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## Governance-strengthening small grants 2024-25

### Call for Expressions of Interest

#### Background information

The [PeaceNexus Foundation](https://www.peacenexus.org) provides organisational development (OD) support to international organisations and networks that have a peace and security mandate and a strong peacebuilding impact in fragile states.

We are known for our long-term individual strengthening support which aims to help our international partners fully align their internal structures, policies and processes to their commitment to locally-led peacebuilding. Our current international OD portfolio is a diverse mix of peacebuilding actors, working towards ambitious organisational change objectives.

In the past few years, we have also supported **collective learning initiatives** to complement our individual partner support. A 2022 external review confirmed the value of providing safe spaces for those leading an internal change agenda to exchange on the challenges they meet and the lessons they learn.

We currently support four peer-learning groups:

1. A Community of Practice for our partners' change champions, first gathered at an [event](#) in November 2022 and who continue to meet on-line for peer-learning and support.
2. A governance peer-learning group where our partners and alumni board members can reflect on their evolving role as well as support each other through challenges.
3. A gender and peacebuilding peer-learning group for our partners and other peacebuilding organisations committed to mainstreaming gender at both the programmatic and operational level. The group shared its first findings in a [report](#) and still meets regularly to share progress and lessons learned in implementing them.
4. A [Community of Practice](#) for philanthropic donors funding organisational development and interested in sharing best practices. This groups stems from a collaboration and a joint [report](#) with other foundations and is now hosted by the Philanthropy Europe Association (Philea).

## Purpose and parameters of the small grants

We have recently begun to experiment with connecting peer-learning and individual organisational change. In 2023-24, we piloted a Small Grants Call to support the participants of our gender integration peer-learning group in their efforts towards operationalising their findings, as captured in their joint [report](#). Based on the group's positive response and the encouraging first results of the four selected small grants recipients, we are now launching a second Small Grant Call focused on Governance – (number 2 above).

We plan to provide up to three small grants of up to 15 000 CHF each to organisations aiming to revisit their governance mechanisms to have them fit-for-purpose. We are particularly interested in supporting **organisations willing to explore the concept of mutual accountability**, between different parts of the organisation and their stakeholders.

The Call is open to our current and former international OD partners<sup>1</sup>. Participation in the governance peer-learning group is not required but willingness to share learnings from the process is: grantees will be asked to share their high-level change roadmap and to reflect on lessons learned in calls with peers under Chatham House rules. All applications and the details of the change processes supported will remain confidential.

A governance strengthening process can take many forms depending on the challenge. It can, for example, involve one or more of the following: reviewing a governance Charter, drafting of Board Terms of Reference, clarification of roles within a Board, developing a mutual accountability framework, including through facilitated dialogue between the organisation's Board and staff. Successful applicants are not required to commit to a certain governance model but must demonstrate an appetite for an open conversation about how governance could be strengthened and adapted in the interests of the organisation and to advance the peacebuilding sector.

## Application process

The Expression of Interest (EOI) should be no longer than 4 pages and answer the following questions:

1. **What is your organisation's current governance practice?** – all organisations have a reference document for their governance, but the extent to which it has then been operationalized into Terms of Reference or set processes vary, just provide the original governance mandate and how it is currently being interpreted.

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<sup>1</sup> This eligibility criteria is based on the assumption that partners that we already know well will be more confident to work with us on governance issues. If you do not meet this condition, but would like to be considered, please write to: [carole.frampton@peacenexus.org](mailto:carole.frampton@peacenexus.org) by September 10, briefly outlining why this opportunity is timely and relevant to your situation. We will respond within a week to indicate if we invite you to submit an EOI.

2. **Where is there change energy for a conversation about governance?** – what governance-related challenges are you experiencing, what impact do they have, what conversations have already taken place, what actions have been taken if any, and for what result?
3. **What are the obstacles to opening up a conversation about governance?** – is there resistance to revisiting and adapting current practices? What has prevented you from initiating it until now and what risks are you concerned with?
4. **What would a small grant of up to 15 000 CHF enable you to do?** – describe the process you have in mind and what success would look like. Suggest first steps and a realistic timeline, knowing that if selected for the grant, thinking through the change roadmap in view of making it as effective as possible in delivering your desired outcome will be our first step. Note that the small grant *is not to be funding governance-related operational expenses*, it is to support a time-bound, projectized, internal change process.
5. **Why is now the right time?** - change is all about timing, what conditions for success are being met right now? In the case of current partners, this is where the envisioned interplay with their ongoing OD process and the added value of a governance small grant is to be explored.

Please also provide – or point us to the right place on your website:

- The composition of your Board and leadership team
- Your overall budget figures for 2023 (expenses) and 2024 (budget)
- For former partners: recent key developments in terms of your work, impact, organisational challenges and evolution

Finally, the EOI is to be signed by both a member of the Management and member of the Board (with authority to represent staff and Board respectively), with a brief explanation of the process followed to develop it.

The submissions will be reviewed by a selection committee, according to the following criteria:

- Direct benefits to the organisation and its peacebuilding impact
- Conditions for success in terms of level of internal demand and timeliness
- Potential contribution to peer-learning on governance through the sharing lessons learned

The selected organisations must be available to engage PeaceNexus in a roadmap planning exercise in 2024, and to share high-level process plans with the peer-learning group early 2025. Implementation is expected to take place over Q1-3 of 2025.

Please submit your Expression of Interest to [Carole.Frampton@peacenexus.org](mailto:Carole.Frampton@peacenexus.org) with the subject heading 'Governance small grant application' by October 15<sup>th</sup> 2024. Selection decision will be made by October 31<sup>st</sup> 2024.