

Act Together for Inclusion Fund (ACTIF)

Project Selection Committee

Terms of Reference

Background and Context

The Act Together for Inclusion Fund (ACTIF) was created to promote and protect the human rights of and socio-economic outcomes for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, two-spirit and intersex (LGBTQ2I) persons in countries eligible for overseas development assistance (ODA). The creation of ACTIF resulted from sustained engagement of Dignity Network Canada (DNC) members with the Government of Canada (GAC) **to address important gaps in funding for advancing LGBTQ2I rights internationally**. Based on its track record of working on international human rights-based programming and with LGBTQ2I partners in the Global South, Equitas, in partnership with DNC, was awarded funding by GAC for ACTIF.

[ACTIF](#) supports **projects proposed by Canadian civil society organizations (CSOs) designed in collaboration with LGBTQ2I CSOs/movements in the Global South**. This model aims to strengthen solidarity between organizations in Canada and in the Global South to further the human rights of LGBTQ2I persons internationally. Given that trans, two-spirit, intersex, bisexual and lesbian people are marginalized within LGBTQ2I communities, these groups often face greater difficulty accessing funding. ACTIF, which is aligned with [Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy \(FIAP\)](#) and applies [gender-based analysis plus \(GBA+\)](#) and a [human rights-based approach \(HRBA\)](#), will develop inclusive processes, capacity building, and knowledge sharing activities to support these groups in accessing and benefiting from the Fund.

Equitas and DNC recognize how power and privilege are inherent to global grant-making and the importance of destabilizing colonial funding dynamics. This is why we are strong proponents of feminist and participatory approaches that shift decision-making power to communities themselves. In line with the principles of "nothing about us without us" and "the process is as important as a result," we believe that local LGBTQ2I human right defenders and organizations are experts of their own realities and should be at the heart of decision making.

Engaging a diversity of Southern LGBTQ2I communities in funding decisions is critical to more robust LGBTQ2I networks, trust, and solidarity — the building blocks for powerful collective action and vibrant movements. The leadership of LGBTQ2I activists and grantmakers in the Fund's governance also allows for more informed, equitable, and effective investments and outcomes

under ACTIF. The **ACTIF Advisory Committee** and **Project Selection Committee**, guided by principles of inclusion, intersectionality, indivisibility and do no harm, are critical to this participatory approach.

Mandate and Responsibilities of the Project Selection Committee

The **Project Selection Committee** is tasked with reviewing proposals and recommending projects to be approved by Equitas and DNC for funding.

MEMBERSHIP

The Project Selection Committee comprises 6 members who serve for a two-year term aligned with the call for proposal cycle. The Fund Director at Equitas and the Executive Director of DNC will sit on the Project Selection Committee ex-officio, without a vote.

The ACTIF Advisory Committee will select members. No person can sit on both the Advisory Committee and Selection Committee. Selection Committee members, and their affiliated organizations, cannot apply for funding during their term.

The selection of members will consider diversity in the type of experience and international representation, including human rights defenders, as well as actors (NGOs and/or funders) with expertise in similar funding mechanisms, in languages spoken, culture, race, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.

The Advisory Committee will select members for the Project Selection Committee that have the following list of collective competencies/experience:

- ✓ Engagement in LGBTQ2I activism and knowledge of the realities at the local, regional and/or international level;
- ✓ Experience in trans-led, Indigenous-led, intersex-led or LBQ women-led organizing;
- ✓ Experience in managing similar grant-making initiatives;
- ✓ Knowledge of Canadian LGBTQ2I sector;
- ✓ Ability and willingness to work in a diverse group that includes activists and donors;
- ✓ Ability to communicate in at least one of the Fund's working languages (English or French).

MEETINGS AND PROPOSAL REVIEW

- The schedule of meetings of the Project Selection Committee will be established in connection with the relevant funding cycle (process and timelines to be confirmed by Equitas and DNC).
- Project selection tools will be drafted by Equitas and DNC but will be reviewed and adapted by the Project Selection team.
- Equitas and DNC will be responsible for logistics, including the translation into English or French of proposals and selection tools for the Project Selection Committee.
- All members of the Project Selection Committee will review all proposals. This process will be reviewed during the first call to learn and improve the project selection process and adapt to applications' volume.

TERM

The term of the Project Selection Committee will be for two years.

COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Advisory Committee will appoint the Chair of the Selection Committee.

The Chair shall:

- Chair meetings of the Committee.
- Report to the Advisory Committee on the work of the Project Selection Committee.

QUORUM

The quorum for the meeting shall be a full majority of all Project Selection Committee members.

