ITALIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNAZIONAL COOPERATION

DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

OFFICE I
THE HEAD OF OFFICE

Courtesy Translation;
This English translation is provided for convenience only;
in the event of any discrepancy or inconsistency,
the Italian-language documentation shall prevail.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS.

BANDO WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY 2026 - APPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INITIATIVES AIMED AT IMPLEMENTING THE FIFTH NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ADOPTED PURSUANT TO UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 1325 (2000) ON "WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY" AND SUBSEQUENT RESOLUTIONS.

Art. 1
Call for Proposal

1. Pursuant to Decree No. 2111/366 of 4 August 2026, through this Public Notice, Office I of the Directorate General for Political Affairs and International Security (DGAP) of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) intends, by means of a public procedure, to invite proposals for the granting of voluntary contributions for the implementation of initiatives aimed at implementing the Fifth National Action Plan (NAP), adopted in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1325 (2000) on "Women, Peace and Security" and subsequent resolutions.

2. This Public Notice establishes the subject matter, criteria, procedures and deadlines for the granting of contributions charged against Budget Chapter 3415, Management Plan 19, within the limits of the relevant annual financial allocations.

3. Office I of the DGAP reserves the right not to allocate all or part of the funds covered by this Public Notice where all or part of the project proposals received are procedurally inadmissible, substantively ineligible or manifestly illogical, or where the applicants are deemed unsuitable for funding.

4. The DGAP reserves the right to allocate the resources referred to in this Public Notice to commitments other than those outlined herein should needs arise that are deemed to take priority, at the sole discretion of the Administration. Timely notice thereof shall be provided through the MAECI website (www.esteri.it).

Art. 2
Eligibility requirements for applicants

1. The following entities may submit an application for the contribution referred to in Article 1, in accordance with the procedures set out in Article 3 below:

a) Italian public entities and international organisations;

b) Italian and foreign private entities having their registered office within the territory of the European Union.

2. Entities belonging to one of the categories referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article may apply provided that they meet the following requirements:

a) they are not subject to any of the grounds for exclusion referred to in Article 94 et seq. of Legislative Decree No. 36 of 31 March 2023;
b) they are in compliance with the tax, social security contribution and insurance obligations established by the applicable Italian legislation;
c) they are in compliance with the anti-mafia documentation requirements pursuant to Article 85 et seq. of Legislative Decree No. 159 of 6 September 2011.

3. Each entity may submit only one application. Where an entity submits two or more applications, only the application submitted most recently within the deadline referred to in Article 3, paragraph 4 below shall be taken into consideration for the subsequent evaluation procedure.

4. Failure to meet one or more of the requirements set out in this Article shall render the application for a contribution ineligible.

5. Applications may also be submitted for projects already under way, provided that they are not financed under another budget chapter of the MAECI budget.

Art. 3
Documentation requirements

1. The applicant shall submit to Office I of the DGAP, in accordance with the procedures set out in paragraph 4 of this Article, the application for a contribution and the self-certification declaration based on the template contained in Annex A, signed by the legal representative. Where the documents bear a handwritten signature, a copy of the signatory's identity document shall also be attached. The application shall include the following documentation, in either Italian or English:

a) a descriptive note concerning the project proposal for which financial support is requested. The note shall not exceed four thousand words and shall comply with the requirements set out in Article 4 below;
b) a timetable of activities indicating the relevant implementation periods, taking into account that:
   - the ranking list referred to in Article 5, point 6 below is expected to be published by 10 October 2026.
   - the report on the activities carried out and the detailed final financial statement referred to in Article 7 below shall be submitted to Office I of the DGAP no later than thirty days after the completion of the project activities;
   - the project activities shall end on 31 December 2026;
c) a summary, not exceeding one thousand words, of any previous activities carried out by the applicant entity in support of women's rights and/or in implementation of Resolution No. 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions within the framework of the "Women, Peace and Security" Agenda;
d) a financial statement, prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the attached Guidelines, providing a detailed item-by-item description of the expenditure to be incurred, distinguishing between costs borne by the applicant entity and/or any other contributors and costs borne by Office I of the DGAP. All such expenditure shall be strictly related to the project submitted. Any item relating to general administrative expenses shall not exceed 10% of the total costs actually incurred for the project and approved during the financial reporting process. Any amendments to the financial statement shall not alter the characteristics of the project described under point (a) of this paragraph and shall be approved in advance by MAECI;

e) a declaration stating that the entity does not receive any other MAECI contributions for the same project;
f) a declaration indicating the start and end dates of the project activities;
g) a declaration concerning the applicable VAT regime, based on the template contained in Annex D.

2. The following documents shall also be attached to the application as certified true copies of the originals:

a) the instrument of incorporation and the articles of association of the entity;
b) the final financial statements for the 2025 financial year, approved by the competent statutory bodies. Where such financial statements are not yet available, the final financial statements for the 2024 financial year shall be attached, together with a declaration stating that the final financial statements for the 2025 financial year are still being finalised and indicating the expected timeframe for their completion;
c) the budget forecast for the 2026 financial year and any related budget amendment, approved by the competent statutory bodies. Where the budget forecast for the 2026 financial year is not yet available, the budget forecast for the 2025 financial year and any related budget amendment, approved by the competent statutory bodies, shall be attached;
d) the statutory auditors' reports on the aforementioned financial statements, where an auditing body is provided for under the articles of association of the applicant entity;
e) a list of the public and private funding and contributions received in 2025;
f) the staffing structure, indicating permanent employees and the members of the governing bodies;
g) a summary list of the facilities and equipment available to the entity for the performance of its statutory activities;
h) the administrative details of the entity, including its registered name, address, contact person and email address and, for Italian entities, its tax identification number and/or VAT number;
i) the treasury account number or bank details to which any contribution awarded is to be credited.

3. The contribution granted by MAECI to each entity shall not exceed the total amount of EUR 140,000.00 (one hundred and forty thousand/00). In all cases, the contribution shall not exceed 80% of the total cost of the entire project.

