



## Incident Response Grant – Application Guidelines

The purpose of the Protect Aid Workers project is to provide assistance to humanitarian workers who have experienced security incidents, are under immediate threat of harm, or have been arrested and/or are facing legal charges due to their work as a humanitarian.

The project achieves this through providing grants to humanitarian NGOs, 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. Additionally, the initiative seeks to create a community of practice and foster dialogue on NGOs' duty of care towards their staff.

### 1. Which individuals are eligible

The fund can support any humanitarian worker, regardless of their position or nationality, who is under a formalised work arrangement (such as an employment, daily labour, intern or volunteer contract) with a national or international humanitarian NGO, which will apply for the individual(s) concerned.

The project is primarily geared towards *national* humanitarian workers (i.e. working in their own country) or refugee workers (working in their host country). However, expatriate staff are also eligible where there is a demonstrated need for support.

The immediate family of the staff member can also be supported if they have undergone the same incident as the humanitarian worker or have been targeted due to his/her work as a humanitarian, or if the latter has been killed, arrested or abducted in line of duty. The project defines immediate family as the child, spouse, sibling, mother or father of a staff member.

### 2. Eligible applicant organisations

To be considered for a grant under the Protect Aid Work project, applicants must be a humanitarian non-governmental organisation and meet the following eligibility criteria:

- The applying organisation must be a *DG ECHO certified* non-governmental organisation. The list of such organisations can be found through this link: [List of certified NGOs 13.11.2023.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)
- A DG ECHO certified organisation can also apply *on behalf of* a national, local or community-based organisation (NGO or CBO).

Therefore, non-international organisations can benefit by requesting one of the DG ECHO certified partners to apply *on their behalf*. The project supports organisations that have the purpose to provide assistance in line with the international humanitarian principles.



### 3. Maximum amount per grant

Grants can be provided for up to 10,000 EUR per staff member. In case of incidents involving more than one staff member, a larger amount can be provided, given that the 10,000 EUR is a maximum *per individual staff*.

If an incident affects staff *and* their family, the grant can cover costs related to *both* the staff and his/her immediate family – but only up to a **maximum of 10,000 EUR** in total combined.

Applicants will be asked to certify in their application that the cost is not already covered by an existing insurance. The mechanism as such is not a replacement of insurance – it is strongly recommended that organisations take out adequate insurance for their national and international staff, covering health, accidents, and where possible insurance covering the aftermath of violence or kidnapping.

The mechanism, unlike insurance, does not offer guaranteed coverage or provide the *right to* a certain type of support. The support is provided only for as long as there are resources available in the fund, and at the discretion of the Project team.

Direct administrative costs can be covered up to 5% of the requested grant. They have to be strictly related to the request and duly specified in the budget lines of the application form.

### 4. Eligible cases

Protect Aid Workers firstly provides financial support in the immediate **aftermath** of an incident or threat. The initiative can also support staff in dealing with the **longer-term** impact of incidents as long as the applicant can demonstrate that the needs are a direct result of the incident. As such, the incidents that took place before the launch of the project can be considered for a grant (i.e. January 2024).

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, if urgent medical care is needed. The eligibility date of costs under the grant will usually be the date of the incident, even if the grant is signed some days or weeks later. However, until you have a confirmation in writing from the project, (re)funding cannot be guaranteed.

The project can only cover one grant per person per year. Grants will in principle need to be spent within 6 months' time, though exceptions are possible for up to 12 months.

The initiative can support in the following possible situations:



## A. Violence

### ✓ What situations does this include?

This would be violence affecting a humanitarian worker as a result of or incurred in the course of their duty as a humanitarian worker. This includes things that might have happened in their homes or during their spare time if they live in a risky location in order to work for a humanitarian organisation. It is up to the organisation to demonstrate or explain the linkage of the incident to their work as a humanitarian in the application.

Violence can include beatings, stabbings, gunshot wounds, impact of artillery or bombings, as well as rape or other forms of sexual assault, or the threat of violence. It essentially includes any form of physical or psychological harm that affects the health and/or wellbeing of staff.

### - What costs can the project cover?

- Medical costs to aid physical recovery, including hospital costs, surgery, specialists, physiotherapists, prosthetic limbs, etc.
- Mental health support to aid psychosocial recovery, including the cost of psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, occupational therapy, or hospitalisation, as needed.
- Coverage of the staff member's salary during a period of recovery, up to a maximum of 6 months or 5,000 EUR at most, whichever is lower.
- Replacement of items damaged or stolen during the incident.
- Temporary relocation of the staff member or his/her family where required.
- Funeral costs and coverage of the deceased humanitarian worker's salary for the benefit of his/her family.

### × What does the project not support?

- If the situation is a direct result of obvious criminal activity of the staff in question.
- If the case is a result of flagrant or brazen violation of the organisation's security policy.

