Programme on Strengthening Civil Society Organizations for Responsive and Accountable Governance in Rwanda

Call for Project Proposals

Deadline for submission
5 November 2021

1. Background

Civil society, as the 'third' sector of governance, constitutes an increasingly crucial element of accountability and citizen participation. The success of development and participatory governance depends on a robust state, a dynamic private sector and an active civil society with healthy levels of civic engagement. Civil Society Organizations have an essential role to play in ensuring human rights, transparency, community development and citizens' participation. Their work with marginalized communities and the focus on advocacy and accountability are critical to a society's wellbeing. Without them, we cannot build societies that 'leave no one behind'. Their connections to the communities and grassroots level interventions complement government actions and make substantial contributions to the well-being of communities. A thriving civil society that can deliver quality services, encourage participation, transparency and innovation is therefore paramount.

The role of civil society during the period following the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi and development journey of Rwanda has been highly recognized and efforts are ongoing to continue building a strong operational framework for CSOs both at national as well as local levels. CSOs are strongly recognized by the Government of Rwanda as an important pillar of Good Governance. The role of CSOs is emphasized in the NST1 under the theme Transformational Governance in many areas including i) *accountability, ii) citizen empowerment and participation iii) monitoring and ensuring effective service delivery.* The importance of the involvement of CSOs in accountable governance and the development processes is equally put forward in Rwanda's Vision 2050.

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the socio-economic damage caused by the related prevention and control measures -especially affecting the most vulnerable, the role of civil society organizations becomes even more paramount. Civil society organizations in Rwanda have a unique opportunity to contribute to the recovery process and ensure its inclusiveness. CSOs will have an important role to play in providing the necessary guidance on the protection of human rights and, with substantial experience in social protection and livelihood support, CSOs can complement government response efforts, especially at the local level. They will also be fundamental in building a rights-based post-coronavirus world.

The landscape of CSOs in Rwanda is diverse with CSOs represented in a wide range of sectors such as human rights, accountable governance, social protection, peace and reconciliation, community development and empowerment. The number of national CSOs in Rwanda has multiplied in recent years - especially in post-genocide Rwanda with organizations originating to respond to needs and vulnerabilities resulting from the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi - reaching a current total of about 2000 organizations. Civil Society exists in various forms and capacity levels. There is a plurality of formal, informal, national, local, weak and relatively strong organizations, which represent and advocate for different interests and interest groups. Rwandan CSOs demonstrate disparities in internal capacities, but generally, they face similar challenges regarding the organizational and management capacities. The key findings of the 2018 Civil Society Development Barometer provide a useful overview of the current state of play of the national civil society in Rwanda.

With the objective of strengthening civil society organizations for responsive and accountable governance in Rwanda the Government of Rwanda and UNDP Rwanda launched a Programme in 2014. When this 5-year programme ended in 2018, the programme was extended for an additional five years (2018-2023). The objective of the CSO strengthening programme is to enhance an enabling environment for CSOs to play a prominent role in service delivery, policy design and reforms, to represent the voice of the people and to hold state and corporates accountable. This will be achieved if CSOs have the required capacities, tools and mandates to represent the interests of the people of Rwanda.

An important part of working towards these objectives is the programme's micro-grant facility, which is part of a wider strategy of strengthening civil society organization and deepening more permanent and sustainable dialogue channels between CSOs and Government to advocate for the voices of civil society to be heard and

taken into account in public policy making. Awarded grantees will commit to active participation in capacity-building activities as well as one-one-one technical coaching support. Through the implementation of awarded projects, grantees will support community development and deepen their understanding of the needs of the people they represent, sensitize them on their rights -including those of marginalized groups- and promote participation in decision making and development processes.

This Call for Proposals outlines the steps to be followed to apply for the micro-grant programme for national/local CSOs. The proposals will be evaluated by an independent Grant Selection Committee ensuring equal treatment of all submissions.

2. Grant areas and thematic priorities

Eligible project proposals can focus on one of the seven thematic areas described hereunder:

1. COVID 19 economic recovery (at community level)
2. Empowerment of persons with disabilities
3. Anti-SGBV, child protection and gender equality
4. Youth empowerment
5. Protection of the environment for green growth and climate resilience
6. Extension services for agriculture and livestock
7. Quality service delivery and accountability

1) COVID-19 economic recovery (at community level)

The Government of Rwanda's National Preparedness and Response Plan (NPRP) and Economic Recovery Plan (ERP) outline measures to contain Covid-19; mitigate the economic and social impacts of the pandemic on local businesses and vulnerable households; and contribute to the mitigation of macroeconomic risks. However, given the unprecedented shock caused by the pandemic, and the level of uncertainty inherent to the recovery process, it is important that all relevant actors – both state and non-state – contribute to the implementation of these plans and play their role in advocating for support to the most vulnerable and ensuring that measures tackle their needs.

