GENERAL CALL FOR APPLICATIONS 2020-1

January

1. Introduction

From now on, it is only possible to submit applications for project financing during announced calls for applications.¹ This enables the Democracy and Media Foundation to review all applications quickly and efficiently. All applications that match the general objectives, pillars and guidelines of the foundation are welcome. The foundation will open calls for applications approximately three times each year. Some calls will put emphasis on a specific focus area.

The current call for applications is open from Thursday 19 December 2019 through Sunday 2 February 2020 (midnight). You can submit your project proposals digitally during this period via our SDM-portal (www.stdem.org/sdm-portal/). We will communicate the final decisions by Thursday 9 April 2020 at the latest.

Does your proposal qualify for financing?
The Democracy and Media Foundation provides financial support through subsidies to organizations and projects that contribute to the realization of the foundation's objectives, mission, pillars and priorities (see below). As in previous calls for proposals, the Democracy and Media Foundation also retains a focus on diversity and media. There are also several general and specific guidelines which determine whether an application qualifies for financing.

2. Goals and mission

The statutory objectives of the Democracy and Media Foundation are to counter all forms of totalitarianism in social and political life and to strive for a vigorous democracy and multifaceted, opinionating media. These objectives are rooted in the origin of the Democracy and Media Foundation, which was established in 1944 by the founders of the illegal resistance newspaper Het Parool.

¹ Exceptions include projects with demonstrable social urgency, requests for financing in other forms than subsidies and applications for amounts in excess of €50.000,-. In all these cases, please contact the Democracy and Media Foundation before submitting an application.
These objectives shaped the foundation’s current mission: to invest in strong, critical media and a strong, just democratic state based on the rule of law. The Democracy and Media Foundation provides financial support to organizations, projects and other initiatives that promote this mission. The foundation can also provide (external) organizational advice and/or bring different initiatives together.

3. Pillars

We have divided the two key elements from our current mission in five pillars. The key element independent, critical media comprises the pillars (i) truth-seeking and (ii) media innovation. The objective strong, just democratic state based on the rule of law comprises the pillars (iii) fundamental rights and freedoms, (iv) vigorous democracy and (v) commemoration and remembrance.

(i) Truth-seeking

A well-informed society is a key condition for a properly functioning democracy. Therefore, the media play a crucial role as watchdogs of a society based on the rule of law. Independent, critical (investigative) journalism is under increasing pressure: attention spans of (online) news consumers are decreasing, the media landscape is changing and budgets for editorial offices are shrinking. However, for a society in a permanent state of (financial/Euro/refugee) crisis, finding and checking facts is crucial. Especially in a world that is governed by the economical interests of large multinationals.

The Democracy and Media Foundation supports (journalistic) initiatives that focus on revealing hidden issues that are relevant for the public interest. These may be issues that have been purposefully withheld by people, (democratic) institutions or companies in a position of power, but also issues that have remained hidden in a excessive or chaotic mass of facts, circumstances and (contradictory) information.

Within the pillar truth-seeking, the Democracy and Media Foundation prioritizes (investigative) journalistic initiatives that aim to dismantle threats to our fundamental rights. For example by generating attention for the causes or urgency of such threats or contributing to a possible solution.

(ii) Media innovation

Recent (digital) developments provide many opportunities for innovation in media and journalism. Thanks to the possibilities of the internet, news and information facilities are
growing all over the world. Numerous and diverse journalistic platforms are blooming, and innovators are developing new business and distribution models. New journalistic methods and formats, like data journalism, citizen journalism, podcasts and story-telling, have myriads of possibilities. The potential reach of journalism is much larger than it used to be: news consumers can hear more diverse voices, and journalistic platforms can more easily check and challenge those in power.

These changes also pose a challenge to the journalistic landscape. Traditional media and news editing offices have to cope with changing revenue models due to shrinking membership and reader numbers, due at least in part to the increased concentration of media-ownership in the hands of a few corporations, and the focus on news by digital giants such as Facebook and Google. Not only revenue models, but also the quality and independence of journalistic productions are threatened by these developments.

The concentration of power among (online) media giants has substantial consequences for the diversity of news providers and the opinions of their news consumers. Algorithms that feed users more of what providers like Facebook and Google think users would like to read, lead to a selective portrayal of the world by invisible means. This only confirms the reader's existing world view, instead of challenging it.

Within the pillar media innovation the Democracy and Media Foundation prioritizes initiatives that:

a) develop innovative business and distribution models that serve media organizations in their quest for truth and checking those in power;
b) search for answers to new power dynamics in the media landscape;
c) use innovative journalistic approaches to interest an audience in stories which meet the objectives, mission, pillars and priorities of the Democracy and Media Foundation (e.g. constructive journalism, narrative journalism).

(iii) Fundamental rights and freedoms

In a strong, just democratic state based on the rule of law, constitutional rights define the relationship between citizens and the administrative and political power, just like the relationship between citizens and companies and among citizens themselves. When these constitutional rights are threatened, citizens can call upon the judiciary to uphold their rights. The rule of law is the cornerstone of a vital democracy, offering the framework for a society in which every human is truly free and equal. It is necessary that the government counters discrimination and racist behavior, but the government cannot do this on its own: in a strong democratic state based on the rule of law, government, non-governmental
organizations, companies and citizens all contribute to mutual respect and compliance with the rule of law.

In practice, the rule of law is fragile. The protection of constitutional rights is jeopardized too often, as seen for example by statements of politicians or administrators. Constitutional rights are too often cast aside, for example in current discussions in the Netherlands about providing basic shelter for undocumented migrants, or in the extensive security measures proposed by the government that risk violating citizens' privacy. Within broader society too, companies and institutions at times fail to enforce fundamental rights and freedoms.

The Democracy and Media Foundation finances projects and organizations that uncover and explain failures in (the compliance with and protection of) the rule of law. The foundation also supports initiatives that uphold the quality of the rule of law – where needed by offering counterweight to politics, administration or business. We also finance projects and organizations that protect and improve the implementation of fundamental rights in our society, as well as initiatives that challenge arbitrary adherence to the rule of law in general.

Within the pillar fundamental rights and freedoms the Democracy and Media Foundation prioritizes initiatives that focus on:
  a) freedom of speech, or the right to freely formulate and express an opinion within the framework of the law;
  b) the ban on discrimination/racism as well as the (sub)conscious unequal treatment or exclusion of others based on certain personal characteristics because they are part of a certain group;
  c) the right to respect for privacy in private and family life and correspondence in general, with emphasis on digital privacy.

(iv) Vigorous democracy
Citizens have low faith in democratic institutions and the political and administrative elites that represent them. While citizens become increasingly critical, both online and in real life, democratic practice consists of one formal election every four years, supplemented with a sporadic closed-question referendum. The digital age offers many possibilities to inform and consult citizens, but many feel they have no insight in and no influence on the decisions and policies that affect their daily lives. Simultaneously, many small-scale democratic initiatives are blooming – outside the sphere of influence or interest of 'big politics'.
The call for democratic renewal does not only arise from the local context. In today's international neoliberal system there too is a lack of voice and involvement. Citizens have little to no insight in, or influence on, international interests of and deals between governments, companies and social institutions. Nonetheless, these deals and interests influence and affect the quality of a just democratic state based on the rule of law. Examples include international agreements about involvement in wars and armed conflicts, fighting terrorism, or securing privacy. Therefore, politics, business and social institutions must act with integrity in order to establish public faith in democracy and the rule of law. Institutions in a position of power must fulfill their role in accordance with fundamental rights and within the framework of the rule of law.

The Democracy and Media Foundation prioritizes initiatives that:

a) develop new inclusive democratic practices (both in participation and representation) in a way that suits the digital era of informed citizens with diverse backgrounds.

