



**PACIFIC ISLANDS
FORUM SECRETARIAT**

**Programme for Strengthening Non-state Actors
(NSAs) Engagement in Regional Policy Development
and Implementation**

Guidelines for Grant Applicants

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1. Programme for Strengthening Non-state Actors (NSAs) Engagement in Regional Policy Development and Implementation

1.1. Background of the Programme

The Programme for Strengthening NSA Engagement in Regional Policy Development and Implementation seeks to promote good governance in the Pacific by opening up spaces for policy dialogue and by building capacity and ability of NSAs to participate effectively in regional policy and implementation.

Non-state Actors (NSAs) are defined as civil society organisations, non-government organisations, research institutes, think tanks, networks, issues-based coalitions, and organisations that represent the private sector. Refer to the footnote¹ for an expanded definition of NSAs according to the EU.

The main stakeholders of the programme will be regionally focused NSAs and national NSA umbrella organisations in 14 Forum Island Countries (FICs) and in Timor Leste, and indirectly the communities and groups they represent. This programme will ultimately support policies that reflect the needs and perspectives of civil society and that have been developed through a participatory process.

The programme will provide capacity development through a variety of training avenues and stakeholder workshops for NSAs to strengthen their engagement in policy development processes at the regional level, with positive flow-on impacts for the national level. It will also support NSAs to contribute to policy making processes, to monitor policies and, ultimately to help implement those policies. The programme will also support the development of an enabling environment for policy engagement through structured dialogue mechanisms between NSAs, PIFS and Development Partners.

¹ The EU considers CSOs as non-State, non-profit making actors operating on an independent and accountable basis. They include: nongovernmental organisations, organisations representing indigenous peoples, organisations representing national and/or ethnic minorities, diaspora organisations, migrants' organisations in partner countries, local traders' associations and citizens' groups, cooperatives, employers' associations and trade unions (social partners), organisations representing economic and social interests, organisations fighting corruption and fraud and promoting good governance, civil rights organisations and organisations combating discrimination, local organisations (including networks) involved in decentralised regional cooperation and integration, consumer organisations, women's and youth organisations, environmental, teaching, cultural, research and scientific organisations, universities, churches and religious associations and communities, philosophical and non-confessional organisations, the media and any non-governmental associations and independent foundations, including independent political foundations, likely to contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) Regulation.

1.1.1. The Grants Facility

The Programme includes an allocation of FJD 5 million for a Grants Facility. A Grants Facility has been designed to facilitate the award and disbursement of grants to non-state actors. The Grant Facility will establish governance and management arrangements, modalities of access, rules, procedures, templates, criteria, and monitoring and evaluation to guide the disbursement and utilisation of Grants.

The Grant Facility will award and distribute grants to non-state actors through Calls for Proposals. It is forecasted that there will be up to 1 to 2 Calls for Proposals launched per year in the first three years of the Programme implementation period.

1.2. Objectives of the programme and priority issues

The overall objective of the Grant Facility is **“to promote good governance in the Pacific and ensure that NSAs perspectives are reflected in effective regional policy development processes and dialogues.”**

The purpose of the Grants will be to support NSAs to translate their policy engagement into concrete mechanisms and actions, and to reinforce their linkages to their constituencies, and strengthen their internal governance and coordination structures.

The specific objectives of the Grant Facility are:

1. Create spaces for non-state actors to participate in, or influence regional policy dialogue
2. Strengthen linkages and information flows to constituent groups
3. Building capacity for meaningful policy dialogue
4. Research, analysis and advocacy strategy development around regional policy issues

Expected outcomes of this programme are increased active participation and contribution of non-state actors in regional policy development and implementation through the newly established regional public policy setting process - the Framework for Pacific Regional (FPR).

For more information on the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, visit the following URL:
<http://www.forumsec.org/pages.cfm/strategic-partnerships-coordination/framework-for-pacific-regionalism/>

1.2.1. Specific Objectives for this Call for Proposals

Lot 1 – Action at Regional Level

Objectives:

- Regional NSAs support and strengthen their national partners to effectively engage in national and regional policy dialogue
- Strengthened coordination of policy dialogue by Regional NSAs through consultation and engagement with national partners
- Regional NSAs present informed and consulted perspectives in regional policy spaces

Note: Letters of Support from each National Partner included in the action are required for Regional Level Activities.

Lot 2 – Action at National Level

Objectives:

- Strengthen National Umbrella NSAs to effectively participate in regional policy development and implementation
- Facilitate national consultative processes to feed into regional policy dialogues

2. Rules for this Call for Proposals

2.1. Financial allocation provided by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is **FJD 2 million**. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat reserves the right not to award all available funds.

Size of grants

Lot 1 – Action at Regional Level

Any grant requested under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- minimum amount: FJD 200,000
- maximum amount: FJD 500,000

Lot 2 – Action at National Level

Any grant requested under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- minimum amount: FJD 20,000
- maximum amount: FJD 50,000

Applications

The applicant **may not** submit more than 1 application under this Call for Proposals.

2.2. Eligibility criteria

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

- (1) the Applicant (2.2.1)
- (2) the Activity (2.2.2)
- (3) the Costs (2.2.3)

2.2.1. Eligibility Criteria for Applicants

In order to be eligible for a grant, the applicant must:

- be a legal entity²
- be established and operating in at least one Member State of the 15 PACPs³
- be non-Government and not for profit entity
- be operating at a regional level⁴ or as a representative / umbrella organisation⁵ at national level
- be willing to participate in a capacity assessment (refer to section 2.5.) as part of the overall evaluation process
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the activity
- have a operational organisation bank account in the PACP country in which the organisation is operating in.

² Certificate of incorporation or equivalent documentation is required as proof of legal status

³ Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

⁴ Regional focused NSA organisations that have demonstrated evidence of activities / linkages to constituents in at least 3 PACP countries

⁵ National representative / umbrella organisations refers to organisations that coordinate and/or represent the work and interests of a number of member organisations. They should have demonstrated evidence of membership and active linkages to with a network of organisations / constituents at national or community level in their respective countries.

2.2.2. Eligibility Criteria for Activities

Duration

Lot 1 – Action at Regional Level

The planned duration of the activity may not exceed **12 months**.

Implementation mode may include:

- Partnership with national⁶ partner organisations
- Capacity building and/or direct support to national organisations

Note: Letters of Support from each National Partner included in the action are required for regional level activities.

Lot 2 – Action at National Level

The planned duration of the activity may not exceed **12 months**.

Implementation mode may include:

- Country level activity to inform / influence policy process, this may include engagement with national level policy processes, but should ultimately draw some linkage with regional level policy.
- Institutional strengthening initiatives to enable effective engagement in policy development and implementation

Sectors or themes

As defined in section 1.2 above.

Location

Activities must take place in at least in one of the 15 PACP countries.

Types of Activities

The following types of activities are **ineligible**:

- activities which consist exclusively or primarily of capital expenditure, e.g. land, buildings, equipment and vehicles;
- activities which discriminate against individuals or groups of people on grounds of their gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or lack of them, or their ethnic origin;
- activities supporting political parties; and

⁶ National representative / umbrella organisations refers to organisations that coordinate and/or represent the work and interests of a number of member organisations. They should have demonstrated evidence of membership and active linkages to with a network of organisations / constituents at national or community level in their respective countries.

- activities which include proselytism (refers to the attempt of any religion or religious individuals to convert people to their beliefs, or any attempt to convert people to a different point of view, religious or not.).

Activities **eligible** for support by the Grant facility should be linked to the realisation of the Pacific Island Forum vision for a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives. The eligible activities include:

Research and Analysis

- Systematic approach to research, analysis and disseminating information on research topics of regional interest

Training/capacity building/institutional strengthening for the organization (grants for individuals will not be accepted)

- Activities for strengthening existing civil society platforms, networks and coalitions, including building of information sharing mechanisms and promotion of cohesiveness across constituencies
- Training and curricula development provided that it complies with the overall objective of the programme
- Strengthening the organisational, planning, management and accountability capacities
- Strategies to identify sustainable, diversified funding options

Consultative processes to guide / inform / influence policy

Awareness raising activities on regional policy processes or issues

- Advocacy campaigns
- Awareness raising and public communication and media activities

An exchange to share information and learning

- Activity designed to exchange information and promote learning from other's experiences.
- Support for secondments between organisations

Visibility

The Applicants must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the European Union have supported the activities. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat will provide the necessary visibility guidelines to successful applicants.

2.2.3. The Costs

Only ‘eligible costs’ can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for ‘eligible costs’.

2.2.3.a. Eligible Costs

Eligible Direct Costs

- a) the cost of staff assigned to the Activity (on time allocation basis), corresponding to actual gross salaries including social security charges and other remuneration-related costs; salaries and costs shall not exceed those normally borne by the Grant applicant, unless it is justified by showing that it is essential to carry out the Activity;
- b) travel and subsistence costs for staff and other persons taking part in the Activity, provided they do not exceed those normally borne by the Grant applicant according to its rules and regulations;
- c) purchase costs for equipment (new or used) and supplies specifically for the purposes of the Activity;
- d) costs of consumables, i.e. direct costs utilised for the purpose of the Activity;
- e) costs entailed by contracts awarded by the Grant applicant for the purposes of the Activity.
- f) costs deriving directly from the requirements of the Contract (dissemination of information, evaluation specific to the Activity, audits, translation, reproduction, insurance, etc.)
- g) duties, taxes and charges, including VAT, paid and not recoverable by the Grant recipient, unless otherwise provided in the Special Conditions.

Eligible indirect costs

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat-rate funding, but the total must not exceed 7 % of the estimated total eligible direct costs. Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another budget heading in the standard grant contract. The applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested before the contract is signed.

2.2.3.b. Ineligible Costs

Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest);
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- costs declared by the Grant recipient and financed by another action or work programme receiving an EU grant or another donor / development partner funded grant;

- capital expenditure, e.g. purchasing of land, buildings, vehicles;
- currency exchange losses;
- credit to third parties
- sub-granting or financial support to third parties

2.3. How to apply and the procedures to follow

2.3.1. Application Forms

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions on the **Grant Application Form** annexes to these Guidelines (Annex 1)

Applicants must apply in English.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions on the application form (e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications may be requested when the information provided is unclear and thus prevents the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Please note that only the application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in (Annex 2 - **budget**) will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the action. Additional information that is relevant to supporting the application form can be submitted as part of the overall application.

NOTE: Applicants are **required** to submit copies of their **certificate of incorporation**⁷, a recent **report on audited accounts** and the **audit management letter** as part of the overall application. The non-submission of these supporting documents would place the application as an incomplete submission at the opening session stage and may result in the application being eliminated from progressing to the evaluation stage.

⁷ or equivalent documentation is required as proof of legal status

2.3.2. Where and how to send applications

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat has 3 accepted methods for the submission of applications:

- a) Electronically
- b) By postal mail
- c) Hand delivery

The complete application form can be submitted through the following:

Email	Grants@forumsec.org
Post	GR03, NSA Programme Unit, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Private Mail Bag, Suva, Fiji
Hand Delivery	GR03, NSA Programme Unit, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Ratu Sukuna Road, Suva, Fiji

2.3.3. Deadline for submission of applications

The deadline for the submission of applications is **Friday 19th May 2017** as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip.

Electronic submissions must be submitted with clear labelling of the application documents.

- i. The Grant Application Form must be saved and submitted clearly labelled “A. Grant Application Form”.
- ii. The Budget Form must be saved and submitted clearly labelled “B. Budget”.
- iii. Additional supporting documents must be saved and submitted clearly labelled “C. Supporting Documents”

Please note that the maximum email file size allowed for electronically submitted documents is **10mbs**.

Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected. The Secretariat will advise applicants of the receipt of their applications within two days.

2.3.4. Further information about applications

Questions may in addition be sent by e-mail no later than 10 days before the deadline for the submission of applications to the specified email address below, indicating clearly the reference of the Call for Proposals:

E-mail address: Grants.Enquiries@forumsec.org

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date. Replies will be given no later than 7 days before the deadline for the submission of applications.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, affiliated entity(ies), or specific activities.

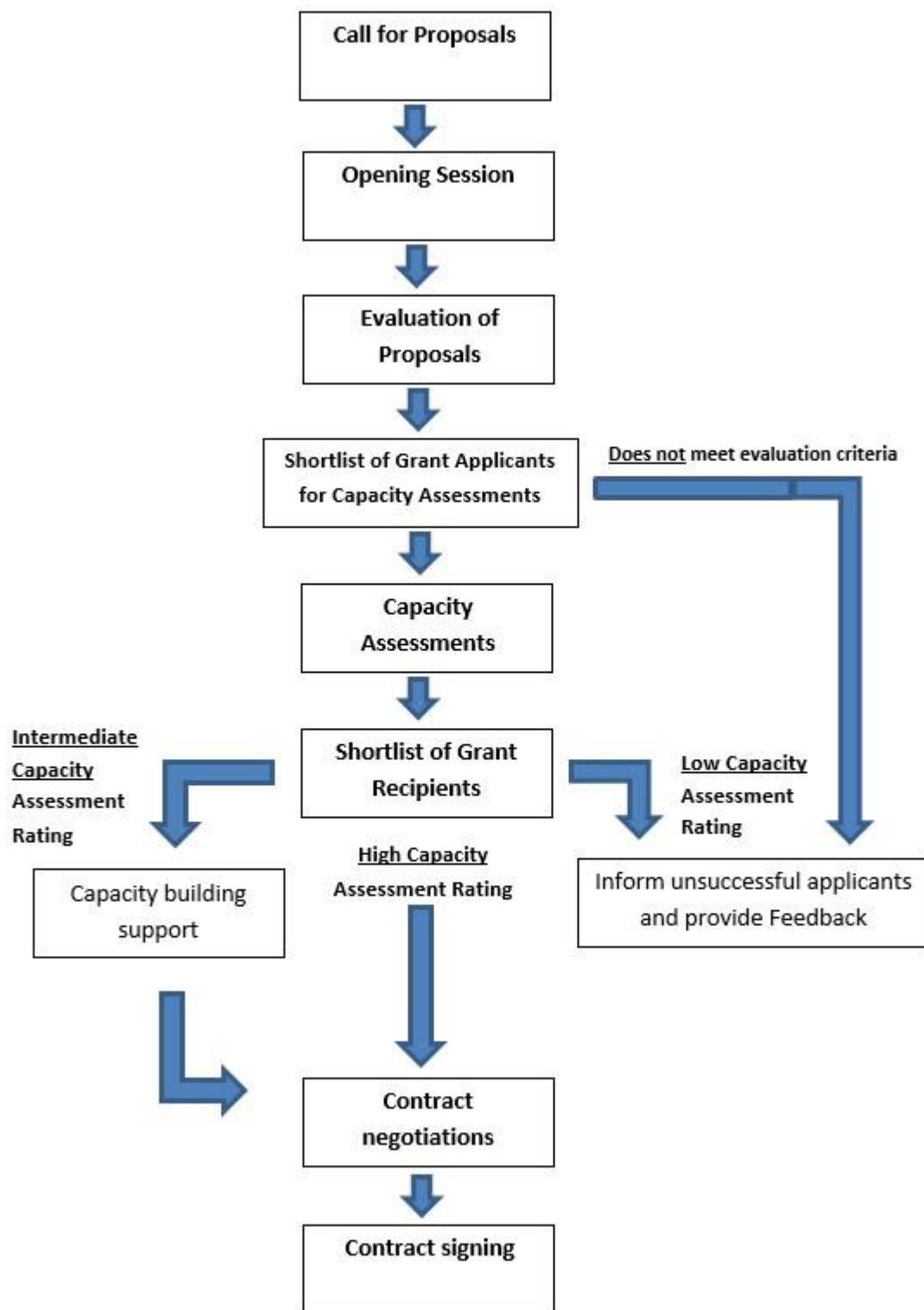
Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat NSA microsite: <http://grants.forumsec.org/>. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