4. The application for a contribution shall be submitted to Office I of the DGAP together with the documentation referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article, using the application form and self-certification declaration attached to this Public Notice as Annex A. The application shall be prepared as a single PDF file, not exceeding 14 megabytes, initialled on every page, and sent to the certified email address dgap.contributi@cert.esteri.it, marked "For the attention of Dr Giovanni Zanfarino or his delegate**", no later than 11:59 p.m. on 18 September 2026, Rome time**. The certified date and time of receipt of the email shall constitute proof of timely submission. Applications received after the mandatory deadline shall not be taken into consideration.

5. Where the documentation submitted fails, without valid justification, to comply with the requirements set out in this Article, the application for a contribution shall be deemed ineligible.

Art. 4
Requirements for proposed activities

1. When selecting the initiatives to be funded, Office I of the DGAP shall award the contributions referred to in Article 1 above, taking particular account of the following requirements:
   a) the proposed activities shall fall within the implementation of the Fifth National Action Plan adopted pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1325 (2000) on "Women, Peace and Security" and subsequent resolutions, including promotion, monitoring

and evaluation activities. Preference shall be given to activities having a concrete and measurable impact in the locations where the projects are implemented;

b) applicants shall demonstrate the quality of their working methodology, the clarity of the objectives established, awareness of any potential risks, particularly security risks, and the capacity to prevent them, with particular regard to ensuring the safety of the personnel involved. In this regard, activities taking place in areas to which the MAECI Crisis Unit advises against travel for any reason, as indicated on www.viaggiaresicuri.it, shall not be eligible. For other countries whose security risk profiles nevertheless warrant particular attention, applicants shall attach to the submitted documentation a written undertaking to implement, under their sole and exclusive responsibility, all measures necessary to protect the safety of any personnel involved in the implementation of the proposed projects in any capacity. Reference shall be made to the guidance contained on www.viaggiaresicuri.it, in coordination with the competent local authorities and the Italian diplomatic and consular representations present in the country of implementation.

Art. 5
Evaluation procedure for proposals

1. The preliminary assessment of the proposals submitted shall be carried out by a Commission appointed by the Head of Office I of the DGAP, which may request additions or amendments to the documentation submitted.

2. The Commission shall be chaired by a diplomatic officer holding a rank no lower than Counsellor of Embassy and shall consist of at least three members.

The Commission shall verify compliance with the requirements set out in Articles 2, 3 and 4 and with the procedures and deadlines established in this Public Notice.

The Commission shall assess the proposals on the basis of the priorities of Italian foreign policy, consulting, where appropriate, the competent offices of the Ministry, and reserves the right to select the initiatives within a coordinated overall framework.

3. The Commission shall award each initiative deemed eligible a score on the basis of the provisions set out in paragraph 5 below and shall draw up the ranking list.

4. The Commission shall award each initiative a score on the basis of the following evaluation criteria:

a) quality of the proposals submitted with regard to their relevance to the implementation of the Fifth National Action Plan adopted pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1325 (2000) on “Women, Peace and Security” and subsequent resolutions, including promotion, monitoring and evaluation activities: **maximum 40 points**;

b) quality of the applicant’s overall organisational structure in relation to the project to be implemented, with regard to its reliability, including its proven ability to carry out initiatives implementing the National Action Plan on “Women, Peace and Security”; the adequacy of its organisational chart; the adequacy of the equipment available; the existence of a positive balance sheet or a low level of indebtedness; its working methodologies; the clarity of the objectives established; and its awareness of any potential risks, particularly security risks, and its capacity to prevent them, with particular regard to ensuring the safety of the personnel involved: **maximum 30 points**;

c) enhancement of the contribution made by civil society to the implementation of the Agenda, particularly at the local level: **maximum 10 points**;

d) capacity to establish, where possible, partnerships with other entities and/or to participate in international networks also involving foreign entities: **maximum 10 points**;

e) capacity to make use of any experience acquired in implementing similar projects, as well as the quantity and quality of such experience: **maximum 10 points**;

5. The minimum score required to qualify for access to the available funds is 60 points. On the basis of the scores awarded to the proposals, the Commission shall draw up the ranking list and submit it to Office I of the DGAP for approval. The initiatives shall be financed in ranking order until the available financial allocation has been exhausted. The Commission reserves the right to deem ineligible any expenditure items that do not comply with the provisions of this Public Notice or the Guidelines attached thereto. The Commission also reserves the right to reject applications submitted by entities that have been notified of a request to reimburse the State Treasury for amounts that were unused and/or not properly reported in relation to contributions granted for "Women, Peace and Security" projects in years prior to 2026.

6. Should additional resources become available compared with those available when the ranking list was drawn up, Office I of the DGAP reserves the right to finance additional proposals deemed eligible by proceeding further down the ranking list.

7. The entities awarded a contribution shall be informed by means of a certified email communication from Office I of the DGAP, sent from dgap.contributi@cert.esteri.it. The entity shall communicate its acceptance within ten days of receipt of the communication, failing which it shall forfeit the funding.

Art. 6
Procedures for the disbursement of contributions

1. The contribution shall be disbursed in two instalments. The first instalment, paid as an advance, shall amount to 70% of the contribution awarded. The second instalment, paid as the balance of the contribution, shall be determined on the basis of the final financial statement referred to in Article 7. Both instalments may be disbursed only following verification of administrative and accounting compliance by the relevant oversight bodies.

2. The disbursement of the first instalment to the beneficiaries shall be conditional upon the commencement of the project activities. The project start date shall be communicated by the legal representative to Office I of the DGAP by ordinary email sent to dgap.wps@esteri.it.

3. For the purpose of monitoring project implementation, a meeting with the representatives of the entities receiving contributions may be held at MAECI at the beginning and at the end of the project activities. Where duly justified logistical difficulties arise, the meeting may be held by videoconference.