The Democracy and Media Foundation pays special attention to the inclusion of voices that are not heard, that are underrepresented or not sufficiently acknowledged. This because, in a democratic model that is based on majority consensus, the experience of a lack of influence, participation and representation is stronger for minorities.

b) contribute to increasing the accountability of governments, companies and social institutions, for example by improving accessibility and transparency.

Initiatives with primarily (party) political or religious objectives are not admissible.

(v) Commemoration and remembrance

Due to its background and origins, the Democracy and Media Foundation values remembering and commemorating times in (Dutch) history when fundamental rights were violated. Times when there was no freedom or equality. To expose totalitarian tendencies and to prevent threats to the constitutional state, it is important to identify the lessons that are to be learned from the past and to apply these to the present.

Therefore, the Democracy and Media Foundation supports initiatives that contribute to making and keeping relevant those events from the past when fundamental rights and freedoms were at stake; always with a link to the present.

Within the pillar commemoration and remembrance the Democracy and Media Foundation prioritizes initiatives that pay attention to:
a) the history of resistance newspaper *Het Parool*;
b) events during the Second World War;
c) the history of Dutch slavery and colonialism;
d) opposition against a totalitarian reign in general sense.

4. **Guidelines**

When evaluating the applications submitted in response to this call for proposals, the Democracy and Media Foundation will follow these guidelines:

**General**

- The Democracy and Media Foundation only supports projects and initiatives that:
  - meet a demonstrable need;
  - are embedded in a broader strategy for change;
  - are based on a clear and solid plan, and for which it is likely that (self-defined) goals will be reached.
- Applicants and/or initiatives that take an activating or mobilising role are preferred;
- If the applicant is a corporation, the initiative must have a transparent governance structure with clearly separated functions;
- Initiatives by individuals are welcomed, provided that the applicant has a demonstrable track record in the field in which they are requesting subsidy;
- Each application should be accompanied by a clear and factual budget with a matching financing plan, including a realistic cost-benefit ratio.

**Core values**

At the core of the Democracy and Media Foundation are key values that form a guideline for the way in which the foundation aims to realize its objectives. These values are, in random order: individual freedom, justice, equality, plurality, decisiveness, openness, integrity, constructive criticism, international perspective, diversity and inclusiveness.

**Project support versus institutional support**

This call for applications is limited to applications for project support. The Democracy and Media Foundation always starts a partnership with an applicant by means of project support. Organizations who have not previously submitted an application for project funding, or who were not granted support for their project, do not qualify for institutional funding. Organizations who have previously received funding and are looking for institutional support can make this request outside of this call for applications, using the general e-mail address of the foundation.
Amount requested
The average grant allotted within the general call for proposals is €15,000,-. Furthermore, applications within this call for applications are considered up to a maximum amount of €50,000 per project (year). In practice this amount is rarely granted to organisations with whom we have not partnered before. Applicants seeking support in excess of this amount should contact the foundation via the general e-mail address. There is no minimum amount. Only in exceptional cases does the Democracy and Media foundation grant funding for more than a third of the total budget of a project or organization.

Type of funding
Within the terms of this call, applicants can only request subsidies (gifts) within the terms. For other types of funding, such as a loan, participation or guarantee, applicants can contact the foundation's office via the general e-mail address.

Encouraged types of projects
Types of projects that the Democracy and Media Foundation supports include (but are not limited to):

- Media productions (long-form) journalistic articles, books, documentaries, podcasts and web or TV series
- Digital journalistic platforms
- Strategic awareness campaigns
- Policy advocacy
- Strategic juridical litigation
- Cultural and art projects (installations, expositions, theater, etc.). These only qualify for funding by the Democracy and Media Foundation if they further the objectives of the foundation.
- Lectures and debates (as long as they are rooted in a broader adaptation strategy)
- Trainings/capacity building

Geographical scope
The foundation prioritizes projects and organizations with clear added value in the Netherlands. Within the Netherlands, preference goes out to projects with an international or national outlook, as well as local initiatives that are part of a broader strategy for change. Projects taking place outside the Netherlands are granted support only rarely. The foundation limits its support to organizations located in the 47 member states of the Council of Europe. Priority is granted to projects in countries were freedom of press and/or the democratic state based on the rule of law is under pressure.
**Grounds for exclusion**

