

EJF Rapid Response Granting Framework

Introduction

The Environmental Justice Fund (EJF) understands that sometimes it is not possible to predict things in advance and can therefore sometimes provide rapid response grants to support urgent responses to unforeseen circumstances.

EJF is particularly mindful of the risks that activists face which sometimes mean the need for urgent action to keep someone safe. We also know that there are organisations who specialise in providing this kind of support. Our approach is to work in partnership with organisations with specialist expertise in the protection of human rights defenders.

Purpose of this Granting Framework

EJF has developed this Granting Framework for two reasons.

- a) It is intended to guide EJF staff when they consider applications for rapid response grants.
- b) It is available as a public resource as part of EJF's commitment to transparency, and with the aim of demystifying the process that EJF uses to make decisions on applications for rapid response grants.

Eligibility for a rapid response grant

There are two components to eligibility for a rapid response grant.

Firstly, an applicant must meet EJF's usual eligibility criteria (that apply to all proposals). These are that applicants must be:

1. An organisation or network¹ based in, and part of, the community it serves;
2. Working on environmental justice; and
3. In South Africa.

Please note that EJF does not fund large, established NGOs - our focus is exclusively on grassroots, community-based organisations. We also do not fund private companies or state institutions.

Secondly, the funds must be necessary to assist the applicant **to respond urgently to unforeseen circumstances**. Examples of relevant scenarios that might qualify here include:

- An activist's physical or digital safety has been threatened as a result of their involvement in environmental justice work, and an urgent response is needed to keep them safe.
- A community has been informed at the last minute about an imminent public consultation held by a government department or corporation which will discuss environmental justice issues which have a significant impact on their lives, and they wish to attend and/or meet beforehand to prepare.
- Pollution has caused some kind of environmental health emergency.
- An activist has been arrested during a protest and needs support for bail.

¹ EJF does not typically fund individuals but we will make an exception to this in the case of a request for a rapid response grant from an activist who needs the support in order to respond to an imminent threat to their safety.

Please note that the following scenarios **do not** constitute an emergency for these purposes:

- EJF does not currently have a call for proposals open or an organisation missed one of our deadlines but would like to submit a proposal anyway.
- An organisation didn't plan ahead (when it was possible to do so) and now there is a need for immediate action.

Some additional things to note about eligibility for rapid-response grants:

- Current EJF grantees are not eligible for rapid response grants. Any current EJF grantee needing urgent support should discuss this with the Activist Support Coordinator that they usually engage with.
- In the interests of fairness and to try and stretch our limited funds as far as possible, we don't usually give more than one rapid response grant to the same organisation in one year.

Size and length of rapid response grants

Rapid response grants have a duration of 3 – 6 months and will usually range from R5 000 – R35 000 in size.

How to apply for a rapid response grant

There is no particular deadline for submitting an application for a rapid response grant. We will consider an application at any time, provided that we have not exhausted our budget for rapid response funding that year (which is limited). There is also no set format for the application.

To apply for a rapid response grant, applicants should:

1. Read through this document to make sure they meet the eligibility criteria.
2. Send an email to proposals@ejfunds.org.za with the subject line RAPID RESPONSE GRANT APPLICATION or WhatsApp (078 291 0014) introducing themselves and their organisation, explaining the situation, what the money is needed for and how much is requested. Applicants must provide a contact number, and should attach any relevant supporting documentation they have.

EJF's Activist Support Coordinator might engage with the applicant to clarify any questions, and will conduct some background checks (such as to verify the request and information provided). The request for funding is then shared with EJF's Executive Director.

How decisions on rapid response grant applications are made

Applications for rapid response grants are decided on by EJF staff – typically by the Executive Director and one of the Activist Support Coordinators.

A conflict of interest check is conducted to assess whether any staff member considering an application for rapid response funding has a potential conflict. The existence of a conflict of interest does not prejudice an application in any way, it just means that EJF will arrange for different members of staff to consider the application so that the process is fair.

The staff consider the following criteria when deciding on applications for rapid response funding:

1. Does the applicant meet EJF's eligibility criteria?
 - a. If the application comes from an individual, are there valid grounds to justify a departure from the general rule that EJF does not fund individuals?
2. Are there genuinely unforeseen circumstances which require an urgent response?
3. Are there any other organisations which are better placed to provide support – either instead of, or together with, EJF?

EJF aims to provide a response to an application for a rapid response grant within 48 hours. This response is communicated to the applicant by one of EJF's Activist Support Coordinators.

Review of Granting Framework

EJF is committed to constant reflection on our activities and ways of working. This Rapid Response Granting Framework is a living document which will be regularly reviewed by the Board, at least every two years, and in conjunction with EJF's Strategy, and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan.