

ALIGN Convening Fund Terms of Reference

The ALIGN project is inviting proposals for its first Convening Fund. The Convening Fund aims to support events that stimulate thinking and support knowledge exchange and debate, share best practice, and advance learning and transformative action on gender norms and processes of norm change. This round of the Convening Fund will support events in the Global South, with an intention to fund at least one event in Africa. The Convening Fund will provide opportunities for researchers, policymakers and practitioners to connect and share knowledge in-person, and to contribute to ALIGN's digital platform and Community of Practice (CoP) for learning and innovation on gender norm change.

1. About ALIGN

Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms (ALIGN) is a four-year project to establish a digital platform (www.alignplatform.org) and support an emerging Community of Practice centred on gendered norms affecting adolescents and young adults. ALIGN seeks to advance understanding and challenge and change harmful gender norms by connecting a global community of researchers, policymakers and practitioners committed to gender justice and equality for adolescents and young adults.

ALIGN is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and is led by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

2. About the ALIGN Convening Fund

2.1. Aim of the fund

This funding will support events/convenings that meet/achieve the following aims. Applicants should demonstrate how they plan to meet/achieve each of the following aims in their proposal:

1. To stimulate thinking and knowledge exchange to advance learning and promote dialogue/debate on gender norms and norm change.
2. To enable researchers, policymakers and practitioners across a range of constituencies working on gender norms to connect, to promote collaboration and relationship-building.
3. To share lessons on gender norms and norm change within the Global South.
4. To enable consolidation of lesson learning for sharing with the ALIGN Community of Practice.

2.2. What themes should the events focus on?

The ALIGN Convening Fund will fund events that are explicitly focused on gender norms and gender norm change.

The event must clearly explain how it will inform an understanding of gender norms.

Events should also focus on **at least two** of the following thematic areas:

1. Underlying drivers of gender norm change

2. The role of legislation and policy in supporting gender norm change
3. The importance of social movements for promoting and supporting gender norm change
4. The role of individuals in gender norm change
5. Community support for gender norm change
6. The role of religious groups in gender norm change
7. The role of media in supporting gender norm change

We particularly invite events that promote linkages between research, policy and practice.

2.3. What type of events will be funded and what outputs should be produced?

The ALIGN Convening Fund will fund several international, regional and/or national convenings, up to a total budget of £60,000. The maximum budget is £30,000 for large international/regional events and £15,000 for national events.

Events can be in any format so long as they respond to the criteria of this ToR.

There must be outputs produced as a result of the event. These could take several forms – from a series of papers pre-produced for the event by panellists/contributors (following a call for abstracts), to a succinct conference report, to more innovative outputs such as graphical illustrations/visualisations, videos of key highlights or participant interviews, and/or short policy briefs outlining recommendations. These will be considered for post-event publication/promotion on the ALIGN platform.

3. Application process

3.1. Timeline of key dates

The deadline for submitting applications is 28 June 2018.

Any applications received after this time will be discounted and will not be eligible for consideration.

The application form consists of two documents: a technical proposal and a financial proposal. Both technical and financial proposals can be downloaded from the ALIGN website at www.alignplatform.org/funding.

Please make sure you submit **both forms** otherwise we will not be able to accept your application.

Completed application forms must be submitted to align@odi.org.uk. Please title your email 'ALIGN convening fund application'.

We expect to notify applicants of the preliminary outcome of their submission **by 15 July 2018**. Any funding offers will be made subject to clarifications and requested modifications.

Only eligible applications (see Section 3.2) will be evaluated by the Review Panel according to the evaluation criteria set out in Section 3.3.

Successful awards are expected to start as soon as within two weeks of the contract being signed.

3.2. Eligibility criteria

The following eligibility requirements must be met to enable assessment by the ALIGN Review Panel. Failure to meet any of the criteria below will result in your application being excluded from further consideration.

Mandatory:

- The event must be held in a low- or middle-income country and at least 50% of attendees must be from the country/region.
- Participation must be commensurate with the budget proposed.
- The events must take place between September 2018 and February 2019. Event outputs need to be completed, submitted and approved by the ALIGN team by 31 March 2019.

Preferred:

- We particularly encourage applications for convenings held in Africa, although applications for convenings across all world regions will be considered.
- We are receptive to co-funding from applicant organisations to increase the size/scope of the event.

Requirements

Eligible organisations and individuals:

- The application must be submitted by a registered organisation (NGO, private sector institute, think-tank, etc.) rather than individuals.
- The organisation must be able to demonstrate management, administrative, logistical and legal capacity to organise convenings (arranging for necessary insurances, and security of the participants).
- The applying organisation and any proposed partners (if applicable) must have a proven track record of organising local/regional conferences, events and convenings (must have organised at least two previous convenings or events).

Budget size:

- The budget is £15,000 for a smaller/national event and up to £30,000 for a larger, regional or international event. Costs must be commensurate with the size of the event.

Language of proposals:

- Applications must be completed in English. Events may be held in other languages but translation/interpretation costs must be included in the available budget and final outputs must be delivered in English.

Format of application

Only fully completed ALIGN application forms (a technical proposal **and** a financial proposal) will be accepted.

