

VOLUNTARY TRUST FUND

Call for Project Proposals

For 2026 implementation

VTF BACKGROUND

Introduction

1. The objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which entered into force on 24 December 2014, include the establishment of the highest possible common international standards for regulating or improving the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms, as well as the prevention and eradication of the illicit trade in conventional arms and the prevention of their diversion.
2. Article 16(3) of the ATT provides for the establishment of a Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) to support national implementation of the Treaty and encourages all States Parties to contribute resources to the Fund.
3. The VTF was formally established in August 2016 by the Second Conference of States Parties to the ATT to operate under its Terms of Reference, as amended (ATT/VTF18/2018/SEC/251/ToR.Cons.Dr.v1.Rev1).
4. The VTF is financed through voluntary contributions by donor States, with contributions open throughout the year.
5. The VTF disburses funds for the implementation of ATT projects according to the provisions of its Terms of Reference and Administrative Rules. Where necessary, OECD DAC guidelines for development cooperation may also apply.

VTF Aim

6. The VTF aims to assist States requiring international assistance to implement their Treaty obligations, including with respect to legal or legislative assistance, institutional capacity building, and technical, material and financial assistance.

Administration

7. The VTF is administered by the ATT Secretariat. It is assisted by the VTF Selection Committee, which consists of nine (9) States Parties, including States that have provided financial contributions to the Fund and it seeks to ensure diverse representation.

CALL FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS

Applicable Timeline

8. Under this Call for Project Proposals the VTF will accept Grant Applications on Treaty implementation **from 25 September 2025 – 23 January 2026.**

Eligibility

9. The VTF Terms of Reference set out the following provisions on eligibility:

‘Any State Party to the ATT requiring assistance in the implementation of the Treaty may submit a project proposal.

Signatory States and other States having shown clear and unambiguous political commitment to accede to the ATT requiring assistance to implement the Treaty may also submit project proposals.

Assistance projects required by requesting States may be implemented by or in conjunction with UN agencies, international or regional organisations, civil society organisations or other competent bodies. Applicant must be the beneficiary country/countries’

Focus

10. The VTF accepts Grant Applications for projects that support States requiring international assistance to implement their Treaty obligations including in the areas of legal or legislative assistance, institutional capacity building, and technical, material and financial assistance.

Duration and Implementation Period

11. Unless agreed otherwise, all VTF projects shall have an implementation period of one year or less starting immediately after the signing of a Grant Agreement between the VTF and the grant recipient. Projects of longer duration and later commencement date may also be considered.

VTF Budget Cap

12. States are encouraged to submit project proposals of any size and complexity but are asked to note that a budget cap of US\$100,000 applies to projects where only one State is benefitting.

13. Please note that personnel costs in project proposals should not normally exceed 45% of the total project costs. In exceptional circumstances where highly specialised professional skills are required to implement a VTF project at a rate exceeding 45% of total project costs, a detailed motivation should be submitted together with a project proposal for consideration and decision by the Selection Committee.

Project's Co-funding

14. The VTF is open to co-funding of projects. However, VTF Grant Applicants are encouraged to secure a project funding partner prior to applying to VTF for project co-funding.

States' In-kind Contribution

15. States are requested to indicate any in-kind contribution (i.e. personnel, office space, etc.) they are making to the project to offset certain budget line items.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Application Forms

16. All VTF Grant Applications must be submitted using the VTF forms, which can be downloaded from the ATT website at: <https://www.thearmstradetreaty.org/voluntary.html?tab=tab3> in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. All fields of the Grant Application Form (Annex 1) and the Budget Form (Annex 2) are mandatory and must be completed in full.

17. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult the Explanatory Notes for Completing the Grant Application Form and Explanatory Notes for Completing the Budget Form when preparing their applications. Applicants are also encouraged to consult other assistance and guidance material available on the ATT website including the short videos on 'How to complete the Grant Application Form and How to complete the Budget Form'.

18. Applications submitted in any form other than the VTF prescribed forms shall not be considered.

Submission of Grant Applications

19. All VTF Grant Applications must be submitted by mail to: trustfund@thearmstradetreaty.org. With the VTF Grant Application forms being in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, **applications in Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish must be accompanied by an English translation.**

20. The deadline for submission of VTF Grant Applications is **23 January 2026** at 24h00 Geneva, Switzerland time.

Selection Process

21. The VTF project selection process is guided by the VTF Terms of Reference, in particular 'The General Principles for Implementation Assistance Projects under the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund'. These principles provide for both the eligibility criteria and the selection criteria.

22. **Phase One:** Received Grant Applications shall be pre-screened by the ATT Secretariat for compliance with the application requirements and/or eligibility criteria. The ATT Secretariat shall draft a shortlist of eligible projects, subject to approval by the VTF Selection Committee.

23. In addition to the shortlisted projects, applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria shall be fully documented, recorded and forwarded to the VTF Selection Committee for information.

24. To the extent possible, the ATT Secretariat will endeavour to advise the VTF Selection Committee of any overlap/duplication with projects funded by UNSCAR or other entities.

25. **Phase Two:** the VTF Selection Committee shall consider the shortlisted project proposals in accordance with the selection criteria set out in the VTF Terms of Reference.. Where required, shortlisted project proposals could be considered against OECD DAC guidelines for development cooperation, as well as any other conditionalities applied to donations.

26. The VTF Selection Committee shall decide on the list of project proposals to be funded under the available VTF budget for the 2026 project cycle.

Grant Agreement Preparation

27. Once a project has been approved, the ATT Secretariat shall enter into discussions with grant recipients to establish the project's control framework, facilitating financial transfers, reporting, monitoring and evaluation.

28. Upon completion of the project control framework, a Grant Agreement shall be concluded between the VTF and each grant recipient.

Checklist for the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund Proposal Application

- ☐ Have you used the latest **Grant Application Form** and **Budget Form** downloaded from the VTF webpage?
- ☐ Are both forms **signed and dated** by a government representative?
- ☐ Have you checked the boxes for VTF reporting and audit on the last page of the Grant Application Form?
- ☐ Have you provided details of previous projects funded by the VTF or other funding mechanisms?
- ☐ Have you clearly explained that the previous projects do not duplicate the proposed project, and instead, it builds upon and complements past projects?
- ☐ Is the **primary point of contact** a government representative responsible for day-to-day project operations?
- ☐ Is the information in both forms consistent, especially in **Section 6.7 (Project Activity description) and the Budget Form**, regarding:
 - ☐ Number of people involved
 - ☐ Number of travelers
 - ☐ Number of nights spent
 - ☐ Other logistical details
- ☐ (For a project involving one State) Is the project total budget less than or equal to **USD 100,000**?
- ☐ (For a project involving two or more States) Has any evidence been provided that other State(s) consent to the project?
- ☐ Are the budgets in both forms **identical**?
- ☐ Have you attached the **Excel version** of the Budget Form in addition to the **signed PDF version**?
- ☐ If your country is **not yet a State Party to the ATT**, have you included a letter demonstrating **clear and unambiguous political will** to join the treaty?¹
- ☐ If your application is written in a language **other than English**, have you attached an **English translation** for the VTF Selection Committee?
- ☐ Have you consulted with your project implementing partner (if you have one) their capacity to implement multiple projects in the same VTF cycle?

¹ This may include elements such as parliamentary deliberations, development of a national action plan, media campaigns or public outreach initiatives.