Applications that do not qualify for funding include (but are not limited to):

- initiatives that do not match the objectives, pillars and core values as defined by the Democracy and Media Foundation;
- initiatives outside the geographical scope of the Democracy and Media Foundation;
- initiatives with primarily (party) political or religious objectives;
- government initiatives or initiatives from institutions affiliated with governments;
- standalone debates, lectures and similar events that are not embedded in a broader strategy;
- the development or improvement of websites or applications without substantial impact improvement;
- normal business costs related to a project, such as production costs or other expenses for a publisher when publishing a book;
- applications aimed exclusively at purchasing materials or inventory;
- initiatives with purely commercial objectives;
- initiatives with disproportionately high expenses in comparison to the benefits;
- initiatives from organizations with sufficient financial resources to cover the project expenses by alternative means;
- investments in real estate;
- initiatives concerned with remembrance without a clear link to the present, unless they are directly involved with the history of *Het Parool*.

Purely educational projects and packages are not excluded from funding, but are not preferred.

**Met the criteria but still rejected?**

The Democracy and Media Foundation receives a large number of applications and has a limited budget. This means the foundation has to make choices. It may occur that an application that meets all requirements is still rejected. Different considerations can play a part in this decision:

- The application did not meet the Democracy and Media Foundation’s priorities as described in this call for applications and there were sufficient other initiatives within the same pillar that did.
• Other initiatives within the same area of priority and/or with similar themes were preferred.
• The Democracy and Media Foundation has already financed one or more similar projects and needs to evaluate those before funding new initiatives.

Request for reconsideration
The Democracy and Media Foundation is a financially independent institution that makes its own considerations when providing financial support. Applicants who feel their proposal has been rejected on demonstrably false grounds can submit a (digital) written request for reconsideration to the director the Democracy and Media Foundation. They will receive an answer within six weeks.

Application procedure
Step 1 – Submitting an application (deadline: Sunday 2 February 2020)
You can send your application, including the attachments mentioned below, via the web form on the website of the Democracy and Media Foundation (www.stdem.org). Applications will receive a standardized confirmation of receipt the Monday after the call closes. The deadline for applications is Sunday 2 February 2020 (in other words: before Monday 3 February 2020).

An application consists of:
(1) Obligatory: The questions asked during the registration for project proposals via our SDM-portal (www.stdem.org/sdm-portal);
(2) Obligatory: A completed template for project proposals (see appendix 1) – uploaded through the web form;
(3) Obligatory: A budget and financing plan, drafted according to the guidelines as formulated by the Democracy and Media Foundation (see appendix 2) – uploaded through the web form;
(4) Optional: Maximum one attachment of no more than three pages – uploaded through the web form.

Attention: applications will not be considered if they are not submitted:
(1) through registration via the SDM-portal (www.stdem.org/sdm-portal/) on the website of the Democracy and Media Foundation;
(2) according to the foundation's template for project applications (see: appendix 1);
(3) according to the guidelines for the budget and financing plan.
The foundation will not consider incomplete applications (incomplete templates, or applications with an absent or insufficiently disaggregated budget). The responsibility for applications’ comprehensiveness lies with the applicant at all times.

**Step 2 - Evaluation**
The foundation will evaluate this call for applications in two rounds.

**First round (results announced on Monday 24 February 2020)**
During the first round all applications will be reviewed, by at least two persons, on:

1. alignment of the proposal with the objectives, pillars, priorities and core values of the Democracy and Media Foundation.
2. the added value of the proposed project in comparison to other initiatives, whether financed by the Democracy and Media Foundation or not, that address similar themes and/or have similar priorities.

Applicants will receive the results of the first round on **Monday 24 February 2020**, at the latest. Due to the large number of applicants, all decisions will be communicated per standard message.

**Second round (results announced on Thursday 9 April 2020)**
In the second round, applicants may be invited for a personal meeting to discuss their proposal(s). These meetings would take place between the 2nd and 6th of March. We may also consult external experts and referees for advice on the applications at hand. The Democracy and Media Foundation will make its definitive decision based on all input (the application, the possible interview with the applicant and the feedback of consulted experts and referees). Applicants will receive the final decision of the second round on **Thursday 9 April 2020**. Applicants should therefore bear in mind that this timeline may effect the start date or timeline of their projects. Due to the large number of applicants, all decisions will be communicated per standard message.
APPENDIX 1

Application template

Your grant application consists out of this document, together with the information provided during the registration via the SDM-portal and a budget and financing plan as specified below. When registering your proposal, you will be given the opportunity to upload your completed template for proposals. Without this document your application will not be taken into consideration. Please make sure the title of the document is made up as follows: Project Proposal – [applicant], [project title].

We recommend reading the template for proposals carefully before filling it out. Try to answer the questions as thoroughly, but simultaneously concrete, as possible through following the instructions.

The following components together with this document constitute the complete grant application:

- Registration via the SDM-portal – this is also where you upload all the documents
- Budget and financing plan (for guidelines, website)
  
  Please save this file as follows: Budget plan – [applicant], [project title]
- Appendix (max. 3 pages) – this file is not mandatory
  
  Please save this document as follows: Appendix – [applicant], [project title]

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<th>Project title and name of the applicant</th>
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<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Repeat the title of the project as registered via the SDM-portal.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Applicant</strong></td>
<td>Repeat the name of the applicant as registered via the SDM-portal. This can be an individual and/or an organization.</td>
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<th>Extra information applicant</th>
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<td><strong>Website applicant</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Chamber of Commerce number</strong></td>
<td>If applicable.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Management and supervision</strong></td>
<td>If applicable: explain how the management and supervision of the organization is set-up, including names of directors and/or members of the (supervisory) board(s).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total organization budget</strong></td>
<td>If applicable: specify the complete budget of the organization for the current financial year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous support from DMF</strong></td>
<td>If your organization has received support from DMF in the past, please include the title(s) of the approved project(s), reference number(s) and awarded amount(s).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Referent</strong></td>
<td>Who or which organizations could provide the Democracy and Media Foundation with a reference in relation to your work and/or the project proposed? Please include contact name of the person and/or organization, as well as an e-mail address or phone number. Please also</td>
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specify the relationship of the reference in relation to the applicant and/or the project proposed.

**Project explanation**

| Problem                  | - What problem does this project address?  
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<th>- What evidence do you have that this problem exists?</th>
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| Objective                | - Which (long term) objective(s) form the foundation of the project?  
|                         | - What is the relation between these objectives and the problem addressed?  |
| Motivation relation to pillar DMF | Motivate in **no more than 150 words** how this project matches the pillar you selected during the registration via the SDM-portal.  |
| Participants            | - Who are the main persons involved in carrying out this project and how do the profiles of these individuals match their responsibilities within this project?  
|                         | *Examples are directors, curators, project leaders, researchers, journalists, program creators, moderators, etc.*  |
| Partners                | Which partner organisations (if applicable) are involved in this project?  
|                         | Briefly explain the role of each partner within the project.  |
| Target audience         | - What is the project’s target audience?  
|                         | - Why that audience?  
|                         | - How will this project reach them?  |
| Results and dissemination | - What will this project ‘deliver’? (Examples are a documentary of 50 min., book of 200 pages, a three-day event, a website, a rapport, etc.)  
|                         | - How will these results of the project be disseminated? (Examples are related events, (social) media strategy, communication, advocacy, etc.)  
|                         | - What are the expected reach figures per product? (Examples are a book – 3000 prints, event – 400 visitors, documentary – 100.000 viewers, etc.)  |
| Impact                  | - How will the results, provided they are attained, make a (long-term) contribution to the project’s objectives, mentioned above?  
|                         | - How do you support these expectations (based on, for example, experience or research)?  |
| Time line               | - What are the opening and closing dates for the project?  
|                         | - When will you undertake which activities?  
|                         | - Add a step-by-step schedule as an appendix for clarity if necessary.  |
### Feasibility
- Which factors (external and internal) may positively influence the chances of obtaining the desired results and (long term) impact?
- Which factors (external and internal) may negatively influence the chances of obtaining the desired results and (long term) impact? Include a description of possible risks and how you intend to deal with them.