Technical proposal:

- Only ALIGN technical proposals in .doc or .docx format will be accepted – applications in any other format or template will be rejected.
- Word limits as set out in the application form will be strictly enforced. Any text over the word limit specified for each section will be deleted and will not be made available to reviewers, which may compromise your application.

Financial proposal:

- Only ALIGN Excel template will be accepted.
- All costs specified in the budget are inclusive of VAT or any other taxes (where applicable).
- A maximum of 10% overhead costs is allowed within the total budget.
- When developing your budget consider costs of translation/interpretation, copy-editing, design and layout of publications and digital outputs, dissemination of the event and its outputs.
- The technical proposal, budget and Gantt chart must be consistent and have sufficient detail to determine clarity, feasibility and value for money of the overall proposal.
- If applicable, clearly spell out any in-kind contribution in the financial proposal in a separate line.

Number of applications permitted:

- Organisations may submit more than one proposal either as the lead organisation or in partnership with another organisation, provided these are substantively different. If proposals are not substantively different, the ALIGN Review Panel reserve the right to disqualify a proposal for review.

Application standards:

- Prospective awards must focus on gender norms.
- We expect the highest standards in research ethics and applications should consider any ethical issues regarding vulnerable participants.
- Applications should demonstrate the peer review (by technical experts) and quality assurance process each written and digital output will be subject to. The chairs of the ALIGN Review Panel and at least one other advisor will provide basic feedback and sign off final outputs.
- Applications should include a commitment that all outputs will be made available for public/open access. The ALIGN team will aim to post all outputs which are a strong fit to ALIGN's mission and learning needs onto ALIGN's digital platform and help disseminate them via ALIGN's networks.
- Applications must reveal value for money (defined as demonstrating economy, efficiency and effectiveness within the proposed budget). Any in-kind or matched funding will also be positively assessed.

3.3. Evaluation criteria

The ALIGN management team will evaluate eligible applications as per the evaluation criteria cited below, drawing on thematic and technical experts to advise where applicable. The highest scoring proposals will be shortlisted (there is no minimum score threshold for shortlisting).

Each shortlisted proposal will be individually assessed by experts representing relevant thematic and geographic expertise.

Application review criteria:

- **Strategic value (15%):** clear and compelling aims, objectives, target audiences, impacts and outputs that demonstrably align with the wider aims of the ALIGN Convening Fund.
- **Convening power (15%):** demonstrable evidence that the applicant is well positioned to attract and engage influential thought leaders, policy-makers, practitioners and researchers to the event (demonstrating intellectual rigour/credibility), spanning a strategic geographic and constituent reach.
- **Substantive merit (15%):** compelling ideas for substantive research discussions and event outputs, demonstrating high levels of knowledge/expertise on, and conceptual understanding of, gender norms, and clear/close alignment to the thematic areas/topics listed in section 2.2.

- **Practical viability (15%):** demonstrable evidence that the event will be smoothly and realistically planned/managed/delivered, with reporting requirements met; evidence that the event is logistically possible given budget, timeframe and capacity constraints, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities (the proposed composition and experience of the team should demonstrate the required experience and abilities); evidence that the event will be subject to sound risk-management, safeguarding and ethical policies (with a clear assessment of risks and mitigation measures).
- **Strong and appropriate approach (7%):** clearly defined event formats, compositions and approaches that align with/further the event's stated aims/objectives, and which account for diverse representation of panellists/participants.
- **Scope and reach (7%):** ambitious but practical ideas for engaging the targeted audience in the event and afterwards in the dissemination of its outputs, including relationships with proposed partner organisations and use of outreach channel in dissemination activities (proven access to established outreach and promotional channels).
- **Longevity and impact (7%):** demonstrable evidence that the event both builds on and informs a wider programme of work (within the applicant's organisation and/or beyond), leading to longer-term uptake of findings and outcomes.
- **Relevance and context (7%):** a clear narrative of how the event aims to inform or influence a wider local, national, regional or international agenda (priorities in research, policy or practice) and why it is relevant and well positioned in the time and place proposed.
- **Value for money (7%):** evidence that the event will be managed efficiently and effectively within budget, offering a solid return on investment.
- **Innovation (5%):** ideas and proposals for useful/relevant and innovative event outputs.

3.4. Our engagement

The Fund Review Panel: The ALIGN management team will review all proposals, with expert input from a multi-disciplinary panel of advisors on gender norms and event management. ALIGN management team members and independent thematic experts will review the applications against the criteria outlined above. All written and digital outputs must also be peer-reviewed by technical experts for quality assurance purposes. Final outputs will be signed off by the ALIGN management team.

Programme office: In coordination with partners, the ALIGN operations team will support the financial management and risk monitoring of successful applications.

Communication and research uptake team: The ALIGN operations team will also provide guidance and support to successful applicants on the co-branding of outputs and may advise on communications, dissemination and public affairs activities (to be determined once a funding offer has been made).

Reporting: Successful applicants will be required to report on financial expenditure at the end of the project, as well as to have regular check in communication on the progress of the activities with the ALIGN team.

3.5. Contact

For any queries please contact align@odi.org.uk