DECISION-MAKING

The Committee shall strive for consensus when making decisions. If consensus cannot be achieved, the Committee members must agree on how to resolve the outstanding issue (i.e. vote, continue discussion, table the issue to another meeting, refer a question to the Fund Director).

ACCOUNTABILITY

- The Project Selection Committee will select projects and report on the outcomes of its [process](#), deliberations, [feedback for unsuccessful proposals](#), and any lessons learned to the Advisory Committee, DNC and Equitas.
- Equitas reserves the right to refuse a project if it does not meet GAC requirements. We do not anticipate this situation taking place, as both the Executive Director of DNC and the Fund Director sit on this Committee. While they do not have voting rights, they can provide framing on the criteria and GAC requirements if these issues come up during deliberations. The two-step process also mitigates this risk, as only organizations that meet eligibility criteria can apply.

REMUNERATION

Project Selection Committee members (except for already compensated members) will receive a modest honorarium of CAD \$500 per day, for a maximum of five days.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

INTERSECTIONALITY

Equitas and DNC recognize that it is not only transphobia, biphobia, and homophobia that impact LGBTQ2I people. Rather, these systems of power intersect and compound with colonialism, racism, classism, patriarchy, ableism, and ageism, among others. These power systems exist both within and between LGBTQ2I communities, partners, and funders. The Fund and its projects integrate an intersectional analysis and approach to addressing the human rights of LGBTQ2I persons.

INCLUSION

Historical and current power dynamics and inequalities within LGBTQ2I communities require intentional measures to ensure marginalized groups inform, access, and benefit from the Fund. ACTIF maintains a commitment to deliberate practices of inclusion and power redistribution through its operations and in its portfolio. In particular, ACTIF prioritizes the leadership of two-

spirit, trans, and intersex people, as well as bisexual, queer, and lesbian women from around the world in its governance and programming.

INDIVISIBILITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights are all human rights and inherent to every human person's dignity, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics.

These rights are equal in status, and one cannot be prioritized over another. Work to advance specific rights must not undermine others. Socio-economic outcomes for LGBTQ2I persons are explicitly linked to the advancement of their other rights.

DO NO HARM

The Fund is guided by the principle of 'do no harm' in both partnerships and programming. ACTIF aims to challenge colonial funding dynamics and work in solidarity with marginalized LGBTQ2I groups in both Canada and the Global South to minimize harm. ACTIF will also pay particular attention to the security and well-being of Canadian partners, Southern partners, and local communities to ensure that interventions do not exacerbate risks of discrimination or violence. Information about project partners and individual activists will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All staff and Board Members of Equitas, staff and Board Members of DNC, Members of the Advisory Committee, and Members of the Selection Committee are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity and avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest. ***A conflict of interest is defined as an actual or perceived interest in an action that results in or has the appearance of resulting in a personal, organizational, or professional gain.*** Everyone involved in managing the Fund and project selection is obligated to act in the Fund's best interest, its stated objectives, and mission. Staff and Board Members of Equitas, staff and Board Members of Dignity Network Canada, Members of the Advisory Committee, and Members of the Selection Committee working with the Fund are prohibited from using their role, or the Fund's name or property, for private profit or benefit at all times.



All members of the Advisory and Selection Committees will be required to sign the Equitas declaration of conflict of interest, make a declaration of neutrality upon joining a committee and complete a disclosure form identifying any relationships, positions or circumstances in Canada or in the Global South in which the person's involvement could contribute to a conflict of interest arising. Suppose the potential for a conflict of interest arises. In that case, they will be expected to inform the Fund Director and may be asked to recuse themselves from decisions relevant to their interest.

The Project Selection Committee operates at arms' length from the Advisory Committee, Equitas and Dignity Network Canada. This Committee must be independent to avoid conflict of interest or perceptions of conflict of interest. Likewise, organizations with a representative (i.e. paid employee or volunteer member of the Board of Directors) serving at the time on the Project Selection Committee are not eligible to apply for funds.

TRANSPARENCY

Project selection criteria will be established and made publicly available online to any interested applicants. Unless security concerns prevent the public dissemination of information about projects, a list of the organizations that have successfully secured funding for their projects will be made publicly available. The timelines for project applications will be established in advance and made publicly available online. Unless there are security reasons not to do so, the names of members of the Advisory and Project Selection Committees will be made publicly available online.

By signing these ToRs, I hereby acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree with all of the above-stated information. I agree to abide by the terms of reference of the Acting Together for Inclusion Fund (ACTIF) for the Project Selection Committee (PSC)

Signature of committee member: _____

Name (please print): _____

Date: ____/____/____