STRONG CITIES NETWORK: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
LOCAL PARTNERSHIP GRANTS (CENTRAL ASIA)

- **Donor Organisation:** Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD)
- **Eligible Organisations:** NGOs/ civil society organisations registered in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
- **Budget:** Maximum $5,000 USD per award
- **Length:** 3 months
- **Start Date:** September 2021 (pending availability of funds)

About the Strong Cities Network (SCN)

Led by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) and launched at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, the Strong Cities Network (SCN) is the first ever global network of mayors, governors and local practitioners united in tackling extremism, violence and polarisation in local communities in every major global region.

We help cities and local authorities design polices, practices and partnerships to enable locally-designed responses to these challenges that meet the needs of each local context. We provide our members with leading subject-matter expertise, practitioner training, and policy/leadership support.

SCN membership currently comprises 150+ cities, municipalities and local governments across more than 40 countries worldwide. We operate with a set of fundamental principles, agreed by all members, that protect and promote human rights and civil liberties in all aspects of our work to prevent violent extremism in all its forms.

SCN in Central Asia

The SCN started its expansion into Central Asia in 2019, welcoming new members from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and enhanced its partner network with international organizations and CSOs from the region. Together with its partner Global Centre for Cooperative Security (GCCS), the SCN also delivered the December 2019 Regional Practitioners' Workshop in Almaty, bringing together national and local government representatives to explore the role of local communities in rehabilitation and reintegration processes. Additionally, the SCN and GCCS conducted the online City Consultations in Central Asia, which provided a comprehensive regional threat assessment of national and city-level risks, and mapped key programming priorities. Five units of local self-government have since joined the network: **Aktau** and **Karaganda** (Kazakhstan), **Bishkek** (Kyrgyzstan), **Panjakent** (Tajikistan), and **Samarkand** (Uzbekistan).

Rooted locally and with a strong contextual understanding of drivers of extremism and communal violence, local governments and their partners have an overwhelming focus on service delivery and yet have little means to coordinate on important awareness-raising and community engagement on P/CVE issues. The SCN seeks to identify and bring together key local government stakeholders and community leaders to provide a forum for cities to share best practices on P/CVE. With the expansion of membership in the region and mapping out the key threats and priorities, the SCN will seek to support locally-led awareness-raising and community outreach activities that undermine divisive and extremist narratives and foster peacebuilding and social resilience. Through a small grants programme to civil society groups and exchange between city officials, the SCN will aim to deliver training and expertise tailored to local contexts and intended to inspire leading local-level P/CVE practice throughout the region.

This project is distinct from other P/CVE efforts in Central Asia with its unique focus on local government partnerships and coordination with local authorities. Success will depend on building cooperative partnerships at all levels of national and local government, cooperation and collaboration with other P/CVE efforts across the country where important, and fostering strong relationships and dialogue with government, public services and civil society. This coordination will be integral to the impact, credibility and ultimately the sustainability of our activities.

Request for Proposals

The SCN is seeking to fund a small number of local civil society or grassroots organisations to carry out projects in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which aim to build awareness, local coordination capacity and community engagement on P/CVE issues. Projects should proactively engage with local government officials throughout, building capacity for district/local governments to work more effectively with public services, civil society groups and their communities on awareness-raising and community resilience agendas to prevent extremism.

Projects are expected to take place over three months from September 2021 and be worth a maximum total of $5,000 USD. The SCN is particularly interested in funding promising and vibrant grassroots organisations who work directly with communities and have existing experience and strong partnerships with local government officials.

Applicants should aim for their project to engage with one local governments of one of the already existing SCN city members from the region mentioned above. Applications for other cities will also be considered, especially for activities in Shymkent and Almaty (Kazakhstan), Osh and Jalalabad (Kyrgyzstan), Isfara and Punj (Tajikistan) and Tashkent, Kokand and Namangan (Uzbekistan). Applicants can select other locales for programming, however they should outline their reasons for their selection, including why there is a need for P/CVE activities. All applications should clearly state the proposed project locations on their application form.

Successful applicant organisations will be expected to liaise regularly with the SCN team based in London, UK, and with a Tashkent-based SCN Local Prevention Coordinator.

Activities may include but are not limited to workshops, roundtable discussions, table-top planning exercises, community activities and training programmes and curriculum development. The SCN welcomes proposals with additional activities and innovative delivery and impact plans.

The SCN fully recognises the challenges of project delivery amid the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the various local restrictions in place on movement and gatherings. The SCN further recognises that a number of stakeholders will be necessarily prioritising public health and basic service to communities at this time. Applicants should therefore consider how their projects will look to operate under the current circumstances, as well as how a P/CVE agenda takes account of local priorities with sensitivity whilst recognising that such circumstances can potentially increase community vulnerability to divisive, extremist and potentially violent narratives in communities around the world. Applicants must describe how they intend to deliver their project activities under the present restrictions and how they will look to adapt to an unpredictable operating environment in the months ahead. The SCN encourages applications including online delivery components, video-conferencing, and online communication and coordination channels, as well as offline and community-based activities where/when possible at an appropriate scale.

