allows the broadest possible use".

Technology Tools Pillar

Does Safe Online fund projects whose outputs can be commercialised?

Grantees shall maximise the public domain access to outputs funded by Safe Online, hence Safe Online encourages projects that are open source, although we will study on a case-by-case basis other configurations in light of security and privacy issues. For more details, please see the [Technology Tools Technical Note](#)

Miscellaneous

Safe Online is hosted by UNICEF, does this mean that grantees need to develop a standard UNICEF Program Document?

Grantees will sign a Grant Confirmation Letter (GCL), which outlines terms and conditions. This letter is set by UNICEF for their hosted funds (including Safe Online) and is countersigned by UNICEF Comptroller. A sample GCL for non-profits and multi-lateral organisations is available [here](#)¹. The project documents consist of the final project proposal and annexes (budget, Results Framework, etc.).

¹ The GCL for private companies is slightly different than the one for non-profits, in terms of Intellectual Property

How can we find the information on the projects awarded last year?

You can find this info [here](#).

Is there a requirement on the project start date?

Projects usually start during Quarters 2 and 3 each year.

How do you determine and agree on a start date?

Grant start dates depend on completion of the due diligence and awards processes. During the awards process, organisations will be asked to confirm timeline as per their proposals.