### Originality
- What is the relation between the proposed project and existing initiatives?
- Are there organizations or initiatives that deal with the same problem in a similar manner? If that is the case: how is the proposed project different from these existing initiatives?
- Why is the approach proposed by this project worthwhile?

### Evaluation
Does this project have an (interim) evaluation? If so, what kind?
APPENDIX 2

Guidelines budget and financing plan

Applicants must include a disaggregated budget and financing plan, which at least specify the entries listed below. The total amount of the financing plan must equal that of the budget. The budget and financing plan may be submitted in Excel, Word or PDF. Please make sure the title of this file is made up as follows: Budget plan – [applicant], [project title].

Project budget

1. **Personnel expenses**
   These cover personnel expenses for overseeing and executing the specific project, if possible specified in FTE and hourly wages.

2. **Project expenses**
   These cover expenses related to the realization of the project for which the applicant is requesting subsidy. For example: filming, editing and screening a documentary, research, materials related to the project, printing, website, equipment, temporary rent, travel and accommodation expenses for organizers and participants, etc.

3. **Miscellaneous expenses**
   These cover indirect costs and possible outsourced activities executed by temporary employees, advisers, experts, etc. If there are any other expenses, we would like to see those briefly explained in a footnote in the project budget.

4. **VAT**
   The requested amount mentioned in the application has to be to the total amount requested from the Democracy and Media Foundation for your project. If your organisation is legally obliged to pay VAT to tax authorities, these costs have to be incorporated in the budget plan. The Democracy and Media foundation does not pay VAT if these costs are not included in the budget submitted as part of the application.

**Organizational costs of the entire organization**

These include structural costs necessary to your organization. You do not have to disaggregate them, and can show them on a meta-level. For example: the total costs of renting an office location (including fixed expenses, taxes, insurances, etc.), the total personnel costs (including a specification of FTEs), the total costs for structural facilities such as catering, accountancy costs, legal advice, IT, etc.

Financing plan

1. **Co–financing**
   This includes all expected revenue from foundations, funds, donations, crowdfunding, (government) subsidies and other financiers.

2. **Sales/participation revenue**
   This covers the expected revenue from, for example, (ticket) sales and memberships.
3. Other revenue
This covers all other revenue, such as from interest earnings etc.

For each source of income in your financing plan, mention:
(a) The amount of revenue for the source in question (in the case of applications for funds: please specify the revenue per fund);
(b) The state of the income for the source in question, namely: 'realized' or 'pending';
(c) What percentage of the total budget the source of income represents.

Organizational costs of the entire organization
These include structural costs necessary to your organization. You do not have to disaggregate them, and can show them on a meta-level. For example: the total costs of renting an office location (including fixed expenses, taxes, insurances, etc.), the total personnel costs (including a specification of FTEs), the total costs for structural facilities such as catering, accountancy costs, legal advice, IT, etc.

Financing plan
4. Co-financing
This includes all expected revenue from foundations, funds, donations, crowdfunding, (government) subsidies and other financiers.
5. Sales/participation revenue
This covers the expected revenue from, for example, (ticket) sales and memberships.
6. Other revenue
This covers all other revenue, such as from interest earnings etc.

For each source of income in your financing plan, mention:
(d) The amount of revenue for the source in question (in the case of applications for funds: please specify the revenue per fund);
(e) The state of the income for the source in question, namely: 'realized' or 'pending';
(f) What percentage of the total budget the source of income represents.