



**The Africa Regional Democracy Fund Program
Guidelines**

Dear Applicant,

We are pleased to provide you with information related to the Africa Regional Democracy Fund (ARDF), including program guidelines, application instructions, and contact information. Applications are available online at <https://cm.usembassy.gov/education-culture/small-grants-program/>, upon request via email to grantsyaounde@state.gov, or at the embassy's main entrance. Please read all information carefully before completing the application form. All applicants with strong projects matching the fund requirements may complete and submit their application for consideration via email or to the address indicated below:

**The Africa Regional Democracy Fund
Embassy of the United States of America
B.P. 817 Yaoundé**

Selection Timeline

Application deadline: July 14, 2019.
Selection period: July-August 2019
Award period: August – September 2019

We receive a high number of proposals each year and we try to respond to each applicant. If you have not heard from us within one (1) year of submitting your application, please request the status of your application via email at grantsyaounde@state.gov.

Important Reminders

The Africa Regional Democracy Fund Application Form is FREE of charge and the Embassy DOES NOT require any payment to receive and evaluate a project.

- Submit filled, typed and signed ARDF application form
- Provide a detailed budget (Excel) and a timeline for completion
- Fill and submit the SF-424 Federal Assistance Application form (If preselected)
- Do not submit any documents not requested in these instructions
- If your project is chosen for consideration, an embassy representative will contact you to discuss your proposal and verify the information on your application as appropriate.
- Remember to include a current mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address
- Make a copy of the application and all supporting documents for your records
- Send the original completed application to the U.S. Embassy, preferably via email at grantsyaounde@state.gov.

Contact Information

**Address: The Africa Regional Democracy Fund
Embassy of the United States of America
B.P. 817 Yaoundé**

Email: grantsyaounde@state.gov
Telephone: 2220-1500 Ext. 4171 or 4544
Fax: 2220-1503
Office Hours: Monday through Thursday 7:30 am - 5:00 pm and Friday 7:30 am - 12:30 pm

Thank you for your interest in the **Africa Regional Democracy Fund**. We look forward to hearing from you.

NB: The U.S. Embassy expects to receive funding for the ARDF program before September 30; Grant awards are contingent on the receipt of funding. If the program is not approved, no grants will be awarded under this call.



Introduction

The purpose of the ARDF for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance is to strengthen democratic institutions, improve governance, and promote respect for human rights in Cameroon. The ARDF provides assistance to Cameroonian organizations that seek to implement short-term, highly targeted activities designed to show measurable results. Last year, ARDF funding supported organizations in all ten regions of Cameroon. Typical ARDF grants are approximately USD 20,000 (approximately 10 million francs FCFA); they may not exceed USD 25,000 (approximately 12.5 million francs FCFA). A single group may not apply for more than one grant in a given funding period. Organizations that have successfully partnered with development agencies in the past and that can provide audited financial statements will be more competitive for this program and stand a greater chance of receiving ARDF funding.

Basic Project Requirements

The U.S. Embassy will consider funding only those projects that:

- Funding ceiling is \$25,000;
- Are initiated by Cameroonian organizations (excluding the executive branch of the Cameroonian Government);
- Promote governance, political pluralism and respect for human and civil rights;
- Benefit a large number of people
- Include activities, expenditures and timelines that are consistent, reasonable, and within the ability of the organization to implement;
- Can be completed within one year, without requiring further ARDF assistance; and
- Respect environmental norms.

Basic Project Reporting

ARDF grantees will be required to:

- Submit quarterly reports (financial and activity) to the U.S. Embassy;
- Ensure that expenditures are supported by adequate documentation and that funds are expended for their intended purposes;
- Maintain basic financial records for the duration of the funded activity, and for a period of three years after submission of the final invoice and the project's conclusion.

Project Categories and Acceptable Activities

• Protection and Human Rights Systems and Policies

Support systems to prevent and address human rights violations through early warning, monitoring, investigating, and reporting. Promote respect for human rights and support human rights defenders through utilization of national, regional, and international legal systems for human rights protection and enforcement. Harmonize domestic laws and policies with international human rights standards; promote the adoption and implementation of human rights and labor standards; and sponsor legal aid and other assistance for victims of human rights violations. Support the work of National Human Rights Commission[s]. Integrate human rights into training for security sector actors, teachers, civil society leaders, journalists, religious leaders, and government officials.

