



USAID/Uganda Civil Society Strengthening Activity

Annual Program Statement Request for Concept Papers Democracy, Rights, and Governance

Concept Paper submission date: July 5, 2022
Closing Time: 5:00 pm, Kampala time
APS Number: 3031-2021-004

The USAID/Uganda Civil Society Strengthening Activity (CSSA) invites eligible Ugandan umbrella and individual civil society organizations (CSOs) that focus on democracy, rights, and governance to apply for Advocacy Capacity Support (ACS) grants. This Request for Concept Papers intends to support strengthening the advocacy capacity of CSOs to influence national and local development related to democracy, rights, and governance efforts in Uganda.

Issuance of this Annual Program Statement (APS) does not constitute an award commitment on the part of East West Management Institute Inc. (EWMI), nor does it commit EWMI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a Concept Paper. In addition, final award of any agreement cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed by USAID. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award. Furthermore, EWMI reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

Grant Awards: CSSA plans to award up to for four (4) grants under this Annual Program Statement. The maximum grant award for each proposal is USD 100,000. Grant funds may be used only for activities as described in this Annual Program Statement.

Funding Limits: The financial proposal must not exceed USD 100,000 or it will be disqualified. **Period of Performance:** The initial grant award under this APS will fund activities for up to 12 months, starting on September, 1 2022 and ending on August 31, 2022, with the potential of extending the grant support depending on performance and availability of funds. CSSA will assess the selected grantees at the end of Year 1, and the decision to continue CSSA’s grant support for these grantees will be based on grantees’ performance.

SECTION I – PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. BACKGROUND OF CSSA

Funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), CSSA is a five-year Activity implemented by East-West Management Institute, Inc. (EWMI), in partnership with Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations (DENIVA), the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), and Common Ground Consulting (CGC). CSSA supports the capacity strengthening of Ugandan CSOs to influence and contribute to improved development outcomes in four thematic areas, namely:

- 1) Health, with particular attention paid to achieving Uganda’s HIV/AIDS’ reduction goals;
- 2) Education, youth, and child development;
- 3) Agriculture with particular focus on food security; and
- 4) Democracy, rights, and governance.

CSSA prioritizes support for umbrella and individual CSOs implementing activities at the national level, or/and in the following twelve districts in Uganda: Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, Nwoya, Gulu, Lamwo, Lira, Omoro, Masindi, Mbarara, Rubirizi, and Kampala. EWMI’s approach to implementing CSSA emphasizes: (i) local ownership of CSSA’s interventions and initiatives; (ii) building the capacity of CSOs and investing in their sustainability; and (iii) utilizing Uganda’s local expertise and resources. CSSA’s Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Guidelines lead CSSA staff and partners’ work, while CSSA’s Giving Rise to Ugandan Indigenous Direction and Experience (GUIDE) Program invests in the leadership of women, youth, and CSOs outside Kampala

CSSA implements activities through three components:

- *Under Component One: Strengthen the advocacy capacity of CSOs to influence national and local development* - CSSA supports national and regional advocacy umbrella and individual CSOs to become leaders in advocating for reforms in CSSA’s four thematic areas and enhance their capacity to engage citizens and other stakeholders, strengthen their advocacy and institutional capacity, and build organizational resilience.
- *Under Component Two: Improve the organizational capacity of advocacy and service delivery oriented CSOs to sustainably fulfill their stated missions* - CSSA supports umbrella and individual CSOs at national, regional and district levels that engage in advocacy or deliver services in CSSA’s four thematic areas through capacity development assistance and grant awards.
- *Under Component Three: Promote a more supporting and enabling environment that sustains a vibrant civil society* - CSSA supports: (i) CSOs and government of Uganda (GoU) institutions to promote an enabling environment for civil society in Uganda; and (ii) CSOs to ensure increased levels of funding by the private sector and citizens.

The overall objective of the Advocacy Capacity Support (ACS) grants aligns with CSSA’s Components 1 and 2.

B. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This Annual Program Statement (APS) is focused on partnering with CSOs to strengthen Uganda's democratization process, protect and promote human rights, enhance good governance at local and national levels, and improve an enabling environment for civil society organizations in Uganda.