Art. 7
Procedures for reporting expenditure incurred for the project

1. No later than thirty days after the completion of the project activities, scheduled for 31 December 2026, the beneficiary shall submit to Office I of the DGAP a detailed final report on the project activities carried out, not exceeding four pages, and a detailed and duly documented financial statement prepared using the Excel template attached to this Public Notice. Where the beneficiary involves any partners in the implementation of the project, the aforementioned documentation shall necessarily include the expenditure incurred by each partner. Both documents shall be prepared in Italian.

2. Where an unspent balance remains in relation to the project, Office I of the DGAP shall request the beneficiary to reimburse the unused portion of the contribution. Upon accepting the contribution, the beneficiary shall provide a written undertaking to reimburse any such unspent balance.

3. The aforementioned final financial statement shall consist of the following:

a) a statement of all expenditure incurred by both the lead entity and any partners, prepared on official letterhead and electronically signed by the competent administrative bodies. The statement shall be divided by type of expenditure, including, for example, travel expenses, hotel accommodation, translation services, venue rental and general expenses, and shall also demonstrate that general expenses do not exceed the percentage indicated in Article 3, paragraph 1(d). It shall include a detailed list of expenditure, such as airline tickets indicating the price paid for each individual guest, hotel receipts, catering invoices and lists of participants in workshops, lunches, training courses and similar activities. Where it is not possible to attach the originals of all invoices and receipts issued to the entity, together with the relevant receipt or proof of payment, copies of such documents shall be accepted provided that they are accompanied by a declaration, based on the template contained in Annex B, certifying that they conform to the originals held by the entity and that the originals are retained by the entity for any future inspections;

b) a declaration indicating the start and end dates of the project activities

c) a declaration, based on the template contained in Annex C, specifying that the expenditure incurred relates to services actually performed and connected with the initiative;

d) a declaration concerning the applicable VAT regime, based on the template contained in Annex D;

e) a letter containing the beneficiary's tax details and bank details. Where the bank details change, the entity shall promptly inform Office I of the DGAP.

The financial statement shall necessarily include documentation of the expenditure incurred by the beneficiary entity and/or any partners up to the total approved cost of the project. The Guidelines and the attached Excel template shall be followed when preparing the statement.

4. The documentation referred to above shall be sent to the ordinary email address dgap.wps@esteri.it, with the exception of the original supporting documents which, where issued in paper format, shall be sent to the following address: Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, Direzione Generale per gli Affari Politici e di Sicurezza, Ufficio I, Piazzale della Farnesina 1, 00135 Roma. Copies of such supporting documents shall be accepted in accordance with paragraph 3(a) of this Article.

Art. 8
Indemnity

1. The beneficiary entity shall indemnify and hold MAECI harmless from any criminal or civil liability towards third parties connected in any way with the implementation of the activities provided for under this Public Notice. No additional costs or liabilities may therefore be incurred by MAECI beyond the disbursement of the resources referred to in this Public Notice. MAECI shall remain extraneous to any legal relationship concerning the work of third parties engaged by the beneficiary entity for the purpose of fulfilling the obligations arising from this Public Notice.

Art. 9
Publicity and transparency

1. The list of proposals approved for the contribution shall be published on the institutional website of MAECI in the "Amministrazione Trasparente" section.

Art. 10
Protection of confidentiality

1. The personal data provided by applicants shall be processed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679. The provision of the personal data indicated in this Public Notice and in the attached forms is mandatory for the purposes of participation

in the procedure and all subsequent operations. To this end, the following information is provided pursuant to Article 13 of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679:

a) the data controller is MAECI, which, in this specific case, acts through Office I of the DGAP, ordinary email address: dgap.wps@esteri.it;
b) for questions or complaints concerning confidentiality, the natural persons concerned may contact the Data Protection Officer (DPO) of MAECI at Piazzale della Farnesina 1, 00135 Rome, telephone: +39 06 3691, switchboard; ordinary email address: rpd@esteri.it; certified email address: rpd@cert.esteri.it;
c) the processing of the requested data is necessary for participation in this public procedure;
d) the provision of the aforementioned data is based on consent, and any refusal to provide such data shall render the project proposal procedurally inadmissible;
e) the data shall be processed through a combination of manual and automated methods by the members of the Evaluation Commission and by specifically authorised personnel;
f) the aforementioned data shall be communicated to MAECI's oversight bodies;
g) the data shall be retained for ten years, unless litigation is pending. For selected entities, this period shall run from the date of completion of the project, while for the other applicants it shall run from the date of completion of the public procedure, pursuant to Articles 2220 and 2946 of the Italian Civil Code;
h) the natural persons concerned may request access to and rectification of their personal data. Pursuant to the applicable legislation and without prejudice to any consequences for participation in this public procedure, they may also request the erasure of such data, restriction of processing or object to the processing. In such cases, the data subjects shall submit a specific request to the Office indicated under point (a), copying the MAECI DPO for information;
i) where data subjects consider that their privacy rights have been infringed, they may lodge a complaint with the MAECI DPO. Where they are not satisfied with the response received, they may contact the Italian Data Protection Authority at Piazza Venezia 11, 00187 Rome, telephone: +39 06 696771, switchboard; ordinary email address: garante@gpdp.it; certified email address: protocollo@pec.gpdp.it.

Art. 11
Officer responsible for the procedure

1. Pursuant to Article 5 of Law No. 241 of 7 August 1990, as subsequently amended and supplemented, the officer responsible for the procedure is Dr Giovanni Zanfarino of the Directorate General for Political Affairs and Security of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Rome, August 4th 2026

The Head of Office I
Cons. Amb. Andrea Esteban Samà

(Annex A)

To the
Directorate General for Political Affairs and International Security (DGAP) – Ufficio I
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
P.le della Farnesina, 1 - Rome

Subject: CALL FOR PROPOSALS: BANDO WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY 2026 - APPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INITIATIVES AIMED AT IMPLEMENTING THE FIFTH NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ADOPTED PURSUANT TO UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 1325 (2000) ON "WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY" AND SUBSEQUENT RESOLUTIONS.