## B. Arrest / detention / legal action

### - What situations does this include?

- A staff member gets arrested, detained, or legal action is brought against him/her due to his or her work as a humanitarian.
- He/she gets arrested for other charges, but there is a suspicion or likelihood that these have been brought against the staff, as a result of his/her work as a humanitarian.
- Immediate family members of the staff get arrested or detained due to the humanitarian work of their family member.



**- What costs can the project cover?**

- Cost of legal assistance.
- Cost of salary during the time of incarceration, up to a maximum of 6 months or 5,000 EUR at most, whichever is lower.
- Health care *and* mental health care to support the staff in response to any incarceration, torture, threats or other mistreatment or harm.
- Temporary relocation within the country where the staff lives.

**× What does the project not support:**

- If the situation is the clear and direct result of obvious criminal activity of the staff in question.
- If it is clearly, obviously not in any way linked to his/her work as a humanitarian.

If in doubt, please raise the question with our Project team. Often, the Project can still provide support given that in many countries, spurious charges are put against humanitarian workers, but which are essentially still related to their work as a humanitarian. For instance, staff can be charged under espionage or anti-terrorism laws, even though all they did was a humanitarian assessment in an opposition area.

### **C. Kidnapping / hostage taking**

**- What situations does this include?**

- A staff member who gets taken by a state or non-state group, known or unknown, and is held against his or her will. Demands may or may not be made of his family or the organisation, be it monetary or otherwise.

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**- What costs can the project cover?**

- Mental health support for the staff upon his/her release.
- Mental health support for the immediate family of the person kidnapped.
- The cost of personal items lost in the course of a staff's kidnapping.
- Medical support for the staff upon release.
- Temporary relocation of immediate family or staff within the country in question if they are perceived to be in danger.

**× What does the project not cover?**

- The cost of a hostage negotiator, or other costs involved in hostage negotiations.
- The cost of a ransom or any money or goods that would end up with the hostage takers.



## D. Threats

### - What situations does this include?

If your staff have received a threat to their life or wellbeing or the life/wellbeing of their family due to their role as humanitarian workers.

### - What costs can the project cover?

- Mental health support for the staff or the family members.
- Mental health support for his/her immediate family, which can include children of, spouse, siblings and parents of the affected staff.
- Temporary relocation of immediate family or staff within the country in question if they are perceived to be at danger.

## E. Other cases

The project is not a life insurance and cannot cover for instance the impact of traffic accidents or petty theft. If your incident does not fit in the above categories, and you are not sure if it might or might not be covered, please do not hesitate to reach out the mechanism through our dedicated email: [hotline@protectaidworkers.org](mailto:hotline@protectaidworkers.org)

The project can make exceptions to the criteria for exceptional cases, where there is a significant, justifiable, and urgent need.

## 5. Application Submission

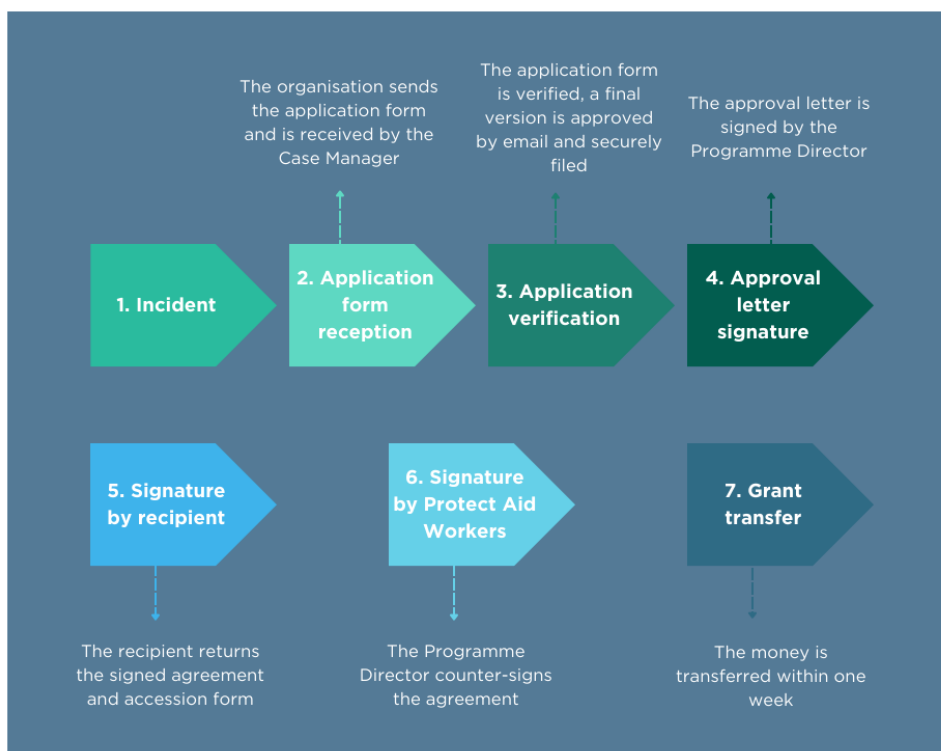
Please complete the grant application form provided as soon as possible after the incident. Please ensure to provide your mobile number on the form, so that the Project team can call you if any information is missing that is essential to process your application.

