**IFSW Europe bid - Strengthening social work and IFSW across Europe - engaging ans supporting diverse, marginalised and under pressure members**

**Background**

There are 50 countries within the IFSW Europe (IFSWE) Region with social work associations . Currently around 30 countries have associations that are members in good standing with both IFSW Global and IFSWE. The region is diverse: countries are very variable in size, demography and language. The associations range in membership from a handful to over 40,000.

The region includes some of the richest, most industrially and technologically ‘developed’ and politically stable countries in the world and also many countries with less developed economies, political and social turbulence, civil and military conflict, (rising) oppression and fewer resources to respond in the face of emergencies and disasters. Levels and nature of the development of social work as a profession also vary widely.

In these very different contexts, IFSWE members already show strong commitment to IFSW’s common values, practice directions and ethics and we have already built strong solidarity as ‘one profession’ across European borders throughout Europe. This is evidenced in the engagement in the delegates meetings, conferences, online events, World Social Work Day activities and participation in our projects.

However, we know that our members experience very different struggles and challenges in daily practice and in the pursuit of professional social work in their countries. It is often colleagues in countries with long term structural barriers to involvement in IFSWE who also experience the most acute and difficult conditions for practice and who are under significant duress. Improving how we respond to and support members in such circumstances will increase the reputation and perceived relevance of IFSWE.

We believe there is an opportunity, through use of the IFSW Global grant, to strengthen IFSWE’s capacity to respond better and in more empowering ways to members’ challenges, particularly at times of significant duress. Through this we may enable countries that are more marginalised and less well represented IFSWE activities and leadership to become better supported and involved, to contribute more to IFSW E and IFSW Global through sharing their time, knowledge and perspectives, and to enhance the development of social work as a values driven profession in more countries.

The proposed project will also support development of effective direct social work practices in situations of duress and emergency and so raise the profile of social work and its values in such circumstances.

This project is intended to be open as a resource and opportunity for further collaboration and sharing of ideas with other IFSW Global regions.

**IFSWE Two Year Strategy 2025-27**

IFSWE has recently adopted a new two-year Strategy (attached separately in email) for 2025-27. This was developed through member consultation (including in Oct 24 delegates meeting Lisbon) and endorsed through a Europe wide vote in favour (March 25). This strategy includes a broad change agenda including developing our networks and framework for mutual support and solidarity across associations and breaking down barriers to inclusion and ‘equal voice’ amongst members.

The IFSW Europe *Strategic themes and proposed work priorities 2025 -2027* document (1.4), outlines that the *promotion of more equitable access and involvement in our work and activities for all members and potential members of IFSW Europe* will be a priority. Through this we will have a richer and stronger IFSWE.

Through the Strategy, we have committed to ensuring we increase the inclusion and connectedness between IFSWE associations with a focus on reducing the imbalances in power and resources between associations and building on the importance of ensuring all members are heard, involved and recognised for their contribution.

Our approach is rooted in a commitment to ‘decolonising social work’ across our work i.e. recognising that as social workers we need to work consciously and systematically to ensure opportunities for involvement and access to leadership opportunities across countries, that we need to understand the historical roots of the social, economic and political contexts of social work and social protection systems across the region, and that we need to work to rebalance power and equality of opportunity to participate and shape IFSWE across countries and associations.

Through receiving this grant, we will be able to pursue several of the priorities agreed by our members through the Strategy.

**Funding proposal**

We are seeking funding to support the development of capacity to deliver funded projects for the longer term. The overall output of the work will be to engage more diverse countries, bid for EU funding and to inclusively extend EU projects to non EU partners..

The funding will resource a coordinator who can apply for funded work, and develop a pool of consultants that can, at the end of the project, support govts and not for profit sectors in developing best practices. The funding will seed capacity to build longer term sustainable funding, which in turn will build and secure the profile of the profession across Europe.

**Proposed scheme of work over two years (to end 2027)**

**Phase One (Aug 25- Dec 25 Develop and Agree the Project Approaches and Action Plan**

1. Appoint a voluntary project lead member and a small support group of members supported by a part time funded officer to coordinate Phase One of the project, working closely with the IFSW Executive to throughout the process.
2. Create a collaborative online process of consultation and participation with IFSWE members, ensuring participation of less well represented and involved members and those currently experiencing significant duress wherever possible.
3. Gather existing knowledge within the membership about best social work practices and effective approaches to building collective support and solidarity in situations of disasters, emergencies and political oppression.
4. Use the ongoing meetings and activities within IFSWE to develop themes and priorities for the project e.g. use the existing quarterly representatives’ meetings, executive committee meetings, regular member communications by email and social media, and dedicated wider consultation/ evaluative processes as needed
5. Consult of early ideas and co-produce draft action plan at the IFSW E delegates’ meeting in October 2025 proposing a platform/approach to supporting countries in Europe that are under duress, or in crisis (Strategy 1.3), dealing with emergencies/disasters or otherwise marginalised and less represented in the work of IFSW E. For example, the action plan may focus on;  implementing a sustainable and ecological approach to IFSW Europe work that is relevant to all countries; taking a *Glocal* (integrated global and local) approach, using relationship- based principles to develop mutual support models; profiling less active/more marginalised countries and social work associations to understand and consensually share information on their situation within the IFSW E community; identifying improvements needed in IFSW E communications to reach more members effectively; using social media and emerging technologies to assist in cross-cultural awareness and development of knowledge.
6. Finalise the action plan through further comment and opportunities for refinement after the October 2025 Delegates’ Meeting
7. Identify improvements or innovations in practice that emerge in Phase one through the participation and feedback of members that will be further developed and piloted in phase two. Use an emergent agile project approach that enables development and deployment of improvements and innovations whilst continuing to collect and respond to the flow of information from members and making further adjustments to approaches over time.
8. Within existing resource, revise IFSWE funding support for attendance in person to the Delegates’ Meetings in 2025 to encourage more representation from less well resources association and especially associations currently or recently under duress. Build proposals for extension of this funding support for subsequent Delegates’ Meetings
9. Put a call out for a support team for the project from the across the membership, ensuring diverse associations are encouraged to contribute, including those with direct experience of working under duress (as defined in this paper), and including members of the New Social Workers and Human Rights networks within IFSWE.

