

Knowledge Management Fund 2021 Information, Application Process and FAQs

Overview

The Knowledge Management Fund (KMF) is the Knowledge Platform's fund to support activities arising from its network. The small-scale grants awarded by the Fund offer a low barrier to entry for pioneering, agile and experimental proposals. The aim of the Fund is to strengthen policies and programs, particularly in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings (FCAS), by diversifying thinking and evidence in the Security & Rule of Law (SRoL) field.

The KMF is a €200,000 annual fund that awards grants of up to €20,000 for events, research ideas and innovative projects that contribute to high-quality knowledge and learning in the SRoL field, *and* the subsequent use of that knowledge and learning in programming and policy.

The 2021 KMF Thematic Headline is *Asymmetric Power & Partnerships*, with subthemes focused on *Change & Learning Processes* and *Examining & Improving Policy*. The Thematic Headline and the subthemes are provided to help KMF applicants frame their proposals and focus on *outcomes*. They also reflect the specific added value of the KMF: addressing emerging priority areas, seizing opportunities to strengthen SRoL policy and practice, and feeding research outcomes and original ideas into the SRoL sector. They are purposefully broad to leave as much scope as possible for applicants to generate knowledge in their specialist thematic and geographic areas.

The KMF is divided into three strands: Events, Research, and Innovation. This helps applicants maintain focus on the *method* by which they try to achieve their aim of seizing opportunities, harnessing potential, and producing original insights to improve the quality and use of knowledge in SRoL programming and policy.

Thematic Headline 2021

Asymmetric Power & Partnerships

Applicants' submissions will be assessed on their alignment with the above headline. Applicants may freely choose their topical focus within the Security and Rule of Law (SRoL) field: (*inter alia*) human security, justice & security sector reform, security governance, conflict & climate change, informal justice, political governance, access to justice, violence prevention, transitional justice, peacekeeping, peace processes and political representation.

Please read the explanation of the headline below carefully, as well as the subthemes. Each are instructive for how submissions will be assessed. Not every topic within the security and rule of law field will automatically be considered relevant. Each applicant will need to justify their topical focus, their approach, and how these contribute to rebalancing "Asymmetric Power & Partnerships" and affirm the role of local actors for strengthening SRoL programs and policies.

Asymmetric Power & Partnerships

The world turned upside down. Depending on your vantage point, this may be a troubling description of current times - the unraveling of norms, standards, and institutions previously relied upon. Or it may be a hopeful aspiration for the future - the opportunity for transformation after a series of unexpected global shake-ups. In either case, it points to a moment of imbalance, of both risk and possibility.

In 2021 The Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law will be directing its instruments and attention toward aspects of asymmetry in Security & Rule of Law (SRoL) policies, programming, and partnerships. This is both in response to and support of our community's growing focus on shifting power dynamics and how this historical moment calls for - and might enable - a re-balancing.

For a more robust exploration of this year's Thematic Headline, [please click here](#).

As additional guidance, please review the following subthemes. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their project will harness the potential to, either, (a) Examine & Improve SRoL Policy, or (b) contribute to Change & Learning Processes. However, applicants are also free to explain how their project harnesses potential in other ways that work toward strengthening SRoL programs and policies.

Examine & Improve Policy

There is an increasing demand for evidence and research in SRoL policymaking. While new research is being generated every day, there are still many assumptions underpinning SRoL policy that could be supported or nuanced by evidence. These might include the assumed positive effect of particular SRoL interventions or policies. There are also opportunities to put forward new policy ideas, for example, more nimble policy responses to the increasing evidence on the role of non-state security and justice providers. This subtheme encourages applicants to identify opportunities to make an impact on such issues, by seizing important junctures in policymaking, convening key players and thinkers, capitalizing on building trends, and shedding light on new policy options. Projects could focus on (*inter alia*):

- generating new evidence or identifying 'what works' within the SRoL policy field
- promoting existing evidence, demonstrating its applied potential to a wider audience
- digging deeper into an encouraging, potentially impactful emergent research finding
- seizing an opportunity to inform a policy-formation process with compelling evidence

Such projects should identify clear opportunities within a specific SRoL policy or policy area and, where possible, produce findings that, if applied, could lead to improved policy impact.

Change & Learning Processes

This subtheme focuses on harnessing the potential for *how* change and learning happens in the field of SRoL. Specifically, projects will be assessed according to how compellingly they demonstrate their potential to galvanize, scale up, or institutionalize the mechanisms by which SRoL actors, organizations and institutions learn and adapt. This can happen in various ways: between organizations, within programs, through feedback loops between practice and policymaking, or by focusing on how insights gained or knowledge generated is identified and subsequently applied. Example areas for action might include (but are not limited to):

- opportunities to pilot, accelerate or scale up a promising new SRoL practice
- bringing more attention to an exciting area of SRoL learning and innovation
- enabling people or organizations to practically diverge from conventional practices
- allowing research methods or partnerships to adapt more effectively to fragile contexts

- overcoming barriers to embrace more adaptive programming approaches

Projects under this headline should produce new practices, test ideas or generate knowledge about change and learning processes relevant for and shareable with the wider KPSRL community.