Under this thematic area, CSO projects supporting economic recovery efforts of local communities will be considered. This can include support to affected businesses, support to skills development for the unemployed, support to innovative entrepreneurship.

2) Empowerment of persons with disabilities

In recent years, the Government of Rwanda strengthened its interventions towards supporting persons with disabilities. In 2011, the government established the National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) to coordinate disability inclusion efforts in the country. More recently, in May 2021, the cabinet approved a national policy for inclusion of persons with disabilities, reaffirming Rwanda's strong political will for disability inclusion. Through interventions of NCPD and partners, various milestones have been achieved particularly on streamlining policy frameworks to be disability inclusive. Rwanda's organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) have been critical channels for advocacy and decentralizing policies and initiatives.

Despite the efforts, a range of challenges persist. Persons with disabilities still face an idiosyncratic exclusion from various services and their socioeconomic status and standards of living remain far below national average. For example, while 25% of persons with disabilities had no access to financial services in 2020, the corresponding rate of financial exclusion of persons without disabilities is only seven percent. According to the 2017 EICV5, literacy rates among those 15 and above are substantially different between persons with and

without disabilities (43% and 75% respectively). What's more, only 28% of women with disabilities in rural areas are literate. The 2015 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) Report indicates that about 25 percent of household heads in severely food insecure households are disabled, compared to only nine percent in food secure households. The unemployment rate among persons with disabilities is highest among female youth with disabilities aged between 16 and 24 and 25 and 34, standing at 22% and 21% respectively vs 17% and 12% among male youth within the same age groups.

Concerted efforts must be made to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in democratic and development processes, in line with the new disability inclusion policy. Projects focusing on socio-economic empowerment and human rights promotion of persons with disabilities and enabling inclusive access to a variety of services will be considered under this area.

3) Anti-SGBV, child protection and gender equality

Projects under this area can include effective models of working with women, men, boys and girls at the community level to achieve behavioral change to reduce violence and build healthy families. Projects can include activities aimed at promoting secure environments for all family members, promoting positive masculinities, eradicating gender-based violence or reinforcing family unity and positive parenting.

Activities can also focus on human trafficking, fighting drug abuse among young people, and mental health and psychosocial support. Activities can also focus on improving gender equality aiming to overcome the still prevalent inequalities between women and men in social, economic and political spheres. While gender equality is a cross-cutting issue, projects also specifically focus on this area.

4) Youth empowerment

Activities can include innovative initiatives led by CSOs supporting communities in strengthening youth's social and economic empowerment and welfare. These can include creating opportunities and skills for decent earnings through employment and entrepreneurship, scaling up a social enterprise initiated and managed by young people, business development services that help enhance self-employment/job creation among the youth, activities related to global citizenship education and prevention of violent extremism. Activities taking place in rural areas and secondary cities are encouraged.

5) Protection of the environment for green growth and climate resilience

Rwanda's economy is heavily dependent on the environment and natural resources. The livelihoods of rural (and increasingly urban) communities depend on access, use and management of such resources. Pursuing green economy is a priority area of economic transformation. Projects can focus on any of the following: green technologies and innovation to reduce vulnerability of people and the ecosystem to climate change; sustainable waste management (reduce the amount of waste, reuse of waste, transformation of waste into new products), ecosystems restoration and rehabilitation, rainwater harvesting system and irrigation, eco-tourism and biodiversity conservation, climate smart agriculture, urban agriculture, investment in renewable energy (for rural settlements); protection of lake shores and river banks to protect from water bodies and restoration of rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems like wetlands; rehabilitation of mining sites; planting of trees especially indigenous species; and mainstreaming activities related to environmental protection and reduction of climate change in sector strategic plans and district development plans and performance contracts.

6)	Extension services for agriculture and livestock

The economy of Rwanda is heavily dependent on subsistence agriculture. The sector employs more than 70% of the work force in Rwanda. However, the agriculture sector is also the main source of Greenhouse gas emissions in Rwanda and the most vulnerable to the impact of the negative effects of climate change. Changes in this sector are crucial for a healthy and wealthy society.

