The LEGO Foundation works with valued partners – including NGOs, international organisations, governments and social entrepreneurs – with the shared objective of building a future in which learning through play empowers children to become creative and engaged lifelong learners.

Our commitment to working with our partners is based on a high level of trust, efficiency and responsibility. We believe in mutual value creation through synergies in expertise and resources. That's why we concentrate on cultivating long-term partnerships with key organisations, well-suited for carrying out impactful initiatives that fit within the current LEGO Foundation strategy, and comply in full with our standards in specific areas.

1. Pre-award phase (9–12 months)
The LEGO Foundation only awards grants via a direct invitation to submit an application. This means there is no grant application process prior to such a direct invitation, and unsolicited funding requests are not accepted.

Invitation to submit a project idea
When we know that an organisation is aligned with our values and principles, and that you could be a partner well-suited to carry out the project, we invite you to submit an early phase proposal.
This proposal provides the LEGO Foundation with a concise summary of the project idea to be considered. Prospective applicants are contacted by the LEGO Foundation staff member designated to help you through this process.
In some cases, such as when we want to broaden our network or fund multiple organisations to implement the project, we invite one or more organisations to discuss the proposal concept with us, so we can explore their interest, their capabilities and their capacity with regard to carrying out the work involved.

Preparation of a project proposal
If we decide to pursue your idea further, we then ask you to provide more information about the project, in the form of a detailed project proposal. We consider this process to be a collaborative effort that might result in a partnership.
This proposal enables you to provide more detailed and supporting documentation, including descriptions of objectives, target groups and anticipated impact. You will also be asked to prepare a budget that provides sufficient detail about the amounts you propose to spend on specific activities.

Risk assessment and partner screening
In parallel with the preparation of the project proposal, we carry out a comprehensive risk assessment and screening to make sure your organisation meets the LEGO Foundation standards.
We carry out a rigorous due diligence process, which includes checking your regulatory compliance, governance structure, financial statements, risk management procedures, etc.
We also review whether appropriate policies and processes are in place in your organisation and the extent to which they reflect LEGO Foundation values and policies about issues that include child protection, code of conduct, ethical standards, etc. During the screening process, we will ask you to submit a number of supporting documents and we might contact you for a short interview to discuss in detail the information you have provided. We also check the references you shared with us. Based on the findings of the risk assessment and due diligence process, we will establish recommendations that the partner must follow.

**Project proposal review**
Once you have submitted your proposal, it is reviewed by LEGO Foundation staff. The review process includes:

- A programme/content review to make sure that the proposed activities reflect programme strategy and are appropriate and measurable
- A technical review to make sure that the grant allocation process has been completed accurately and appropriately
- A capacity review to determine whether there are sufficient resources and expertise to ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of the project.

During the review process, you may be asked to answer additional or clarifying questions, to make revisions to the proposal or to receive LEGO Foundation staff members for a site visit.

**2. Award phase (4–6 months)**

The length of time it takes for your proposal to be approved will vary, depending on the project type and scope, and on the meeting schedules of the LEGO Foundation decision-making bodies. During this time, you will have personal contact with the LEGO Foundation Partnership Manager designated as your cooperation partner and project manager for the entire project period.

Please note that you will have to sign our Partnership Agreement with the terms and conditions for the grant before your grant can start. You can get a blank copy of the Partnership Agreement by contacting tina.bache@lego.com.

**Grant approval and notification**

Our grant approval process includes two stages. Firstly, the LEGO Foundation leadership team reviews the proposal and recommends it to the LEGO Foundation board of directors for approval. The board meets several times a year and considers grants on a rolling basis. After evaluating an application, the board will choose to reject or approve it. Once your application is approved, we will send you notification about the grant approval by email.

**Partnership agreement**

If your grant is approved, we will prepare a Partnership Agreement that regulates our cooperation and includes the project description, the amount of funding involved, the payment and reporting schedule, as well as the exact duration of your project.
The Partnership Agreement may also include requirements based on the findings of the risk assessment and due diligence process (as described above), with which the partner must comply. Your organisation accepts the grant by signing the Partnership Agreement. Failure to comply with these requirements may lead to termination of the partnership contract.

3. Grant execution phase (depending on project duration)
This phase comprises a significant amount of work related to execution of the grant. This includes actual project implementation, reporting progress and completing the requirements necessary to fulfil the terms of the grant. You will also be kept abreast of the overall LEGO Foundation strategy and objectives.

Project implementation
During the project implementation, you will be working with the LEGO Foundation Partnership Manager assigned to your project, and you should keep in close contact with him/her to discuss progress and any challenges associated with ongoing work. By maintaining quality interactions and clear, consistent communication, we are also able to give you feedback after reports and visits, sharing our assessments of progress to date, and in some cases requesting further information. Any changes to the project, including changes in activities and/or budget, or potential extension of the project, must be discussed with – and approved by – the LEGO Foundation. Any significant changes can lead to Amendment to the Partnership Agreement.

Progress reporting and fund disbursement
We want you to report at least once a year, using the report templates provided by the LEGO Foundation. Your narrative and financial reports must be based on the activities and budget laid down in the Partnership Agreement. The financial instalments will be paid based on the payment schedule laid down in the Partnership Agreement. The grant letter includes the first payment and the schedule of payments. The remaining payments will be transferred once your narrative and financial progress reports have been accepted.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning
We place strong emphasis on monitoring and evaluation of the project and want to make sure that any lessons learned during project implementation are identified and described appropriately. We therefore ask you to provide routine monitoring data in line with the monitoring, evaluation and learning plan throughout the duration of the project. This may include baseline, midterm and endline data, and at times involve external consultant support for conducting data collection and quality assessment. The core aim at all times is to facilitate and ensure learning, as well as ongoing improvement of the project.

External auditing
Based on the partnership contract, our partners and grants may be audited by a certified independent auditor at any time during the grant execution. Such audits are mainly intended to provide the LEGO Foundation with appropriate
assurance that disbursed funds were spent for the intended purposes, in accordance with the Partnership Agreement.

4. Grant Completion (minimum 2 months)
The project closure step is completed based on the final financial and narrative report that you submit. The LEGO Foundation may decide to conduct an external evaluation or audit of the project once it has been completed and closed.
The grant completion process can take from 2 months up to several years, depending on whether the LEGO Foundation decides to conduct a project evaluation in order to review the implementation and overall results of the project, and on the scope and complexity of this evaluation.

Final report and final payment
The final report is your opportunity to provide us with a comprehensive picture of what the project has achieved, what you have learned, and your reflections about how the project contributes to social impact and systemic change, and the sustainability of its results.
The final grant instalment will only be released if and when the final narrative and financial report has been accepted.

Ex-post project evaluation
Once the project is completed, we will review the implementation and results of the project in order to enhance organisational learning and quality improvements at both project and programme levels. In some cases, we will arrange for a final evaluation of the project to be carried out by an external evaluator.
Through the ex-post project evaluation, we intend to reach useful conclusions about the level of achievement, in terms of both expected and unexpected results. We do this by examining interventions, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria, including relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.