Aims and focus

- The KMF is particularly interested in bringing wider and more diverse perspectives and sources of evidence into SRoL policy and programming.
- Applications are open to any consortium or individual with the ambition to improve policies, programs or knowledge in the field of security and rule of law in fragile and conflict affected settings. Think-tanks, (I)NGOs, academics, universities, private sector organizations, government institutions, journalists, independent researchers or innovators, local governance authorities, and data specialists are all welcome to submit proposals.
- Partnerships between individuals and organizations and across the range of sectors within our network are highly encouraged. In particular, the KMF welcomes partnerships that link people from different regions of the globe.
- Preference is given to those projects focused on the Dutch MFA policy priority regions: the Middle East and North Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel.
- The KMF will only fund costs that are directly attributable to the project, up to €20,000. All costs – especially salaries, personnel and fee days – must be substantiated and justified. The KMF will not cover overheads or any expenses that fall outside the budget agreed in the signed contract. All applicants must contribute an additional 20% to the funds sought. Please see below and [the budget template](#) for the full budget guidelines and requirements.

How to apply

Interested parties will be asked to submit a brief Expression of Interest form by clicking "[Submit Expression of Interest](#)", on the KPSRL website, [Knowledge Management Fund](#) page.

For those projects that are invited to submit a full proposal (Sept. 28th, 2021), the application form and criteria scorecard template will be shared to help prepare those submissions. Invited applicants will have a window of time between September 28th-October 22nd to submit their Full Proposals.

Once a full project is approved, the Secretariat will contact the grantee to discuss deliverables, budgets, and the division of labor between the Secretariat and the applicant(s) in more detail. What is agreed upon will be drawn up in an award letter and signed by the Secretariat and the applicant(s). All projects will be expected to begin by December 15th, 2021, and close by September 15th, 2022.

Project strands (Full Proposals)

The KMF is made up of three strands to which you may apply: Events, Research, and Innovation. Each strand funds different kinds of activities and initiatives that, collectively, aim to produce original insights to help the KPSRL improve the quality and use of knowledge and learning in programming and policy. The KMF is interested in three dimensions of knowledge: production, dissemination, and use. Each application must achieve at least one of the following:

- generate new research – it fills gaps where there is insufficient knowledge or expertise available

- link existing knowledge and actors – it addresses a lack of awareness or understanding of existing knowledge
- break down the barriers for learning and change within or between people, institutions and organizations – it addresses use of what knowledge and learning already exists, which is either ignored or not made available to policymakers and programmers.

For Full Proposals, each individual strand has its own assessment criteria. (At the Expressions of Interest phase, these criteria are not yet applied.) The following schema can help you decide which strand to apply to, should you be invited to submit a full proposal.

Knowledge Management Fund (KMF)			
	Events	Research	Innovation
WHAT?	The Events strand is designed for events such as workshops, roundtables, conferences and seminars.	The Research strand offers opportunities to respond to clear gaps in knowledge and understanding.	This strand is specifically designed to provide a safe space for testing (failing) and learning by enabling low-risk trial and error.
FOR WHO?	It is for applicants wishing to discuss, disseminate, or debate issues related to one of the thematic areas.	It is for applicants who will conduct small-scale studies to address knowledge gaps and spur knowledge uptake.	It is for applicants who wish to try out of the box approaches with a high potential for impact, even if success is not guaranteed.
ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES	Initiatives may include but are not limited to, learning events, the dissemination of research findings, debates, or policy development or capacity building workshops. These events may be one-off or part of a thematic series. This fund may not be used for research.	This may be through primary research, fieldwork, desk studies, or literature reviews. While research should be the main focus, projects can include subsequent and related activities such as organizing research dissemination and presentations, and validation workshops.	It will support activities that generate and test innovative ideas, theories, and approaches to address the problems inherent within the SRoL field; highlight and help policy makers prepare for emerging issues; and/or present research in innovative ways more conducive to learning and uptake.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who can apply?

Applications are open to any consortium or individual with the ambition to improve policies, programs or knowledge in the field of security and rule of law in fragile and conflict affected countries. Think-tanks, (I)NGOs, academics, universities, private sector organizations, government institutions, journalists, independent researchers or innovators, and data specialists are all welcome to submit proposals.

Partnerships between individuals and organizations and across the range of sectors within our network are highly encouraged. In particular, the KMF welcomes partnerships that link people from different regions of the globe.

2. When can I apply?

This year's application process consists of two phases: Phase I) an initial call for brief Expressions of Interest; and Phase II) an invitation-only call for Full Proposals. Based on the quality and thematic relevance of the Expressions of Interest, we will invite a select number of applicants to submit a full proposal.