THE UNDERSIGNED ....
BORN IN ....(PROV. ……….) ON ....
TAX CODE ....
RESIDENT IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF..............................(PROV..........................)
STREET/SQUARE .... ZIP CODE......................................
AS THE LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ENTITY...............................
WITH REGISTERED OFFICE IN...
STREET/SQUARE…………………………………………………………………..................……
ZIP CODE.......................................
TAX CODE .... TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER ....
TEL. .... FAX .... E-MAIL ....PEC...................

HEREBY APPLIES FOR

the award of a grant in the amount of € _______________________ (______________/__) corresponding to ___ % of the total costs required for the implementation of the activities proposed under the project entitled (INSERT PROJECT TITLE)
____
____
____ with a duration of ___________ months. For the purposes hereof, pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 445 of December 28, 2000, under his/her sole responsibility and with full awareness of the penalties prescribed by the Italian criminal legislation and the relevant special

legislation for making false statements or declarations, with specific reference to the entity he/she represents.

HEREBY DECLARES

1) that they have no criminal convictions;
OR
That they have the following criminal convictions: (SPECIFY) ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

That they have no pending criminal proceedings;
OR
That they have the following criminal proceedings pending: (SPECIFY) ……

2) that the entity is registered at ____ _______ by order No. ______________________________ of _________________________, for activities corresponding to the statutory purposes (for entities based in a foreign state, indicate the registration data in the official Register or List of the State of origin)
OR
that the entity is not registered in any register as an entity without legal personality;

3) that the entity has the capacity to operate having structural, technical organizational and economic financial reliability;

4) that with reference to the entity there are no grounds for exclusion under Art. 94 et seq. Legislative Decree no. 36 of March 31, 2023;

5) that the entity has experience in the relevant sector, having achieved results through previous similar initiatives;
OR
that the entity has no experience in the relevant sector;

6) that the entity is in compliance with the tax, social security contribution and insurance obligations established by the applicable legislation;

7) that the entity is in compliance with the anti-mafia documentation requirements under Article 85 et seq. of Legislative Decree No. 159 of 2011;

8) that the entity undertakes to implement the project using its own funds in the amount of EUR ___________ and/or funds received from other public administrations, entities or institutions in the amount of EUR ___________;

9) to undertake to provide, at the Administration's request, the certifications necessary to demonstrate compliance with the requirements listed above;

10) to authorise the Administration to disclose copies of all the documentation submitted should a request for access to administrative documents be made under Law No. 241/199

11) to acknowledge that the Administration reserves the right to carry out ex officio checks, including on a sample basis, regarding the truthfulness of the declarations made, in accordance with Article 71 of Presidential Decree No. 445/2000;

12) to be aware that, should the contents of this declaration be found to be untruthful, the entity shall be excluded from the procedure for which this declaration is issued or, where it has already been awarded the contribution, shall forfeit such award, which shall be annulled and/or revoked;

13) to have been informed, in accordance with and for the purposes of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679, that the personal data collected shall be processed, including by electronic means, exclusively within the framework of the procedure for which this declaration is made;

14) to have read and to accept fully and without reservation all the conditions governing the procedure;

15) that, for all legal purposes, all communications may be sent to the following certified email address: dgap.contributi@cert.esteri.it;

Date and Location, ...

The Legal Representative

(sign) ....

Please note, for private entities whose registered office is located in Italy or in another Member State of the European Union, the declarations referred to in this Annex shall be deemed valid if submitted in accordance with Article 65 of Italian Legislative Decree No. 82/2005. For entities whose registered office is located in a non-EU country, this Annex must be legalized by the Italian diplomatic or consular representation having territorial jurisdiction.

(Annex B)

To the
Directorate General for Political Affairs and International Security (DGAP) – Ufficio I
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
P.le della Farnesina, 1 - Rome

SUBJECT: …….(Title of the project) - Self-declaration of true copy of the original (ex. DPR no. 445/2000).

The undersigned ……………………………..….. born in ………………………….. on ………………..……, resident in the municipality ………………………………………….…., as the legal representative of the entity……………………………………, with registered office in ………..……… street/square ………………………., VAT NO. ……………..…………., Tax code……………………………….. with regard to the financial reporting activities relating to the subject matter:

HEREBY DECLARES

- that the copies of the supporting documentation attached hereto conform to the originals and that the latter are kept by the Entity ……………………………………, located in ……………………………………, at ……………………………………, and are available for any inspections or verification.

The Legal Representative

(sign) ____________________

Please note, for private entities whose registered office is located in Italy or in another Member State of the European Union, the declarations referred to in this Annex shall be deemed valid if submitted in accordance with Article 65 of Italian Legislative Decree No. 82/2005. For entities whose registered office is located in a non-EU country, this Annex must be legalized by the Italian diplomatic or consular representation having territorial jurisdiction.

(Annex C)

To the
Directorate General for Political Affairs and International Security (DGAP) – Ufficio I
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
P.le della Farnesina, 1 - Rome

SUBJECT: ………………………..……(Title of the project) *Declaration under Presidential Decree No. 445/2000 concerning the relevance of the reported expenditure to the project*

The undersigned, ……………………………………., born in …………………………………… on ……………………., residing in ……………………………………, in his/her capacity as Legal Representative of the entity ……………………………………, with registered office in ……………………., at ……………………………………, VAT No. ……………………………………, Tax Identification No. ……………………………………, with regard to the financial reporting activities relating to the following subject matter:

HEREBY DECLARES

that all the expenditure included in the financial report submitted by ……………………………… in relation to the project concerned, for a total amount of EUR ……………………….…, relates to services actually performed and directly connected with the initiative concerned.

