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A Communion
of Churches

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LWF Policy on Member Church Projects

Member Church Projects are projects initiated and carried out by LWF member churches with support from the LWF and its Communion Office (CO). They aim at addressing member church needs arising from their participation in God's holistic mission in their respective contexts. The project support is offered both in the form of the required funding and of accompaniment to the churches themselves, with the aim to also improve their ability to plan, monitor, implement and report on the project outcomes.

In a deeper sense, member church projects are a meaningful expression of mutuality and solidarity among LWF member churches as they seek to encourage and support each other in God's holistic mission. Beyond their local impact, they are an expression of communion relationships. They become a place and an instrument to share resources and knowledge, learn together and embrace jointly the Lutheran communion's vision of member churches "living and working together for a just, peaceful and reconciled world."

1. Purpose and Scope of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to state the:

- Role of member church projects within the LWF communion as well as the added value of the LWF as a communion of churches and its CO in project work;
- Types of grants that can be made available to member churches, including their purpose and characterization;
- Criteria that guide the selection of projects;
- Responsibilities, decision-making and accountability with regard to project work.

This policy applies to projects owned by member churches, which the CO supports through grants and accompaniment.

2. The place of member church projects in the LWF communion

This section highlights the role of member church projects in the LWF communion and the added value of its CO in the project work.

2.1. The role of member church projects

Member church projects are one of the ways through which the LWF expresses its shared participation in God's holistic mission that includes proclamation, diakonia and advocacy. The joint work around projects and churches' participation nurtures and deepens communion relationships among the member churches as they mutually support each other and express solidarity.

Within the framework of the LWF Strategy 2019-2024, LWF project work contributes to both strategic priorities:

- *Supporting churches' presence and vibrant witness in the world*
- *Promoting human dignity, justice and peace*

Therefore, LWF project work plays a pivotal role in accomplishing what member churches envision to do together in the world as expressed in the LWF Strategy.

The following three aspects define the role of project work for the LWF as a communion of churches:

Participation in God's holistic mission

- Deepening the participation of churches in holistic mission, i.e. proclamation, diakonia and advocacy;
- Strengthening churches' presence in the public space and their local witness by addressing important needs of congregations and the wider community;
- Increasing local ownership and participation, contributing to church sustainability.

Expression and nurturing of communion relations

- Representing a tangible way of expressing communion relations among the member churches;
- Expressing in concrete ways the meaning and practice of mutuality and solidarity;
- Becoming an avenue through which the LWF member churches can take part and support each other in their local witness to the Triune God.

Empowerment, learning and capacity building

- Building capacity within the member churches and empowering them for local witness;
- Deepening the sharing of resources, knowledge, learning and good practices resulting from working together;
- Bringing forth insights that reinforce learning, innovation and framework of the CO programs.

2.2. Added value of the LWF Communion Office in the project work

The CO provides a multidimensional platform for member churches to work together in responding to their own strategic needs and accompany each other with a variety of thematic expertise:

Connecting member churches

- Maintaining interconnectedness among member churches;
- Providing capacity to create synergies and share experiences among member churches;
- Replicating good practices in the LWF communion.

Facilitating cooperation and resource sharing

- Supporting multilateral cooperation guided by a communion-wide approach to resource sharing for holistic mission;
- Facilitating transition of multilateral to bilateral cooperation and vice versa;
- Mediating between project holders and project supporters.

Providing thematic expertise and specific approach to project work

- Providing broad thematic expertise to share among member churches;
- Combining project support with capacity building;
- Promoting a communion-wide approach to learning.

3. Types of grants, purpose and characterization

There are two types of grants available to member church projects:

3.1. Long-term grants

Member churches can apply for long-term grants to support their presence and witness as they participate in God's holistic mission according to their medium- or long-term priorities.

The main characteristics of long-term grants are:

- Regular application and approval cycles;
- Standard project methodologies;
- Holistic mission, communion relations and capacity building are integrated in a balanced way (see 2.1);
- LWF funding is granted for a maximum of three years and, under certain conditions, can be renewed once for the specified period;
- LWF funding contribution is limited to the amount of EUR 150,000 per project (EUR 50,000 annually). Any amount above this must come from other sources;
- Project holding member churches must contribute at least 5% of the total budget of the project. Contributions in kind can be accepted to show commitment if the financial contribution is not possible;
- Long-term grants are funded by member churches and related agencies through earmarked or un-earmarked funds.

- In situations where funding is earmarked for specific projects and cannot be transferred to other projects, exemptions from maximum project durations and/or maximum contribution amounts are possible.

