

Call for proposals for projects in Asia (2025-2027) with a focus on Promoting Social Protection for Workers

Development cooperation of the North-South Network within DGB Bildungswerk BUND (Education Institute of the German Trade Union Confederation)

The trade union development cooperation of the North-South Network within DGB Bildungswerk BUND (DGB BW) aims at the implementation of political, economic and social human rights, decent work for all, fostering of democracy and gender equality at work and in society for sustainable economic and social development minimizing existing inequality. To that avail, the North-South Network supports the development and consolidation of strong, democratic, politically and financially independent trade unions and organisations defending the interests and rights of the working people. For the funding of projects in the Global South, DGB BW receives public funding from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The call for projects for the next period focuses on promoting comprehensive and inclusive social protection for workers

Social protection is a human right. It provides access to health care and income security and covers life risks, be it old age, accidents, illness, pregnancy etc. Yet, still in 2020, 4.1 billion people or 53.1 per cent of the global population were not covered by any type of social protection scheme. From the working age population, only 30.6 percent fall under comprehensive social security schemes as prescribed by law. For women the situation is even worse. They enjoy significantly lower social protection coverage and substantially lower benefit levels than men as result of lower labour force participation rates, higher levels of part-time and temporary work and of informal employment.

The Covid-19 pandemic put a spotlight on social security systems. Those countries with well elaborated systems did principally better facing this unforeseen challenge. Nevertheless it became clear that most vulnerable groups of workers were not covered adequately, in particular women in the informal sector. In Asia, the prevalence of informal work is particularly high. The majority of people working in the informal sector are not covered by social security at all. But even in the formal sector, social security systems - where they exist - are underdeveloped and do not provide adequate protection for workers.

The fight for adequate social security coverage for workers has been a fundament of the trade union movement. For South and South East Asia, enforcing comprehensive, inclusive and universal social protection is key for reducing gender and socio-economic inequality and for further promoting better lives for workers.

Based on the analysis above, there are different routes for trade unions in order to enforce inclusive social protection and better social protection schemes. Trade union can e.g. *address labour market inequalities and fight against structural disadvantages* in the labour market as well as a low labour market participation of marginalized groups. They can also *advocate for inclusive labour protection schemes and social security systems reforms*, e.g. recognizing care work in social protection schemes, significantly expanding access to public non-contributory social protection schemes.

Within the frame of this call for proposals projects can implement the following activities of union training, information, advocacy and counselling (non-exclusive list):

- Sensitizing workers, trade unions, governments, civil society etc. for the importance of universal social security protection as a human right and a measure to reduce inequalities
- Supporting trade unions and their members to analyse structural disadvantages in social protection schemes and to advocate for reforms on the shop floor as well as on national or international level
- Supporting trade unions and their members to analyse structural disadvantages for marginalized groups in access to labour market and to enforce respective changes
- Supporting trade unions and their members to analyse structural disadvantages for women in the world of work which affects their social protection benefits, such as gender pay gap, job insecurity caused by gender based violence etc.
- Supporting trade unions and their members in their capacity as collective representatives of workers' interests in order to enforce inclusive and universal social protection as well on the shop floor as on national level
- Overcoming fragmentation of unions and promoting the unity of trade unions along with their capacity for joint campaigning for universal social protection.
- Building coalitions with other relevant social actors in order to enforce a more balanced labour market participation of women and men and/or to promote inclusive social protection schemes.
- Advocating for a more equal distribution of care work by investments in the care economy and support to the professionalization and formalisation of care work as well as paid parental leave for both women and men that allows for a more equal division of care responsibilities between parents.
- Supporting trade unions in assisting workers in improving their social protection.
- Supporting the establishment and consolidation of independent and democratic trade union structures based on a broad membership.

Long-term orientation and micro, meso and macro leverage of projects

All projects of the DGB Bildungswerk aim to contribute to social change. Social change cannot be reached in just three years. Therefore, it is intended to continue for two or even three project phases with three years each. In consequence, projects should have a concrete project objective which can be reached in three years and a longer-term objective which will be reached at the end of the full cycle (usually 9 years). Project applicants need to have an idea of how the successive three-year phases of the cycle build on each other to achieve the longer-term objective.

Furthermore, projects will have to include results on different societal level, the so-called micro, meso and macro level:

Micro level: is directed towards individuals. Interventions on the micro level strives to directly improve the living and working situation of individual persons, e.g. workers and their families.