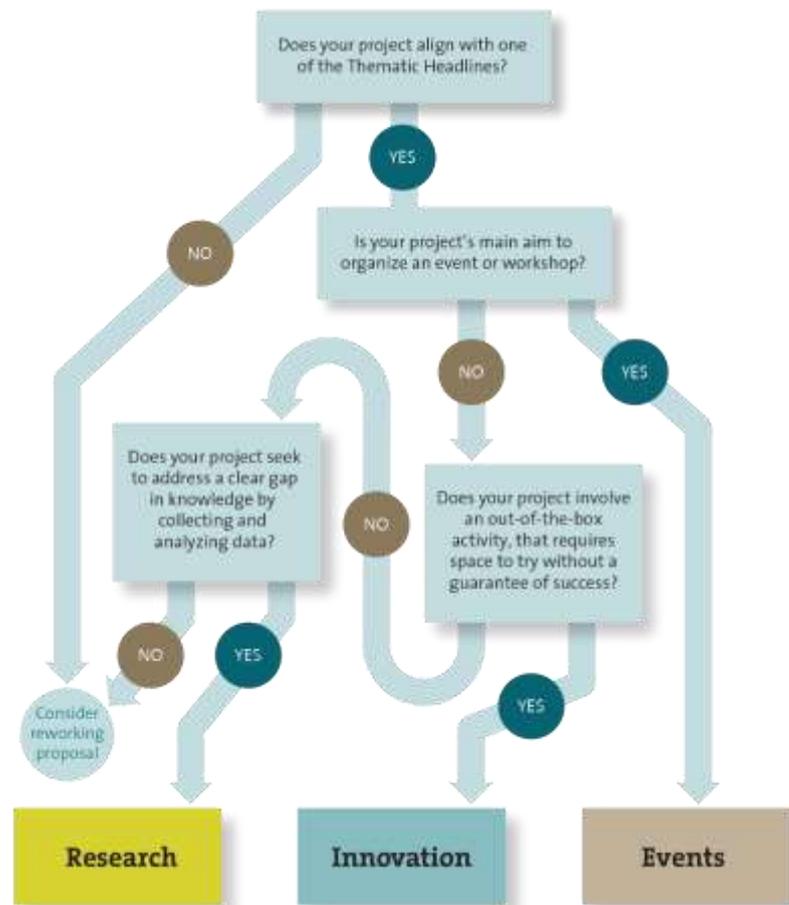
	Phase I: Expressions of Interest Due	Phase II: Full Proposal Invitations Sent	Phase II: Full Proposals Due	KMF Recipients Awarded	KMF Projects Start
Dates	Sept. 6 th 2021	Sept. 28 th 2021	Oct. 22 nd 2021	Nov. 16 th 2021	Dec. 15 th 2021

3. Which of the three strands should I apply for?

As a rule of thumb, if your application involves only events, workshops etc. then your application should be submitted under the **Events strand**. If your application is at all Research based then you may not apply to the Events strand.

For research projects, that is, pilot studies, proof of concept studies, methodology testing, literature reviews and other activities focused on collecting and analyzing data, we encourage you to apply for the **Research strand**. While research should be the primary focus, projects under this strand can include organizing subsequent and related activities such as organizing research dissemination and presentations and validation workshops.

If your idea is committed to experimentation to address potential for strengthening practice or policy within the SRoL field, or looking at fresh ways to present and disseminate research and knowledge or to stimulate learning, then the **Innovation strand** is best for you. See the following flow chart for clarification.



4. How much can I apply for?

The fund will award grants of up to a maximum of €20,000. There is no minimum amount, however, the Secretariat will assess each grant's level of impact against the administrative burden involved in allocating and managing it.

All applicants must commit to providing (in-kind) contributions amounting to at least 20% of the total award sought, and use the [budget template](#) to propose how they will do this (e.g. if the KMF Funding you have sought is €10,000, your minimum applicant contribution should be €2,000).

5. How long does each grant last?

Projects last 9 months and must commence by December 15th, 2021. The projects may not extend beyond September 15th, 2022.

6. What will the KMF not fund?

The KMF will not fund overheads or indirect costs. The KMF will not cover any expenses not agreed in advance in the budget within the signed contract. For full information please see the [budget guidelines](#).

7. What is an "applicant contribution"?

"Applicant contribution" or "co-funding" entails any in-kind contribution by the applicant to any of the existing budget items, supplementary to the budget requested from the KMF. The applicant

contribution is in addition to the KMF Funding (e.g. if the KMF Funding you have sought is €10,000, your minimum applicant contribution should be €2,000). The applicant contribution should not imply or include double funding of the same budget item. However, budget items can be split between separate funding sources.

8. Is there an opportunity to present at the KPSRL Annual Conference?

There must be some public presentation of the results of the project in order to ensure that the entire community can benefit, as detailed in the assessment criteria. One of the preferred ways of doing this is to host a session at the Annual Conference in October 2022, though this cannot be guaranteed.