The Legal Representative

(sign) ____________________

Please note, for private entities whose registered office is located in Italy or in another Member State of the European Union, the declarations referred to in this Annex shall be deemed valid if submitted in accordance with Article 65 of Italian Legislative Decree No. 82/2005. For entities whose registered office is located in a non-EU country, this Annex must be legalized by the Italian diplomatic or consular representation having territorial jurisdiction.

(Annex D)

To the
Directorate General for Political Affairs and International Security (DGAP) – Ufficio I
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
P.le della Farnesina, 1 - Rome

SUBJECT: ……………………………………………………………………………………………(Title of the project) *Declaration under Presidential Decree No. 445/2000 concerning the relevance of the reported expenditure to the project.*

The undersigned, ……………………………………, born in …………………………………… on ……………………, residing in ……………………………………, in his/her capacity as Legal Representative of the entity ……………………………………, with registered office in ……………………, at ……………………………………, VAT No. ……………………………………, Tax Identification No. ……………………………………, with regard to the financial reporting activities relating to the following subject matter:

HEREBY DECLARES

that the entity is in the following position with regard to compliance with the applicable VAT requirements (tick the box corresponding to the entity’s status):

- o VAT deductible
- o VAT non-deductible
- o VAT deductible at the rate of __________ %

The Legal Representative

(sign) ____________________

Please note, for private entities whose registered office is located in Italy or in another Member State of the European Union, the declarations referred to in this Annex shall be deemed valid if submitted in accordance with Article 65 of Italian Legislative Decree No. 82/2005. For entities whose registered office is located in a non-EU country, this Annex must be legalized by the Italian diplomatic or consular representation having territorial jurisdiction.

WPS PROJECTS: ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL GUIDELINES

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

This document provides administrative and financial guidance to be followed by beneficiaries of grants awarded by Office I of the Directorate-General for Political Affairs (DGAP) of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) for the implementation of initiatives supporting the Fifth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), adopted in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions. Its purpose is to provide beneficiaries with a reference framework to ensure compliance with expenditure eligibility criteria and the proper management of administrative, financial and reporting activities, supplementing the provisions set out in the Call for Proposals.

SECTION I – BENEFICIARIES AND PARTNERS

Who is responsible for the implementation of the project?

The beneficiary of the grant (hereinafter, the Beneficiary) is solely responsible for the proper implementation of the project. The Beneficiary retains all powers and responsibilities relating to project management, monitoring and oversight, which may not be delegated either to third parties or to project partners. Once the grant has been awarded, the Beneficiary shall appoint a Project Manager, who will act as the sole point of contact with the Ministry throughout the entire project lifecycle.

Can project partners participate in project implementation?

Following formal written acceptance of the grant, the Beneficiary may reimburse or provide advance payments to project partners, ensuring that the related expenditure is duly included in the financial report. However, as the recipient of the grant, the Beneficiary remains solely responsible vis-à-vis MAECI. During administrative and financial audits, the Beneficiary must also provide appropriate supporting documentation for expenditure incurred by its partners, demonstrating that all reported costs are actual costs. The Beneficiary is responsible for fulfilling all obligations under the approved project. Should it become necessary to replace one or more partners identified in the project proposal—for example, due to bankruptcy, insolvency proceedings, breach of obligations, or other justified reasons—or to include new partners, the Beneficiary must submit a reasoned request for prior authorization to Office I of the Directorate-General for Political Affairs (DGAP).

SECTION II – FINANCIAL REPORTING OF EXPENDITURE

How is the MAECI grant disbursed?

Following acceptance of the grant and the official commencement of project activities, notified by the Beneficiary in writing, MAECI may disburse an advance payment amounting to 70% of the awarded grant.The remaining balance, where due, will be paid upon completion of the project on the basis of eligible expenditure, provided that: a) the project has been properly reported and has successfully passed the financial verification concerning both the eligibility and the reasonableness of the expenditure incurred in relation to the activities described in the approved project proposal; b) the competent offices of the Directorate-General for Political Affairs have verified the full implementation of the project and the effective achievement of the objectives set out therein.

The Beneficiary's final financial report shall include the expenditure incurred both by the Beneficiary and by any project partners, listing all costs sustained for the implementation of project activities. The final financial report shall be prepared using the Excel template attached to the Call for Proposals.

What is the maximum percentage of the total project cost that may be financed by MAECI?

The MAECI contribution may not exceed 80% of the total eligible cost of the project.

Which activities may be financed through the MAECI grant?

The Beneficiary shall use the grant exclusively to cover expenditure directly related to the implementation of the activities described in the approved project proposal.

What happens if ineligible expenditure is included in the financial report?

Any expenditure deemed ineligible will be excluded from the reimbursable costs, resulting in a reduction of the project's total eligible cost. Accordingly, the final balance, where due, will be recalculated proportionally, while maintaining the same co-financing percentage originally awarded to the Beneficiary.

How is the Ministry's contribution recalculated?
For example, if the Beneficiary has been awarded a grant of EUR 80,000, corresponding to 80% of a project with a total cost of EUR 100,000, and the financial verification subsequently recognizes eligible expenditure amounting to EUR 92,800, the Beneficiary will receive a final contribution of EUR 74,240, corresponding to 80% of the eligible project cost.

What happens if the project is only partially implemented?
Although this represents a situation to be avoided, where the Beneficiary implements the project only partially in comparison with the version approved by the Evaluation Committee, Office I of the Directorate-General for Political Affairs will assess whether the activities actually carried out are nevertheless sufficient to achieve, at least in part, the objectives set out in the project proposal. If this assessment is positive, the grant will be recalculated, maintaining the originally approved co-financing rate, on the basis of the activities effectively implemented and the corresponding eligible expenditure. Where the advance payment received exceeds the recalculated grant amount, the Beneficiary shall reimburse the excess.

Conversely, if the partial implementation is considered to have substantially altered the project, making it no longer eligible for Ministry funding, the grant shall be revoked and the Beneficiary shall repay the advance payment in full.