Meso level: changes at this level go beyond the individual. On this level, interventions strive to strengthen and build capacities of organisations and groups set up and joined by workers.

Macro level: is directed towards socio-economic and political changes on a broader societal level. More parts of society are affected than just the direct target groups. Trade unions involve other social groups, political actors and stakeholders.

For further information see annex 5 of this call for proposal "definition of micro, meso and macro level results in international cooperation projects of the DGB Bildungswerk"

Target groups

Direct target groups of the projects should be: workers, trade union members, leaders and activists, full-time and voluntary trade union officials, trade unions and workers' interest groups. Besides these, families and dependents of workers, governments or representatives of public institutions, employers, international organisations (including ILO, IOM, development banks), civil society organisations or the public may additionally be involved as direct or indirect target group.

Regional limitations

Eligible for funding are any projects in South Asia and Southeast Asia with the exception of countries that are not listed on the *DAC List of ODA Recipients* of the OECD: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2022-23-flows.pdf>

Scheduled project duration

1 January 2025 – 31 December 2027

Guidelines for application and funding

Who is eligible for funding?

- Union federations and confederations; unions of national scope; regional organisations of the ITUC or of the GUFs; pro-union NGOs and such engaging in labour issues; union-affiliated or pro-union oriented research institutions and educational providers
- The implementing agency (applicant) will have to be from South or Southeast Asia

Prerequisites for funding

Prerequisites for the applicant organisation:

- Registered (non-profit) organisation or legal person with statute and board or management
- HR and professional resources for the application, execution and accounting of a project in accordance with the BMZ provisions
- Financial independence, activities independent of third-party funding. Organisation will have sufficient own resources to bear financial project risks (non-eligible expenditure) autonomously
- Accounting able to identify project funds separately; experience in managing international projects will be advantageous
- As for unions: concordance with the political guidelines of DGB, ITUC, Global Unions¹ and/or their regional organisations
- Organisation with a democratic and independent constitution

Conceptual project prerequisites:

- In-depth analysis of the dimension of problems in the country and in the area where the project is supposed to intervene
- Realistic project planning implementable within three years, including then of start of project, implementing phase and end of project
- Incorporating a project objective to be reached after three years as well as a longer-term objective to be reached after 9 years of project phases built upon each other
- Results on micro, meso and macro level (see above and annex 5 to this call)
- The project is orientated towards sustainability, i.e. also after the end of the project cycle measures can be still implemented by the applicant organisation and the target group will continue to profit from the results after termination of funding
- In line with DGB and ITUC goals

Financial scope of project

Proposals with annual budgets between EUR 80,000.00 and EUR 120,000.00 may be submitted. The annual scope of the project should not exceed 35 percent of the organisation's annual budget.

Participative project planning

¹ <http://global-unions.org/-about-us-.html?lang=en>

DGB BW attaches great value to participatory project planning which from the outset takes into consideration the opinion and perspective of the unions, their officials and members as well as the employees. During the preliminary stages of project planning, it must involve the most important organisations/persons participating in the project. Project planning should consider that

1. The project goals can be reached within the duration of the project (effectiveness),
2. The project results continue to have a positive effect on the target group even after the completion of the project funding (sustainability),
3. All genders (men, women, non-binary, transgender, intergender etc.) have access to the benefits and offers created by the project (gender equality).

Eligible expenditure

For the funding of projects in the Global South, DGB BW receives public funding by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Therefore, the funding underlies German law and must be accounted according to the provisions of the German Federal Budget Law. The financial and administrative prerequisites for project funding by the BMZ will be the basis for this (Federal Budget Law, Funding Directive by the BMZ). See also annex 7: Financial guidelines for BMZ supported projects.

Generally, the following expenditure can be funded:

Training and counselling activities in the project countries. These include all expenditures related to the preparation, follow-up and implementation of national, regional and local events such as conferences, seminars, workshops, group events; information and advisory services; drawing up of application-oriented studies, information and training material for trainers and participants;

Staff and project infrastructure of the applicant organisation executing the project on site (local partner) directly necessary for the implementation of the project. These include skilled and unskilled workers contracted for the project; short term skilled workers; material resources and costs for the ongoing business in so far as the expenditure is necessary for the project and cannot be accounted for otherwise.