For grants where there is an **urgency** to receive confirmation of funding, please tick “yes” for it being an **emergency request**. Please only answer yes *if* approval of a grant **within 48 hours is essential** to safeguard the wellbeing and safety of the affected staff or provide immediate support after a serious incident.

Where it comes to the budget, remember that in any case, the contract allows for full flexibility between line items, which means that you can move money from one response activity to another. In that sense, often, being 100% accurate in the estimated costs is not essential.

In anticipation of the potential approval of your application, you can already share your bank account details stamped and signed by the authorised Director of your organisation.

## 6. Process of approval



For cases that obviously meet the criteria outlined in the guidelines, the case manager has the authority to make an immediate recommendation for funding, prepare the contract and present the grant for signature to the program director, who will sign off the grant. If in any doubt, the decision will be made jointly by the Case Manager and Programme Director.

In case of a rejection, the Case Manager will inform you of the reasons of the rejection. If you do not receive information on the rationale of a rejection, you have the right to request it from the Case Manager.

If you are concerned your application may be unjustly rejected, or you feel you have not been appropriately treated by the Project Team, you can appeal to the vetting committee through the following email address: [vettingcommittee@protectaidworkers.org](mailto:vettingcommittee@protectaidworkers.org)

The vetting committee serves as the complaints mechanism for the project and consists of a number of advisory board members, other outside specialists, and the program director. Additionally, on a regular basis the vetting committee meets to review sample cases that have been rejected and cases that have been funded, to verify continued alignment with agreed criteria, and where needed to adjust criteria.

In the case of exceptional situations that fall outside of the criteria, the vetting committee will also be asked by the project team to review the case and can approve exceptional cases that are critical to the wellbeing of humanitarian workers, even if not fully aligned with the criteria. Please ask for advice of the project team if you think this applies to your case.



## 7. The contract

Due to the source of the funding, coming from ECHO, all DG ECHO certified recipients of funding from the project become co-partners of the project, as per DG ECHO rules and regulations, as mentioned in: [Humanitarian Aid General Model Grant Agreement](#).

The co-partner however only is responsible for the implementation of the grant received and can only be held liable (in case of disallowed cost, etc.) for a maximum of the amount received.

As part of the agreement with the Protect Aid Worker project, you will be asked to sign an Accession form DG ECHO: <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/download/referencedocumentfile/164>

## 8. Accountability - the role of applicants

Applicants are expected to do their **own verification** on the cases presented to the project and the cost needed. The project will not normally, unless it has obvious reasons to do so, be double checking the information presented or checking through third parties what happened. This is for the applicant to do. Nonetheless, in case of a suspicion of provision of false information, fraud or abuse of the resources of the mechanism, the project maintains the right to do so.

As for **financial accountability**, the co-beneficiaries should keep all relevant supporting documents for the audit purpose and remain individually responsible for justifying the cost vis a vis DG ECHO. If you are unable to collect supporting documents, we recommend you to certify the details of the expenditure incurred in a separate document.

## 9. Data protection

Many of the cases submitted to the project can be very sensitive, for the privacy or even the safety of affected staff. Hence, the project has put in place a number of ways to ensure data protection:

- The project will minimise the number of people in the team that have access to the full case details.
- The approved application shall not be attached to the grant agreement, but only be referenced in the agreement by the *date and time of its receipt* by the project team. This is to avoid too many people and units having access to it.
- The project and the applicant will each designate only one person responsible for communication.
- Data protection for the project will abide by the conditions of the *General Data Protection Regulation (EU GDPR)*.



Furthermore, the Protect Aid Workers project will:

- Take appropriate measures to ensure case data in its original (non-anonymised) form is not accessible to anyone but the 3 individuals in the project team that are involved in Case management.
- Application data may only be shared with other finance or contract management staff after fully anonymising and removing *identifiers* of the individual.
- Data can be used for learning and evaluation purposes within the wider Protect Aid Workers project team, but only after fully anonymising and removing any possible identifiers of the individual.
- Only fully anonymised and aggregated (i.e., summarised and combined with a large number of other cases) data on cases will ever be shared externally.
- External auditors designated by the grantor or donor may be granted access, if strictly necessary, and under stringent conditions, to the un-edited source data, after signing an explicit confidentiality commitment.
- Ensure adequate protection of its IT systems to safeguard data.

#### **10. Where to submit**

Please send your application to [hotline@protectaidworkers.org](mailto:hotline@protectaidworkers.org)

You can call us on +33170845131 if you need advice or help with your application.