3.2. Short-term grants

Member churches can apply for short-term grants to address local situations that require rapid response.

The main characteristics of short-term grants are:

- Rolling applications and rapid approval;
- Simplified application format;
- Time limit: maximum duration of 6 months; exceptionally 12 months;
- One-time support to achieve specific goals with the possibility to transition to a long-term grant;
- Maximum amount of EUR 10,000;
- Short-term grants are funded through the Communion Solidarity Fund, ear-marked and un-earmarked funds from supporting churches.

4. Criteria for selection and extension of projects

	Long-term grants	Short-term grants
Selection criteria	Application	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The submission deadline is respected • The project is endorsed by a member church, an LWF national committee or an LWF regional expression body • All the sections of the application format are completed • All annexes are attached and complete (Budget, Church Profile and Endorsement Letter) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project is endorsed by a member church, an LWF national committee or an LWF regional expression body • All sections of the application format are completed • All annexes are attached and complete (Budget and Endorsement Letter)
	Content	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to which the project is responding is clearly identified and analyzed • The project's objectives and activities are relevant in relation to the expressed needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to which the project is responding is clearly identified and analyzed • The project's objectives and activities are relevant in relation to the expressed needs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scope of the project's objectives and activities in relation to the budget and the capacities of the applicant is realistic • There is a clear link to churches' own medium or long-term priorities as highlighted in the Church Profile • The project plan reflects a meaningful and balanced involvement of men, women and youth in project management and implementation • The project plan reflects meaningful involvement of the target group • The project integrates the three aspects of the role of projects in a balanced way (holistic mission, communion relations and capacity building) • The project application demonstrates at least a basic understanding of project planning and outlines a Monitoring & Evaluation plan • The exit strategy and/or the sustainability plan of the project are realistic • Duration: 3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scope of the project's objectives and activities in relation to the budget and the capacities of the applicant is realistic • The reason why the need requires a rapid response is clearly justified • The project plan reflects a meaningful and balanced involvement of men, women and youth in project management and implementation • No other partners are funding the project • Maximum duration: 6 months
	Financial	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LWF funding contribution is limited to the amount of EUR 150,000 per project (EUR 50,000 annually). • Any amount above this must come from other sources • The member church provides at least 5% of the overall funding. Contributions in kind can be accepted to show commitment if the financial contribution is not possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum amount requested from the LWF is EUR 10,000
Project renewal criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects can be renewed only once • The new phase must fulfill the following conditions: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No renewal possible • Upon funding availability, LWF could exceptionally bridge the gap between a short-term and a long-

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Relevance</u>: objectives build up on the achievements of the previous phase and/or activities are scaled up to new geographical areas and target groups or adapted to changing context as needed 2. <u>Sustainability</u>: the new phase strengthens the achievements of the previous phase to ensure that the positive change will last after the project has ended And if possible have: 3. <u>Increasing financial ownership</u>: the budget must reflect a progressive reduction of the LWF share and a consequent increase of the project own contribution and/or third-party contribution in order to set the basis for LWF funding withdrawal 	<p>term grant if the member church decides to apply for a long-term grant</p>
<p>Decision-making considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for successful fundraising • Positive track record of previous projects with LWF (if any) • LWF financial support balanced between different regions, countries and churches • Priority will be given to churches with no other ongoing project • Priority will be given to projects presented by more than one member church for joint implementation • Potential for LWF accompaniment to add value to the project • Priority will be given to projects that have a strong learning potential • Potential for strengthening the relationship between the church(es) and the LWF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding availability • Positive track record of previous projects with LWF (if any)

5. Responsibilities, decision making and accountability

The roles and responsibilities with regard to member church projects are outlined below.

The responsibility of the LWF Committee for Member Church Projects is to:

- Ensure ownership by the LWF communion as a whole of the decision-making process;
- Provide strategic directions related to project work;
- Approve policies that guide the Committee's work including criteria for projects;
- Decide on the allocation of long-term grants for projects and authorize the Communion Office to seek funding;
- Report on approval of member church projects to the Committee for Theology, Mission and Justice.

The responsibility of the LWF Communion Office is to:

- Coordinate the project application and screening processes for subsequent submission to the respective committees for approval;
- Decide on the allocation of short-term grants through the internal Staff Committee for Member Church Projects;
- Manage grants, including fundraising and PMER, and ensure alignment to LWF values, policies and best practices;
- Provide support to project holders, including thematic expertise and capacity building;
- Coordinate learning platforms and information sharing among member churches, LWF governance, related agencies and within the Communion Office;
- Report on the implementation of member church projects to the LWF Council through the Committee for Theology, Mission and Justice.