The local partner shall provide an **own contribution to the project** which could be a financial contribution or as a contribution in kind. Contributions in kind include, for instance, the free use of the organisation's office and conference rooms for the use of the project, library services (where available), provision of internet and other communication media, work-capacities of organisation's employees not paid for by the project like technical support (data processing), reception, secretary and accounting services, supervision and coordination of the project by the management of the organization and/or board.

Generally, only expenditures accrued after the start of the project (i.e. 1 January 2025) are eligible. Any costs for preparation and application etc. cannot be reimbursed.

Project application and authorisation

Applications for projects under this call for proposals may be submitted until **31st October 2023** to DGB BW. Applications should be made in **English**.

Applications to be sent by e-mail to
proposalNSN@dgb-bildungswerk.de

The application consists of the following documents, to be submitted as separate files:

1. Completed application form (annex 1)
2. Project budget (annex 2)
3. Completed information on partner organisation (annex 3)
4. Constitutions/statutes, approvals in country (copy of the registration as a local organisation or approval as a trade union, certificates of registration/incorporation)
5. Declaration of intent of the applicant organisation's Board or Management (local partner) and, as the

- case may be, of further partners as provided in the project
6. Copy of the last financial statement, audit report;
 7. Evidence of tax payments
 8. Completed checklist (annex 4)

If necessary, further documents may be requested. The shortlisted applicant organisations (local partner) will receive preliminary information stating interest on the part of DGB BW in the proposed project presumably in January 2024. However, a definite positive response can only be issued after application and authorisation by the funding agency BMZ and is not to be assumed before October 2024. The DGB BW will organize together with the designated partner a planning workshop in the first quarter of 2024 for the detailed preparation of the project preceding the final application with the funder (BMZ). DGB BW will finance this workshop.

Contractual arrangement and project implementation/reporting

After authorisation of the program by the funding agency, DGB BW concludes the contracts with the partners.

Start of project is usually 1 January, in this case 1 January 2025.

Within the framework of the regular project, the partners will report semi-annually and annually on the project results. Financial reporting is monthly. After the end of the project, the partners will draw up a narrative report and a financial report on the entire project duration.

Cooperation of partners during implementation of project

The applicant organisation on site (local partner) is responsible for the actual application and implementation of the project. DGB BW provides monthly advances for the project activities to the partners upon their request. Financial reporting is done on a monthly basis.

The local partners must commit themselves to implement the project in accordance with the planning, the budget and the monitoring instruments agreed upon with DGB BW. Furthermore, the local partners must commit themselves to provide any necessary information on the project and particularly to present the original vouchers and receipts for any audits of DGB BW, of an auditor appointed by DGB BW or of the funding agency BMZ. The partner must also agree to have project results examined in internal and external evaluations.

DGB BW is responsible for providing the authorised funds to the amount agreed to the local partner, for monitoring implementation and the results of the project (monitoring and evaluation, see below) and for providing technical support to the extent agreed, e.g. through the provision of short term experts and international contacts.

For the implementation of the project and to reach the set goals, a regular monitoring of the project implementation and of the intermediate project results is indispensable. Monitoring is an instrument for project managers and for the organisations implementing the project to gain important insights information into the project's success, e.g. if the chosen activities are contributing in effect to the attainment of the goals, if external or internal factors are influencing the project in a negative or positive sense or if the realisation of the project is otherwise threatened. Following this information, modification to the original project design and/or the planning of activities can be made. DGB BW uses an impact-oriented approach to that avail and supports its partners with the introduction and implementation of the respective instruments. The impact of the project activities is at the centre of monitoring: What has changed for the participants or target groups of the project activities after the project activities? How do they make use of the lessons learned / the material provided / the funded structures to sustainably improve their situation?

Further to that, the projects are to regularly undergo an internal self-evaluation. This may be conducted with or without the assistance of DGB BW or external experts.

Towards the end of the project, an external evaluation ought to be carried out by an independent service provider.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Project proposal form

Annex 2: Project budget (Excel file)
Annex 3: Administrative information of the applicant organisation
Annex 4: Checklist of documents to be submitted
Annex 5: Definition of micro, meso and macro result levels
Annex 6: Indicators and their development
Annex 7: Financial guidelines for BMZ funded projects
Annex 8: Principles of DGB Bildungswerk BUND