**Phase two – Deliver outcomes, disseminate outputs and evaluate the Action Plan Jan 25 - Dec 26.**

1. Refine and begin implementing priority actions and further develop the project support team of members. Continue to work with the IFSWE President and Executive who will support and oversee progress of the project.
2. Ensure tangible implementation actions to include (not limited to)
   * Embedding of IFSWE collective response process to support members under duress more effectively adopting clear approaches for different types of circumstance e.g. for environmental disaster, major accidents and other emergencies, military action, political oppression and/or hostility to social work and people we work with (etc).
   * Develop guidance and training options on social work role and practice under duress, identification of those able to contribute to learning events and organisation of e.g. several webinars
   * Promote the role of social work in disasters, emergencies and military conflict and how social work can persist and have positive influence in times of political oppression and/or hostility through seeking funds to take this work forwards.
3. Put in place a system of ongoing dialogue/consultation with members throughout the project. This will include:
   * quarterly discussion with and reporting into the IFSWE Representatives and Project leads meeting.
   * online open meetings on project progress and ongoing consultation with members
   * six monthly reports to the IFSWE Executive, shared with members
   * a full progress report and participative session on ‘next steps’ at 2026 delegates meeting
4. Throughout, cross reference the work with other parts of the IFSW strategy such engaging with the New Social Workers network and Human Rights network, pursuing an ethic of widening inclusion and participation.
5. Submit a proposal for presentation at IFSW Global conference in Kenya 2026, informing future work, and pointing to the potential value of the work across IFSW regions. The grant will help to fund one or more presenters to attend the Kenya conference to supplement other IFSWE funding.
6. The project lead and support team, in collaboration with the Executive, will undertake a reflective evaluation of the project, successes and work yet to do. This will include the views of members and other stakeholders, if possible including people in communities impacted by social work where the project has had an impact on support and/or training of social workers.
7. An evaluation of the project and proposals for next steps will be written by the Project lead with officer support, presented to the Europe Executive in Spring 2027, and proposed to the members at the Delegate’s meeting in Oct 2026

**See outline budget on next page**

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| Purpose of funding | Phase one  Aug 2025- Nov 2025 | Phase two  Dec 2025 – Sept 26 |
| **People costs -  funded time to build project capacity and deliver specific (eg written) outputs from the project** | Purpose: To support the voluntary member lead and support team to coordinate the development of the action plan, engagement of members and initial actions.  To coordinate three webinars to consult on development of the model of support, empowerment and learning that IFSW E should use in the long term to facilitate wider participation of member association under duress, dealing with emergencies/disasters and in other more vulnerable situations and to enhance the benefit of IFSW membership.  37 euros an hour of net costs (German EU expert project pay rate, 33 euros per hr. plus an overhead/contingency of 15%.) 37 euros x 60 hours = **2,220 euros** | Purpose: To support the voluntary member lead and support team to coordinate the delivery of the Action Plan and engagement of members.  To support writing and production of facilitation, training and guidance materials for IFSW E to use (and for sharing with other regions over time).  To coordinate three webinars to trial the use of the resources and approaches for relevant members i.e. members who are under duress, dealing with emergencies/disasters and in other more marginalised situations  To support completion of an evaluation, presentation and report for the IFSW Global conference and Delegates’ Meeting in Kenya.  To undertake further roll out of the resources including two further webinars and building an online community of support, solidarity and mutual learning across associations in Europe.  37 euros an hour of net costs (German EU expert project pay rate 33e ph, plus an overhead of 15%.) 37 euros x 90 hours = **3,330 euros** |
| **Support costs** | Widening participation opportunities through offering interpretation/ translation for:   * Three webinars as above (interpretation). * Some web content * Invitations to eventsand opportunities through email communications from IFSW Europe   **500 euros** | Increasing accessibility of final resources through interpretation/translation, and other support costs for the development, design and publication of the resources and the evaluation of their initial use as described above.  **500 euros** |
| **Travel and dissemination costs** |  | Support attendance/contribution at global conference Kenya 2026 to present paper progress to date on project - supporting widened participation for colleagues under duress and unable to fully fund attendance  **2500 euros** (match funding at same level from existing IFSWE budget) |
| **Contingency:** | **350 euros** | **600 euros** |
| **Yearly total** | **3070 euros** | **6,930 euros** |
| **Total budget** | **10,000 euros** | |