• Civic Education, Citizen Participation, and Public Accountability

Support activities that advance citizen engagement to hold governments accountable and to participate in economic, political, governing, and other critical process aimed at creating more peaceful, democratic, and pluralistic societies. Promote citizen engagement in local decision-making processes, such as through participatory budgeting processes and public-private dialog for economic development priorities. Examples of other activities include, supporting CSO and citizen advocacy efforts; backing citizen monitoring and oversight initiatives; and strengthening citizen engagement in service delivery. Activities in this element relate to the role of civil society in holding public institutions accountable (watchdog role).



Unacceptable Activities

ARDF funding may not be used to conduct the following activities or purchase the following items:

- Paramilitary activities, and prohibited from supporting police and other law enforcement forces (even if the proposed activity is consistent with programs described above.);
- Construction of buildings;
- Purchase of vehicles;
- Recurring administrative costs such as building or equipment maintenance, rent, office supplies, or administrative salaries;
- Travel outside of the project locations;
- Conferences or workshops that lack a specific and clearly-articulated goal;
- Research projects without a results-oriented component;
- Humanitarian assistance or support for refugees (unless human rights related);
- Activities that do not directly encourage or promote increased respect for civil and human rights;
- Purchase of pharmaceuticals, pesticides, or fertilizers;
- Activities to influence the outcome of elections;
- Training or advising, support for police, prisons, other law enforcement forces, military, or any program of internal intelligence or surveillance.

Selection and Award Process

The program is highly competitive. Historically, less than ten percent of applicants receive funding each year. If a project is selected for consideration, a representative from the U.S. Embassy will contact the applicant to further verify the application information. The selection committee will base its decision on the potential impact, feasibility, and financial soundness of the proposed activity. The committee will consider the record of accomplishment of the organization proposing the activity as well as its contribution to the project. The selection and award process consists of several steps as follows:

- The ARDF staff will review all the applications and select a preliminary list of projects
- The ARDF committee will review the preliminary list and compose a list of potential grantees
- The ARDF staff will work with potential grantees on suggested updates to their project proposals. During this phase, the Grants Officer makes the final recommendation to the committee and submits a final list of projects for the Ambassador's approval
- The Ambassador and the project's representative sign the agreements and the grants are awarded.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be reviewed in two phases according to their administrative compliance and their quality assessment. Projects which fail to fulfill the administrative compliance requirements will be excluded from further consideration.

➤ **Administrative Compliance**

The application was submitted on the form posted on the embassy's website or collected from the Embassy and submitted within the announcement's deadline; form is complete, proposal meets program requirements and application includes all the supporting required documents.

➤ **Technical Assessment (50 points)**

Assessment will be conducted by an evaluation panel on a scale from 0 to 50 points and recommendation for an award will be based on highest scores and total program funding:

A. Project justification, goals and benefits (20 points)

The proposal addresses a specific problem that affects the community and proposes a project that will improve the political and/or social conditions. It targets an adequate number of people and describes how it will benefit the target population.



B. Sustainability (10 points)

The project has a concrete and realistic strategy for continuation and follow-up to assure sustainability of results beyond project completion.

C. Budget and budget justification (10 points)

The budget description should detail all funds requested. The estimated expenditures of the proposed activities are necessary, reasonable, and realistic for the implementation of the project. Budgets submitted should follow the budget format provided, and filled in an Excel spreadsheet. Please also specify whether matching funds and other contributions are pending or secured.

D. Organizational capacity and experience (5 points)

Applicants must show capacity to implement the scope and scale of the proposed work and the ability to successfully complete the project within the proposed budget and timeline. Organizations that have previously carried out similar or other human rights projects may be ranked higher during the evaluation process.

E. Timeline (5 points)

Project timeline should be feasible within 12 months, appropriate and connected to project goals and budget.

How to Apply for the Fund

- Complete the application form and attach additional pages if necessary. The application form is available online or can be requested via email at grantsyaounde@state.gov ;
- Type clearly and answer each question as best as possible;
- All applications must include a specific project budget with cost estimates and a timeline;
- The project's representative must sign the application form ;
- Send the original completed application to the U.S. Embassy.