

## The FREE STEM Fund Regional Review Panels Terms of Reference

### What is the FREE STEM Fund?

FREE stands for Financial Resilience and Economic Empowerment. The first iteration of the FREE Fund was set up in 2021 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic to provide much needed resources and support to youth and women-led organisations to advance girls and women's economic resilience. This participatory grant-making fund adopts a holistic approach to economic resilience that recognises that girls' economic resilience involves more than just learning or earning, but also the ability to use and control economic resources. These solutions aim to broaden our concept of economic resilience to address discrimination and aim to advance gender justice.

Women Win is building upon the strong foundation and approach of our work on the FREE Fund to design the FREE STEM Fund that specifically focuses on narrowing the gender gap in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematic (STEM) fields. Similar to FREE, we will use models of shared governance and participatory mechanisms to design a fund that is tailored to the needs and gaps within the STEM sector, and that centres grassroots STEM expertise and voices. FREE STEM Fund will invest in projects that prioritise girls, women, transgender and non-binary people's access to STEM opportunities.

The FREE STEM Fund will issue a call for applications in 2022 and 2023, focusing on the Global South. In particular, it is envisioned that the FREE STEM Fund will aim to support girls, young women, transgender and non-binary people to:

- Provide marginalised youth to access to opportunities in STEM;
- Increase girls', women, transgender and non-binary people's skills in STEM fields;
- Create a platform for girls, women, transgender and non-binary people in STEM to showcase their contributions and impact;
- Inspire more girls, women, transgender and non-binary people to pursue careers in STEM;
- Create women, transgender and non-binary role models and STEM changemakers;
- Support girls, women, transgender and non-binary people to be trained for STEM opportunities;
- Increase access to sustainable jobs and lifelong careers allowing girls, women, transgender and non-binary people to maximise their contributions to their communities and the economy;
- Expand girls, women, transgender and non-binary people's representation, voice, and decision-making influence in their communities or at the workplace.

### Governance of the FREE STEM Fund

Women Win will co-design and launch FREE STEM Fund, in close collaboration with the Advisory Committee (AC) and four Regional Peer Panels (RPP): Latin America & Caribbean, Africa, Asia & the Pacific, and the Middle East.

Each RPP will be composed of women, transgender and non-binary people who are from the four regions, who strive for gender equality and have an understanding of the gender-related barriers in STEM. The RPP are crucial in providing local context for the many unique and collective

experiences of the girls, women, transgender and non-binary people who are the target beneficiaries of FREE STEM. The RPP are key during the grantmaking process and will be tasked with the responsibility to review, score, and shortlist applications from their own region.

## Who are we looking for:

- Women, transgender and non-binary people (minimum age is 18)
- Originally from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East, and the Pacific
- Fluent in English, Arabic, or Spanish
- Regular internet and email access, and the ability to join meetings remotely (by Zoom or any other platform).
- Committed to feminist principles of collective power and decision-making
- Previous experience in organizations, programs, groups related to STEM or gender equality in STEM is preferred.
- Have connections to girls, women, transgender, non-binary people organising, programming or movements in your context or community
- Have an interest in collaborating with and learning from other people across the world in this process
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills

## Responsibilities & Time Commitment:

The specific scope of the Peer Panel's work includes:

- **Grant making** - Participating in reviewing and scoring applications and recommending a shortlist of applications to the Advisory Committee
- **Learning** - Contribute to the learning agenda, including determining themes and topics for (virtual) grantee convenings and other learning events;
- **Outreach** - supporting communications, information sharing and awareness raising.

Members will work with the FREE Fund Advisory Committee and Women Win to ensure grant making decisions are transparent and aligned with the Fund strategy.

- 75 hours taking place from November 2022 to the end of February 2023 including:
  - Attending the training sessions on FREE (2-4 hours)
  - Reviewing and scoring assigned applications (~65 hours)
    - Approx. 25 hrs in December 2022
    - Approx. 40 hrs in January 2023
  - Attending sessions to discuss and shortlist the top scored applications (4-6 hours)
  - Attending a learning session to reflect on their experience as a panellist. (1 hour)

## Compensation

Each panellist, as an individual, will receive a stipend of 1,125 EUR for their participation in the Regional Peer Panel.



We also believe that there are other benefits to being involved as a panellist, such as connecting to other women's rights and feminist activists across the region and the opportunity to learn more about participatory grant making.

**Interested in the opportunity to shape funding decisions?**

**[Fill out the application form here](#) by October 9<sup>th</sup>.**

If you have any questions please email [freefund@womenwin.org](mailto:freefund@womenwin.org)