2.4. Evaluation and selection of applications

Applications will be examined and evaluated by an evaluation committee established by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat which comprise of a non-voting chairperson, a non-voting secretary and 5 voting members (the evaluators) with the possible assistance of external assessors.

All actions submitted by applicants will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

2.4.1. Evaluation process and selection of applications



2.4.2. Evaluation criteria

The Evaluation Committee will assess all Grant applications using a standard evaluation criteria.

Scoring:

The evaluation grid is divided into sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Section	Maximum Score
1. Design and Relevance of the Activity	30
1.1 How relevant is the overall design of the concept to the situation analysis? In particular, does it reflect the analysis of the issues involved, take into account external factors and relevant stakeholders? Does the proposal contain specific added-value and crosscutting elements, such as environmental issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, or innovation and best practices	5*2
1.2 How relevant is the proposal in addressing NSA engagement in regional policy development processes and dialogues?	5*2
1.3 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (stakeholders, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately? Have the relevant constituent groups been adequately consulted? For regional organisations, in which PACP countries are the relevant constituent groups based?	5*2
2. Effectiveness and feasibility of the activity	35
2.1 Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the proposal's objectives and expected results?	5*2
2.2 Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outcome of the action? Is any evaluation planned? Is it clear how success will be defined?	5
2.3 Does the proposal contain inclusive approaches to engagement and participation of target groups?	5*2

2.4 Does the proposal identify clear communication initiatives that will add value to the outputs and outcomes of the activity(ies)?	5
2.5 The implementation schedule of the activity(ies) is clear and achievable	5
3. Sustainability of the activity	15
3.1 Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5*2
3.2 Is the proposal likely to have multiplier effects? (Including scope for replication, extension and information sharing.)	5
4. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the activity	20
4.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5*2
4.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5*2
Maximum total score	100

2.4.3. Short-listing of Grant Applicants for Capacity Assessments

Upon the completion of the evaluation of all concept notes received, the Evaluation committee will compile a shortlist for potential Grant recipients for the next stage of evaluation – Finance and Management Capacity Assessments.

The ranking of Grant recipients will be done according to the evaluation score of the Grant application and budget proposal. The funding ceiling of this Call for Proposal (2.1.) will determine the number of Grant applicants shortlisted to progress to participating in the capacity assessment process.

2.5. Finance and Management Capacity Assessment of Shortlisted Applicants

A Finance and Management Capacity Assessment of the shortlisted applicants will be conducted by an independent assessor on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. The purpose of conducting this process is to assess the institutional capacities of the shortlisted grant applicants to manage grants.

The Finance and Management Capacity Assessments will assess the following information from the shortlisted applicants:

- i. **Governance and Control Environment** – Governance oversight structure, organisation structure, policies and procedures, risk assessment and management, reporting, monitoring, control activities, and resources.
- ii. **Accounting** – Internal accounting system and policies
- iii. **Independent External Audit** – evidence of independent external audits
- iv. **Grant Management** – evidence of experience in grant management

Time and dates for the capacity assessments will be coordinated with shortlisted applicants. The onsite capacity assessment is expected to be conducted and completed within a day. The assessor may request some documentation prior to their visit. The sample finance and management capacity assessment template is attached as [Annex 3](#).

2.5.1. Capacity Assessment Ratings

The Finance and Management Capacity Assessment results will group shortlisted grant applicants into one of the following categories of grant management capacity:

High Capacity

The organisation appears to be well managed and with appropriate governance structures in place. It has relevant policies and procedures in place and they appear to be implemented and followed. The organisation has sufficient resources and adequate systems to manage its finance and accounting appropriately. On the whole, the risk that the organisation will not be able to appropriately manage the grant amount requested is considered to be low.