Project proposals in this area can include interventions supporting a wide range of activities in agriculture covering multiple dimensions, for example the production of organic food; the use of clean and renewable energy to achieve food security; green and sustainable livelihoods; clean agriculture value chains; sustainable livestock production. Interventions related to accessing climate resilient seeds and organic fertilizers; increasing awareness of communities on new clean technologies to apply in the agriculture sector; creation of markets for organic food; building the capacity of the community on climate resilient agriculture; and support to increasing sector delivery for citizens and farmers will be considered.

7)	Quality service delivery and accountability

Accountability is a cornerstone of good governance. Accountability exists when the performance of tasks of one body, are subject to another's oversight, direction, or request for justification. Democracy requires active informed citizens and responsive and accountable states. Such a relationship between state and citizens is fostered through participation and accountability mechanisms, which in turn, render public services more effective and foster democratic ownership of public resources. Civil society has an important role to play in holding government and private sector accountable.

Project proposals in this area can contribute to the effective service delivery in relation to national service delivery priorities. Activities can focus on creating awareness of and promoting compliance to the service quality standards to enhance service delivery to citizens. Activities will also focus on addressing related bottlenecks through capacity building to influence behavioral change with an emphasis on raising awareness of service providers to provide effective and quality services to citizens while at the same time encouraging the recipients to thrive for better services and decline poor services.

3. Cross Cutting Areas

The proposals will consider the following three cross-cutting areas.

Gender Equality: The extent to which the proposal incorporates gender equality principles will be evaluated. It is important for any project to demonstrate that gender aspects have been taken into consideration even if the main focus area is not gender equality. This may be done through gender mainstreaming approaches or gender specific components within the project. Disaggregating data on target groups, beneficiaries, stakeholders and staff in relation to their gender roles is also recommended. CSOs that can demonstrate an active effort to have gender balance in staffing, particularly in key and senior positions, will also be favorably considered.

Human Rights: Each proposal should contribute to the promotion of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international human rights instruments which Rwanda has ratified, in line with the responsibilities of the duty bearers (*authorities*) and the rights-holders (*citizens*) respectively. Each proposal should respect the principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment, and the rule of law.

Environment and Climate Change: Each proposal should indicate how the project will adapt and reduce the impact of climate change on the environment. All proposed projects should benefit individuals from all

categories (children, youth and adults) while carrying out activities aimed at ensuring environmental sustainability in homes, schools, communities and workplaces.

4. Financial Allocations

Micro-grants will be awarded a **maximum budget of 25,000,000 RWF**. Proposals submitted cannot exceed this budget ceiling.

CSOs are required to provide own contributions to the implementation of the proposed project, which should be clearly reflected in the budget. Own contributions can be financial or in-kind such as the organization's office space, equipment (IT equipment, office furniture and vehicles), volunteer staff, among others.

5. Eligibility Criteria

5.1. Eligible applicants

Organizations eligible to respond to this Call for Proposals are national non-governmental and faith-based organizations (including umbrella organizations), which are legally registered by the Rwanda Governance Board in line with the existing legislation. All applicants should possess a registration certificate (legal personality) issued by RGB and an organizational bank account. In addition, all eligible organizations should be complying with laws and regulations as well as required governance principles and practices.

For the purpose of this Call for Proposals, civil society organizations encompass national non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations defined as follows:[1]
- Registered national non-governmental organizations *(including media associations registered by RGB)*
- Registered faith-based organizations

CSOs that have benefited from grant support of the UNDP/RGB programme for 3 or more times in the past years, are not eligible to apply for this call for proposals.

5.2. Eligible projects

a. Duration

The proposed project can have a duration of maximum twelve (12) months. The project will start on the day of signature of the grant agreement.

b. Location

The project should take place in the territory of Rwanda. Projects targeting rural areas will be given more consideration in the selection process.

c. Types of projects

It is mandatory that, the proposed project contributes to one of the seven thematic priorities as outlined in section 2.

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[1] Law nr. 4/2012 of 17/02/2012 governing the organization and functioning of national governmental organizations; Law nr. 6/2012 of 17/02/2012 determining organization and functioning of religious-based organizations

A project that contains coherent and connected set of activities that respond to specific needs of a targeted group and that will achieve a specific objective within a specific and reasonable timeframe.

The following projects and activities are not eligible and will not be selected:
- Projects focusing only or mainly on sponsorships for participation in seminars and conferences, trainings and studies;
- Activities supporting activities of political organizations;
- Profit making activities;
- Activities focusing on proselytism;
- Activities supporting any type of discrimination or violation of the basic rights of people.

5.3. Eligibility of costs

All indicated costs must be based on supporting documents, and the proposed budget should be realistic and cost-effective. Debt charges, purchases of land and buildings as well as currency exchange losses are not eligible costs.