Any modification to the approved project must be agreed in advance with Office I of the Directorate-General for Political Affairs, within the limits and according to the procedures set out in Section IV. Any diversion of grant funds from their intended purpose, resulting in the failure to achieve the project's objectives, shall entail the obligation to reimburse the entire advance payment received.

What happens if the final project cost is lower than the initial budget?
If the total project cost documented in the final financial report submitted to MAECI is lower than the initial budget, the Beneficiary shall receive any outstanding balance due, while maintaining the co-financing rate initially approved. *For example, if the Beneficiary has been awarded a Ministry grant of EUR 80,000 for a project with a total cost of EUR 100,000, and has received an advance payment of EUR 56,000 (corresponding to 70% of the grant), but the final financial verification determines that the total eligible project cost amounts to EUR 90,000, the MAECI contribution will be reduced accordingly to EUR 72,000, while maintaining the original co-financing rate of 80%. Consequently, the final balance payable will amount to EUR 16,000, after deduction of the EUR 56,000 already received as the first instalment.*

Should the final eligible project cost fall below the amount of the advance payment already disbursed by MAECI, the Beneficiary shall reimburse the unused portion of the grant, in accordance with the commitment undertaken upon acceptance of the grant.

By when must the financial report be submitted and what should it contain?
Upon completion of the project, and no later than the deadline specified in the Call for Proposals—without prejudice to the cases referred to in Section VI below—the Beneficiary shall submit to MAECI the project's financial report, including expenditure incurred both by the

Beneficiary and by any project partners.

The documentation shall consist of:

- A **Final Report** (not exceeding three pages), drafted on the Beneficiary's official letterhead and signed by its legal representative. The report shall provide a descriptive narrative of all phases of the project, summarizing its implementation and the results achieved, and shall indicate, for each project phase where applicable, the corresponding expenditure and the use of resources.
- **Administrative and financial documentation**, signed by the Beneficiary's legal representative or Administrative Manager, together with the supporting documentation referred to above, evidencing all expenditure incurred for the implementation of the project. Where necessary, such documentation shall be accompanied by an Italian translation.

All reported expenditure must be properly documented and supported by clear and unequivocal evidence. Failure to provide adequate supporting documentation shall result in the expenditure being declared ineligible. Supporting documents must be clearly traceable to the reported amounts so as to demonstrate the existence, relevance and reasonableness of each item of expenditure.

For reporting purposes, the administrative and accounting documentation supporting expenditure <u>shall be retained in its original form by the reporting entity</u> and shall meet the following requirements:

- **refer to eligible expenditure items;**
- **relate exclusively to expenditure incurred after the date on which the grant was formally accepted; be free from alterations and fully legible, particularly with regard to numerical information (amounts, dates, etc.);**
- **comply with applicable accounting, tax and social security legislation;**
- **bear an issue date no later than the official project completion date.**

During the reporting process, the Beneficiary shall collect, organize and retain all administrative and accounting documentation relating to expenditure incurred and duly paid for the implementation of project activities.

SECTION III – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR EXPENDITURE

Project expenditure shall be considered eligible where it meets all of the following criteria.

a. Actual expenditure

Expenditure must have been genuinely incurred and be clearly attributable to the project. In particular, the expenditure must relate to an eligible cost, be directly connected with the project activities, and be consistent with the strategy and objectives of the approved project. All supporting expenditure documents included in the financial report shall be issued in the name of the Beneficiary or of the project partners involved in the implementation of the initiative and shall clearly indicate the title of the project.

b. Consistency with the approved budget

All expenditure incurred must be consistent with the approved budget, including any duly authorised budget revisions, and must correspond to the objectives and activities of the approved project.

c. Incurred within the project implementation period

Each financial report shall indicate the relevant reporting period. Only expenditure incurred from the day following the Beneficiary's written notification to MAECI accepting the grant until the official completion date of the project shall be considered eligible. Expenditure relating to periods preceding or following the eligible implementation period shall not be recognised, even if connected with the project.

d. Verifiable

Expenditure must be supported by paid invoices or accounting documents of equivalent evidential value. Supporting documents shall include a reference to the funded project. Where this is not possible, the entity incurring the expenditure shall ensure that such reference is added to the supporting documentation.

e. Traceable

Payments relating to the funded project shall be considered eligible only if made using traceable financial instruments, such as payment orders, bank transfers, or non-transferable cheques. Cash payments are not eligible. However, where no alternative payment method is reasonably available, the Beneficiary, through its legal representative, shall submit a prior request for authorisation to Office I of the Directorate-General for Political Affairs and International Security (DGAP) via certified email (PEC: dgap.contributi@cert.esteri.it), together with all relevant information and supporting documentation demonstrating the necessity of such payment. Any authorised cash payment must be fully documented and included in the financial report. In all cases, beneficiaries shall comply with all applicable national legislation governing financial transactions.

f. Within the authorised limits

Expenditure shall not exceed the limits established, whether by nature or amount, in the approved project budget. Reallocations between expenditure macro-categories are permitted provided that the total project cost remains unchanged. Where such reallocations exceed 20% of the amount allocated to a single expenditure macro-category, they shall be subject to prior authorisation by Office I of the Directorate-General for Political Affairs (DGAP), in accordance with the provisions set out in the following section.

SECTION IV – BUDGET AMENDMENTS AND REALLOCATIONS

With regard to the activities approved for funding, the Beneficiary is responsible for the full and proper implementation of the project. However, the Beneficiary may submit duly justified adjustments or amendments to the original project, provided that such changes do not alter its overall design, objectives or intended purpose. Depending on the significance of the proposed amendment, it shall either be notified to Office I of the Directorate-General for Political Affairs (DGAP) or be subject to prior authorisation. More specifically, provided that the total project budget remains unchanged, budget reallocations between expenditure macro-categories amounting to 20% or less of the relevant budget line shall be promptly communicated to MAECI, together with an explanation of the reasons for the reallocation. Such reallocations shall also be clearly identified in both the final financial report and the final narrative report. Budget reallocations resulting in an increase or decrease of more than 20% of the amount allocated to a single expenditure macro-category shall require prior authorisation from MAECI, upon submission of a duly justified request by the Beneficiary.