The SCN reserves the right to award multiple or none of the completed applications submitted. Grants will be awarded in conjecture with quality, as evaluated through the criteria listed below, and perceived needs of the county, and is pending the availability of funds. It is not guaranteed that all cities will be represented in the final awarding of grants.

Objectives

Proposals must clearly outline how they will address all three objectives. The SCN strongly suggests that proposals should include baseline research to understand how to best design capacity-building activities.

1. Strengthened knowledge and awareness of local government officials around pressing P/CVE issues.
2. Improved capacities of local governments to develop multi-stakeholder coordination and planning mechanisms on P/CVE.
3. Increased cooperation between civil society and local governments on P/CVE through joint-planning and delivery of community awareness-raising activities and campaigns.

Key information for bidders

Mandatory Organisational Requirements

Applicant organisations must meet the following requirements and qualifications:

- Officially registered organisation in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Applications from individuals and government bodies will not be accepted;
- Proof of eligibility to receive funds for P/CVE purposes;
- Previous experience of working with international donors and partners;
- Demonstrated operational capacity in selected project location(s);
- Experience of designing and delivering P/CVE capacity-building trainings;
- Experience of designing and delivering awareness-raising campaigns, both online and offline;
- Strong project management skills, as evidenced by the successful delivery of projects and grants;
- Experience of developing partnerships with local government stakeholders and civil society organisations;
- Experience in monitoring and evaluating and able to demonstrate impact of projects;
- Ability to work proficiently in English for project management and reporting purposes and for activities engaging international partners and SCN staff. Daily project delivery in the eligible Central Asia countries is expected to be in local languages and/or Russian, including coordination with an SCN Local Prevention Coordinator based in Tashkent.

Evaluation Criteria

Bids will be evaluated and scored by a panel of ISD's senior programme and operations staff, in line with the below selection criteria and weighting. Applicants should note, as above, that practical project feasibility and organisational capacity will be carefully assessed in line of ongoing restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants must clearly demonstrate how they will deliver projects in these circumstances.

Clarity & Relevance (25%)

Proposals need to:

- Have clear and concrete project activities and objectives, communicated simply
- Achieve the objectives as outlined above
- Be realistic and achievable, considering the budget and timeframe
- Demonstrate understanding of the context and problem to be addressed

Innovation (10%)

P/CVE projects often use the same few activities to try to achieve the same objectives, with mixed results. Projects that think innovatively about different approaches will receive 'bonus' points from the innovation category.

Sustainability (10%)

The proposal must detail the legacy of the project after the close of the grant period. Activities must promote local ownership and institutional sustainability.

Scale & Beneficiaries (10%)

The scale and quality of impacts will influence project marking. Projects should seek to achieve the widest and/or most meaningful impact possible within the realistic boundaries of the project. They should also seek to measure that impact in a relevant and credible manner.

Ethics/Risks (5%)

Applicants should demonstrate that they take ethics and security risks seriously, and consider the risks of projects professionally and proportionately.

Feasibility (10%)

The team should have a well-developed, realistic plan to execute on the proposal, including a simple but comprehensive logic framework that includes outcomes, outputs and measurement indicators. Moreover, the team should have the right expertise and skills to execute on the proposal or have identified the right partners and domain experts needed for implementation.

Budget (20%)

Realistic and responsible budgets are an important part of our assessment of grants. Where existing investment can be unlocked or additional funding or in-kind support can be acquired to support project activities, this should be highlighted.

Organisational Capacity (10%)

In assessing applications, we will consider the 'added value' offer of the organisation/organisations involved in the project, especially where it develops networks and capacities or valuable collaborations. Grantees are expected to work with other stakeholders, in particular the local government or national government representatives in the county.

Timetable

5th July 2021	Call for proposals published
13th August 2021	Applicants submit complete proposal package to grantsteam@isdglobal.org by 1700 GMT.
18th August 2021	Preferred applicant organisation(s) to be notified
1st September	Start of contract (pending availability of funds)

Contractual Arrangement

The contract will be awarded by ISD and will enter into force from the date of its signing by both Parties, for the duration of the project until the satisfactory completion of all project deliverables and final reporting. The contract may be modified only through mutual agreement in writing signed by both Parties. The Partner shall not disclose nor communicate any confidential information relating to ISD's business activities to any third party, save where required by law or with the express written consent of ISD.

Submission guidelines

All applications must be submitted electronically in English and include the following documents. Applications not containing all four documents will not be considered.

- Application in the <u>provided application form;</u>
- Budget in the <u>provided template;</u>
- Letter of support from a local/district government official or staff member; and
- A copy of your organisation's registration documents.

There is no need to submit any other documents, supplementary attachments will not be reviewed by the evaluation team. Hand written applications will not be accepted. Application forms and budgets must be submitted to <u>grantsteam@isdglobal.org</u> before <u>1700 GMT on Friday 13th August.</u>

For any questions please contact **grantsteam@isdglobal.org**.