Before signing the contract, RGB/UNDP can request awarded grantees for clarifications regarding the budget and accompanying reviews.

6. Application procedure

Applicants will duly complete the project proposal template *(see Annex 1).* All applicants should strictly adhere to the format of the proposal template. Failure to do so will lead to automatic rejection of the proposal. The proposal template will be the basis for assessment of the quality of the proposal.

All documents will be completed electronically. ***Hand-written applications will not be accepted.***

Applicants should also complete and attach all the required supporting documents. ***Incomplete applications will not be considered.***

Applicants may submit their application documents in English or in French.

Application documents should include:

1. Project Proposal (following the template) including the results framework and annual work plan (duly signed) *(see Annex 1)*
2. Project Budget Form (duly completed and signed) – completed in excel format *(see Annex 2)*
3. Copy of registration certificate from RGB *(Legal Personality or Compliance certificate)*
4. Proof of existence of an organizational bank account via letter of the bank. Please note that if selected, the applicant will have to open a specific bank account for funds received under this proposal.
5. Completed application form (available online through the below link)

Application process

All applicants fulfilling the eligibility criteria should submit their application **online** through the following link: **https://forms.gle/ZQE62UapVcL2erWg9**

Note: All the documents should be in PDF format.

The deadline for submission of the applications is 17:00 on **5 November 2021**. This deadline is strictly final; any applications submitted from 17:01 on 5 November 2021 will not be considered.

7. Selection Mechanism

7.1 Grant Selection Committee

The submitted proposals will be evaluated by an independent Grant Selection Committee composed of representatives of key stakeholders.

Final validation of the selected proposals will be done by the Programme Steering Committee chaired by Rwanda Governance Board and co-chaired by UNDP- Rwanda.

7.2 Selection phases

a) Administrative check

During the initial phase of the selection process, the following criteria will be checked:
- Timely submission before the deadline;
- Adequate submission of **all** application documents;
- Valid registration certificate (legal personality or a certificate of compliance);
- Submission of the proposal in English or French.

Only applications complying with these initial selection criteria will be further evaluated.

b) Evaluation phase

Applications will be reviewed by the Grant Selection Committee. This committee will base its evaluation of submitted proposals on the detailed selection criteria listed hereunder.

Project Proposal Evaluation Grid	Scores	
1. Relevance and feasibility	**Sub-score**	**35**
1.1 Relevance of the project in relation to the CSO's mandate	5	
1.2 Has the relevance of the project objective been well-analyzed and is it well-articulated in the problem analysis and needs assessment?	10	
1.3 Have the target groups and final beneficiaries been clearly identified and are their needs well analyzed? Is the proposed target group inclusive (PWDs, gender balance, etc)	5	
1.4 Relevancy of the project proposal to the indicated thematic area	10	
1.5 Does the formulated proposal incorporate cross-cutting issues (gender equality, human rights, environment and climate change)	5	
*Important! Only proposals reaching the threshold of **25/35** will pass to the next phase of evaluation*		
2. Implementation Strategy	**Sub-score**	**25**
2.1 Is the results framework well-structured following an adequate hierarchy of the result chain? Does it include objectively verifiable indicators, and does it provide means of verification (surveys, reports etc)?	10	
2.2 Are the proposed activities and work plan consistent with the objectives of the project and presented in a clear and structured manner?	10	

2.5 Are the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders clearly defined and relevant to the accomplishment of the proposal's objectives?	5	
3. Sustainability	**Sub-score**	**15**
3.1 Is the proposal likely to have a long-lasting impact on the target groups beyond the project's duration? Is the proposal likely to have multiplier effects? Are there going to be any mechanisms, frameworks or institutional structures left behind with a clear plan on how they will keep functioning or being used?	10	
3.2 Are potential partnerships identified? Are modalities for engagement and roles and responsibilities defined?	5	
4. Cost effectiveness	**Sub-score**	**15**
4.1 Is the proposed budget responding to the workplan and overall objective of the proposal?	5	
4.2. Are the activities costed appropriately? (appropriate estimates, salary-activity ratio, etc)	5	
4.3 Does the proposal contain CSO own contributions (in kind or in cash) which will directly contribute to the activities presented in the proposal?	5	
5. Technical and financial capacity	**Sub-score**	**10**
5.1 Does the applicant have sufficient and demonstrated experience in project management? Does the applicant have sufficient management capacity (e.g. staff, equipment)?	5	
5.2 Does the applicant have sufficient and demonstrated experience in financial management?	5	
TOTAL SCORE		**100**

The candidates will be informed in writing of the final decision taken. In case applicants require additional information after receiving the written notification, a written request for information will need to be presented within 7 days.