For this purpose, the 20% threshold shall be calculated with reference to the amount originally allocated to the individual expenditure macro-category concerned.

SECTION V – REQUESTS FOR AN EXTENSION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The Beneficiary may request authorisation to extend the duration of the project beyond the time limit established in the Call for Proposals. Such request, accompanied by appropriate and detailed supporting documentation demonstrating the need for the extension, shall be submitted by the Beneficiary's legal representative via certified email (PEC: dgap.contributi@cert.esteri.it) to Office I of the Directorate-General for Political Affairs (DGAP). Approval of the request shall be at the sole discretion of the above-mentioned Office.

SECTION VI – ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE: CATEGORIES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Eligible expenditure shall consist exclusively of actual costs incurred by the Beneficiary and effectively paid, as evidenced by duly receipted invoices or equivalent accounting documents. The only exception concerns indirect (overhead) costs, which may be claimed on a flat-rate basis up to a maximum of 10% of the eligible direct costs, provided that they have been included in advance in the approved Financial Plan. Eligible expenditure is therefore divided into direct costs and indirect costs. For reporting purposes, direct costs shall be presented **in sufficient detail**, maintaining the approved expenditure macro-categories, in a schedule clearly indicating the calculation methodology, the supporting accounting documents, and the allocation of expenditure among the various project partners.

1. DIRECT COSTS

a) Human Resources

For reporting purposes, expenditure relating to human resources engaged in the project under employment contracts, collaboration agreements or professional service contracts shall be considered eligible.

For employees, eligible costs shall include the gross remuneration paid for work performed in connection with the project. Gross remuneration includes employer-paid social security contributions as well as statutory social insurance and pension contributions. For the purpose of determining eligible personnel costs, staff costs shall be calculated in proportion to the actual number of hours worked on the project. The final financial report shall include, for each employee, a detailed calculation sheet indicating the reference salary on which the calculation is based and showing how the proportion of personnel costs attributable to the project has been determined. Supporting evidence of payment of the related social security and statutory contributions (F24 forms) shall always be attached. Where cumulative payments have been made, the portion attributable to the project shall be clearly identified.

In addition to internal staff costs, expenditure relating to human resources engaged by project partners under self-employment contracts, consultancy agreements or occasional service contracts shall also be eligible, provided that such personnel perform specialised activities directly related to the project and that these activities cannot reasonably be carried out by the Beneficiary's internal staff. For external personnel, the following documentation shall be provided: a signed curriculum vitae demonstrating the professional qualifications relevant to the services required and a signed contract or letter of appointment clearly specifying the scope of work, duration and remuneration for the assignment, in compliance with any applicable transparency requirements. The remuneration shall be consistent with the rates normally applied under collective bargaining agreements or company-level agreements for comparable professional services and, in any event, shall be reasonable and proportionate to the overall project budget.

Summary of supporting documentation required for Human Resources expenditure:

Internal Staff

- service order or administrative act assigning the employee to the project, specifying the role, duties, duration of the assignment and planned level of commitment (for example, as a percentage of working time);
- payslips together with proof of payment of the employee's net salary (where cumulative payment orders are used, a detailed schedule identifying the individual employees shall be attached);
- documentary evidence of payment of social security and statutory contributions (where cumulative F24 forms are used, a reconciliation statement indicating the share **attributable to project staff** shall be attached);
- a detailed calculation of the employee's average hourly labour cost, including social security and welfare contributions, together with the base salary used to determine the proportion of personnel costs charged to the project.

External Personnel

- documentation describing the reasons for, procedures governing and methods used to select the consultant or collaborator;
- signed *curriculum vitae* demonstrating the professional qualifications required;
- signed contract or letter of appointment specifying the scope of work, duration and remuneration;
- appropriate documentation demonstrating the activities actually performed (such as activity reports, timesheets, studies or other deliverables supporting the expenditure claimed);
- fee notes, payslips, invoices or receipts; proof of payment of the agreed remuneration; documentary evidence of payment of withholding taxes and any applicable social security and insurance contributions (where cumulative F24 forms are used, a reconciliation statement identifying the share attributable to personnel assigned to the project shall be attached).

b) Travel, Meals and Accommodation

This category includes travel expenses incurred by internal and external personnel **while carrying out project-related assignments**, including meals (up to a maximum of EUR 30 per day for one meal or EUR 60 per day for two meals, supported by no more than two fiscal receipts);
accommodation (luxury hotels are not eligible) and transportation costs. These expenses shall be

reimbursed on the basis of actual costs incurred.

As a general rule, only the use of public transport is considered eligible.Taxi fares may be reimbursed only in exceptional circumstances, provided that they are duly justified by the traveller and authorised by the legal representative of the Beneficiary or project partner (or by a duly authorised delegate). Taxi expenses shall be eligible only where the use of public transport is objectively incompatible with, or excessively burdensome in relation to, project requirements, timing, organisational needs, the specific circumstances of the personnel concerned, or the characteristics of the location where the project is implemented, particularly with regard to security considerations. The request, the authorisation and the taxi receipt—showing the date, passenger's name, departure and destination addresses, and the start and end times of the journey—shall be attached to the financial report. The following costs are not eligible: rental of private vehicles, use of private vehicles, mileage allowances, fuel reimbursements, parking fees and motorway tolls.

Supporting documentation shall also include the mission authorisation indicating the traveller's name, duration and purpose of the mission, destination, and confirmation that the travel is attributable to the project.

c) Materials Required for Project Implementation

This category includes expenditure relating to the purchase of materials necessary for the implementation of the project, to the extent that such materials are indispensable and used exclusively for project purposes. Such expenditure shall be considered eligible as direct costs only where its exclusive use for the operational implementation of the project can be clearly demonstrated.