Applicants with high capacity will be recommended to progress to final contract negotiations.

Intermediate Capacity

The current management and governance structure of the organisation is sufficient for it to meet its existing requirements (which includes existing donor requirements). There are some policies and procedures in the organisation, but they do not cover all areas and / or some are not sufficiently documented / formalised. The organisation is able to survive with its existing resources and keeps track of its finances to allow it meet its basic internal and donor reporting requirements. There are areas for capacity building at the organisation which are proposed below. On the whole, the risk that the organisation will not be able to appropriately manage the grant amount requested is considered to be moderate.

Applicants with intermediate capacity will be recommended to progress to discussions on short term strengthening of capacity gaps/weaknesses before contract negotiations

Low Capacity

The organisation does not have sufficient level of management and / or governance structures in place. There is lack of formal or informal policies and procedures and / or the entity does not have a system which ensures consistent execution of policies and practices. The finance

and accounting function is deficient and does not allow for adequate monitoring of the entities finances. The organisation lacks adequate resources (people and / or other resources). On the whole, there is high risk the organisation will not be able to appropriately manage the grant amount requested.

Applicants with low capacity will be recommended to progress to discussions on options for longer term strengthening of capacity gaps/weaknesses.

Does Not Meet Minimum Capacity Standards

The organisation does not meet minimum level of for accounting procedures / management and / or governance structures in place. Applicants in this category will be informed of their capacity assessment results.

2.5.2. Capacity Building Support

In some instances, the independent assessor may make recommendations to strengthen applicant's financial and administrative systems in order to comply with PIFS requirements for grant management.

There will be provisions for capacity building support for shortlisted grant applicants that satisfy minimum capacity assessment requirements. Capacity building support will be largely on strengthening the shortlisted applicant's financial and administrative systems before the awarding of the grant.

2.6. Final Shortlist of Grant Recipients

A capacity assessment summary containing findings and key recommendations of grant applicants will be reviewed by the evaluation committee.

The final shortlist of Grant recipients will be selected based on the review of the following elements:

- i. Evaluation score of Grant application and proposed budget
- ii. Finance and Management Capacity Assessment ratings

The final shortlist of Grant recipients will be submitted by the evaluation committee to the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat's Secretary General or Deputy Secretary General for review and decisions on awarding the grants.

2.7. Notification of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat's (PIFS) decision

The applicants will be informed in writing of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat's decision concerning their application and, if not selected, they will be provided with feedback on the decision accordingly.

2.7.1. Indicative timetable

	DATE
Publication Date	Wednesday 13 th April 2017
Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat	Monday 8 st May 2017
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat	Thursday 11 th May 2017
Deadline for submission of Grant applications	Friday 19th May 2017
Opening session	Monday 22 nd May 2017
Commence Evaluation of Grant applications	Tuesday 23 rd May 2017
Provisional list of grant applicants for finance and management capacity assessments	Monday 29 th May 2017
Finance and management capacity assessments of shortlisted grant applicants	May-June 2017
Notification of award and Contract Negotiations	June 2017
Contract signature	July 2017

2.8. Conditions for Implementation after the Contract Authority's Decision to Award a Grant

Following the decision to award a grant, the Grant recipient will be offered a contract based on the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat's standard grant contract (Annex 4 of the Guidelines).

3. Check List for Grant Applicants

Please ensure the following documents are submitted:

- Completed Annex 1 - Application Form
- Completed Annex 1a – Indicative Implementation Timetable
- Completed Annex 2 - Budget proposal
- Copy of Certificate of Incorporation
- Copy of recent report of audited accounts and audit management letter

Note: Applicants are reminded that the omission of any of the above documents may place their application as an incomplete submission at the opening session stage and may result in the application being eliminated from progressing to the evaluation stage.