After communication of final decisions, selected CSOs will start the contracting phase, during which any outstanding issues, technical or financial, will be discussed in order to finalize the agreement. Rwanda Governance Board and UNDP Rwanda will provide technical assistance and capacity building support during the project implementation to strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of the planned interventions. The overall aim of this technical support is to empower CSOs to robustly plan, implement, monitor and evaluate sustainable projects within their respective areas of expertise. This should lead to increased quality and impact of the projects implemented by the awarded CSOs.

This call for proposal can also be found on the following websites:

www.rw.undp.org
www.rgb.rw

Annex 1 Project Proposal Template

Instructions:
- *Do not exceed 15 full pages of text (any text exceeding 15 pages will not be considered in the evaluation).*
- *Delete the instructions in italic once you have completed the form.*
- *Do not modify this template and respond, in the same sequence, to each of the sections listed below.*
- *The evaluation will be carried out in accordance with the evaluation grid provided in the Evaluation Grid*

1. **Project Summary   (max. 1 page)**

Indicate under which Thematic Area you are applying	*Important! Each applicant should clearly indicate in the application under which thematic area the organization is submitting its proposal. Each organization can only apply under one of the thematic areas.*
Project Title	
Name of Civil Society Organisation	
Mandate of Civil Society Organization	
Geographic coverage of the project:	*Nationwide or in specific areas of Rwanda? Specify as detailed as possible.*
Duration of the project	*Indicate number of months (maximum 12 months).*
Project Budget	**REQUESTED AMOUNT:** *Mention the total requested amount in RWF* **OWN RESOURCES:** *Mention the total of own resources in RWF*
Beneficiaries	*Provide numbers and disaggregate by gender where possible. Try to distinguish between direct and indirect beneficiaries.*
Contact details of focal point of CSO	*Must be a staff of the CSO. Indicate name, phone number and email address.*
Address & Website	*Indicate physical address of CSO, as well as link to website.*
Number of projects funded by the RGB/UNDP programme in the past	*Indicate the number of times your CSO has been awarded with a micro-grant through the UNDP/RGB programme (This will be duly verified!) Indicate 0 in case your CSO has never benefited from support of this programme*

2. **Background/situation analysis (max. 1 page)**

3. **Problem analysis and needs assessment. Identify the needs and constraints at national and/or local context. (max. 2 pages)**

4. **Outline the thematic area and the activities planned (max. 3 pages)**

5. **How will cross cutting issues be integrated? (max. 1 page)**

6. **Outline and describe the target groups and final beneficiaries (max. 1 page)**

7. **Describe the Expected results following the format in the below table (max. 2 pages)**

Results	Description	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Risks and Assumptions
Outcome						
Output 1						
Activity 1.1						
Activity 1.2						
…						
Output 2						
Activity 2.1						
Activity 2.2						
….						

8. **Prepare an Annual Work Plan following a monthly calendar in the following format (max. 1 page)**

Month / Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Location of Activity
Activity 1													
Activity 2													
Etc.													

9. **Describe the project management structure and division of labor and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved (max. 1 page)**

10. **Sustainability of results (max. 1page)**
    Describe any possible multiplier effect. How will long-lasting impact on target groups be ensured?
    Will any mechanisms, frameworks or institutional structures be created with a clear plan on how they will keep functioning or being used?
    What kind of partnerships will help ensure the sustainability of your proposed interventions?
    Describe the partnership with local leaders, churches, or other local organizations or platforms which will help to ensure the sustainability of the project.

11. **Describe the operational and financial capacity of your organization (max. 1 page)**
    a. Outline experience in project management
    b. Describe overall management capacity (e.g. staff, equipment)
    c. Outline the financing of your organization and the evolution of financial resources during last five years.
    d. Outline experience in financial management

Annex 2. Budget (in RWF)

Applicants are required to use this format but are encouraged to be as detailed as possible.
The headings and sub-headings A.1, A.2, B.1 are mentioned only as illustration and can be changed.

	General Category of Expenditures (in RWF)	Unit	Number of Units	Unit Value	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total
A.	**Personnel**								
A.1	Project Manager	Per month							
A.2	….								
B.	**Workshops/trainings/events**								
B.1	Conference room rental								
B2.	…..								
C.	**Communications**								
D.	**Travel/transport**								
E.	**Office operations**								
E.1.	Office rent	Per month							
F.	**Other [Specify]**								
F.1.	Publications	Per copy							
	TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET								
	TOTAL REQUESTED UNDER APPLICATION								
	TOTAL OWN CONTRIBUTIONS								