Examples include, but are not limited to: raw materials required for project activities and workshops,

printing of training handouts and educational materials, teaching materials or other instructional resources necessary for the proper implementation of project activities. These materials must be used **directly and exclusively** for the purposes of the project.

d) Goods and Services

The Beneficiary may engage third-party suppliers to carry out part of the project activities.

Contracts concluded with suppliers shall relate to project activities for which the Beneficiary does not possess the necessary internal expertise and/or resources, provided that such activities are of a specialised nature or are merely ancillary or instrumental to the project's objectives and core activities, and in all cases comply with the applicable legal and regulatory provisions. For goods that do not fall within the previous category ("Materials Required for Project Implementation"), leasing and rental costs shall be eligible, whereas **purchase costs shall not be eligible**.

For example, where the Beneficiary requires an audio system for a public event as part of the project activities, neither the Beneficiary nor any project partners may use the Ministry's grant to purchase the equipment. However, the cost of renting the equipment for the period during which it is used for the project shall be eligible. Similarly, where the proposed project involves the production of manufactured items and the Beneficiary does not own the machinery required for that purpose, the Beneficiary and/or its project partners may claim the costs of leasing or renting the necessary equipment, but not the costs of purchasing it.

With regard to services, expenditure incurred through purchase, rental or leasing arrangements shall be eligible.

Note: The Beneficiary shall provide supporting documentation demonstrating that the most cost-effective option was selected, namely between rental and leasing for goods and, where applicable, between purchase, rental and leasing for services.

e) Other Costs

Cost categories not falling within the expenditure categories listed above may also be considered eligible, provided that they have been included in the approved budget, are consistent with the approved project, and comply with the specifications set out in the Financial Plan. With regard to the supporting documentation to be submitted, reference shall be made, where applicable by analogy, to the requirements specified for the relevant expenditure categories described above. Expenses of a financial or banking nature, including interest charges, bank guarantees and depreciation, shall not be eligible. Likewise, any profit margins attributable to direct costs and included in the final financial statement by the Beneficiary or any of its project partners shall not be eligible.

Any expenditure referred to under points a), b), c), d) and e) that is incurred in a foreign currency shall be supported by a *bank exchange receipt* (bordereau) indicating the exchange rate applied. Where such documentation is unavailable, and only in exceptional cases involving purchases made locally in a foreign currency, the applicable exchange rate shall be determined on the basis of the exchange rates published by the Bank of Italy and applicable on the date the expenditure was paid.

2. INDIRECT COSTS

General overhead costs incurred by the Beneficiary (e.g. *rent, cleaning of premises, heating, electricity, telephone charges, internet services, minor maintenance, outsourced accounting services, office supplies, photocopying, toner and other routine office expenses not directly attributable to a specific project*) shall be eligible up to a maximum flat-rate amount of 10% of the eligible direct costs reported and accepted during the financial verification process, provided that such costs have been included in the approved Financial Plan. Should the administrative and financial verification of the final financial report result in a reduction of the eligible direct costs incurred by the Beneficiary, the eligible indirect costs shall be recalculated on the basis of the percentage specified in the approved Financial Plan.

For example, if the Beneficiary has included EUR 70,000 in direct costs in the approved Financial Plan and indicated indirect costs amounting to 3% of direct costs (i.e. EUR 2,100), resulting in a total project cost of EUR 72,100, and has received a MAECI grant of EUR 57,680 (corresponding to 80% of the total project cost), but, following the financial verification, only EUR 65,000 of direct costs are deemed eligible, the maximum amount of eligible indirect costs shall be reduced accordingly to EUR 1,950 (3% of the revised direct costs). Consequently, the total eligible project cost shall amount to EUR 66,950, and the MAECI contribution shall be reduced to EUR 53,560 (80% of the revised eligible project cost).

Where the final eligible project cost falls below the amount of the advance payment already disbursed by MAECI, the Beneficiary shall reimburse the unused portion of the grant.

Furthermore, where the Beneficiary incorrectly reports, under the category of direct costs, expenditure that should properly be classified as indirect costs, MAECI reserves the right to reclassify such expenditure. As a consequence, the amount of eligible indirect costs shall be recalculated on the basis of the revised amount of eligible direct costs.

For example, assume that the Beneficiary submitted a Financial Plan with a total value of EUR 68,250, consisting of EUR 65,000 in direct costs and EUR 3,250 in indirect costs (5%). If the Beneficiary reports, under "Direct Costs – Materials Required for Project Implementation", expenditure amounting to EUR 500 for paper, photocopying and general office stationery that cannot be directly, unequivocally and transparently linked to a specific project activity, such expenditure shall be deducted from the direct costs and reclassified as indirect costs. Consequently, the eligible direct costs shall amount to EUR 64,500, while the eligible indirect costs, calculated at 5% of the revised direct costs, shall amount to EUR 3,225.

SECTION VII – DISCLAIMER

Where a project co-financed by MAECI includes the organisation of conferences and/or the publication of articles, studies, research papers, books, conference proceedings or other intellectual works, the following disclaimer shall be included in writing. Italian version: "Il presente progetto/convegno/articolo/etc. è stato realizzato con il contributo dell'Ufficio I della Direzione Generale per gli Affari Politici e di Sicurezza del Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, ai sensi dell'Avviso n. x del gg/mm/anno. Le opinioni contenute nella presente pubblicazione sono espressione degli autori e non rappresentano necessariamente le posizioni del Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale." English version: "This project/conference/article/etc. was carried out with the support of Office I of the Directorate-General for Political Affairs and Security of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, pursuant to Call for Proposals No. x of dd/mm/yyyy. The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation."

<u>For any aspects of financial reporting not covered by these Guidelines, reference shall be made to the applicable national and European Union legislation in force. The examples provided throughout this document (shown in italics) are for illustrative purposes only and shall not be regarded as exhaustive.</u>