There is consensus that civil society organizations are key partners in Uganda's development. Over the years, CSOs have contributed to the delivery of social services; acted as change agents; been proponents for democracy; been crusaders for human rights; influenced policy agenda setting; and played their key role as watch dogs, holding duty bearers accountable to citizens. Uganda's supreme law, the Constitution (1995)¹ provides for NGOs to retain their autonomy in pursuit of their declared objectives. It also states that "The State shall guarantee and respect the independence of non-governmental organizations which protect and promote human rights".² Furthermore, it provides for the right to influence the policies of government through civic action.³

CSSA provides financial and technical support to Ugandan CSOs aimed at improving development in line with national priorities spelled out in the Uganda Constitution, the National Development Plan III, commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other relevant policies. The key objective is to contribute to the development of a Uganda where citizens are empowered to engage in democratic processes, where the state respects citizens' rights and where good governance principles are upheld. CSSA seeks to strengthen the engagement between CSOs and state actors in the democracy, human rights, and governance thematic areas. It seeks interventions that support efforts that would ensure strong focus on the relationship between citizen as right holders and the state as duty bearers. It is envisaged that CSOs will work closely with state agencies to contribute to government's commitments to democracy, human rights, and governance.

The thematic areas for this Annual Program Statement (APS) are broad, interconnected and are as follows: **i)** Strengthening democratic processes that promote citizens' rights; **ii)** Increasing protection and fulfillment of human rights and gender equality; **iii)** Improving citizens' inclusion and engagement in decision-making processes at local and national levels; and **iv)** Improving an enabling environment for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Uganda. *Although this APS provides specific thematic areas in which proposed interventions may be classified, the call is open to other democracy, rights and governance areas that CSOs may be working on.*

i) Strengthening democratic processes that promote citizens' rights

Uganda ascribes to democratic principles as stated in the Constitution⁴ the Africa Charter for Democracy⁵ and other international conventions promoting democracy that Uganda is signatory to. These democratic principles are to empower and encourage active participation of all citizens at all levels in their own governance. The Uganda Constitution mandates all political and civic associations aspiring to manage and direct public affairs to conform to democratic principles in their internal organizations and practice. It further empowers civic organizations to retain their

¹The Uganda Constitution: National objectives and directive principles of State Policy II Democracy principles (iv)

²The Uganda Constitution Section V: Fundamental and other human rights and freedoms (ii)

³The Uganda Constitution: Freedom of Association, Assembly and Speech. (Article 29e) as enshrined in Article 38(2)

⁴The Uganda Constitution (1995) with amendments through 2017, <https://www.constituteproject.org>

⁵ The African Charter for Democracy was assented to by the Government of Uganda.

autonomy in pursuit of their declared objectives. The National Development Plan identifies some of the key results for the next five years as follows: (a) Increasing the Democratic Index from 6.5% to 8.6%; and (b) Increasing the percentage of citizens participants of citizens participation in electoral process from 80% to 90%. Therefore, advocacy CSOs are doing their civic duty to empower citizens to hold government accountable to its commitments to form a government in which people have the authority to deliberate, decide legislation and elect leaders of their choice.

The Equal Opportunities Commission Act, 2007⁶ provides for sensitizing and mobilizing communities to demand for their rights and freedoms and to eliminate discrimination and inequality against any individual or groups.

Possible thematic areas of intervention to promote democracy in Uganda

There is a growing need for CSOs, the citizens and the state to meaningfully engage to promote democratic principles stated in the Uganda constitution. CSOs can help to develop values of democratic life: tolerance, moderation, compromise, and respect for opposing points of view. Without this deeper culture of accommodation, democracy cannot be stable or yield meaningful fruits. These civic values cannot simply be taught; they must also be experienced through practice. CSOs can strengthen democracy by providing new forms of interest and solidarity that cut across old forms of tribal, linguistic, religious, and other identity ties.

*The following **specific thematic areas** aim at empowering citizens to meaningfully engage in democratic process, demand for legislative reforms, and hold government institutions accountable.*

- a) Proactively initiate debate on a robust constitutional review process and mobilize citizens around a more progressive legal and constitutional amendment agenda.
- b) Advocate for electoral reforms that enhance electoral integrity and accountability.
- c) Roll out the civic education program to empower citizens to know and exercise their civic rights and responsibilities.
- d) Create platforms for national dialogue on democracy, based on the Uganda Constitution.
- e) Promote women in leadership in elective positions from local to national levels.

ii) Increasing protection and fulfillment of human rights and gender equality

The enjoyment of inalienable human rights is enshrined in Chapter 4 of Uganda's Constitution that clearly spells out clauses on the protection and promotion of fundamental human rights and freedoms. In addition, Uganda is a signatory to regional and international human rights conventions which provide for the protection of persons and property, especially the women and other marginalized groups. The Uganda Constitution provides for the rights of expression, association, and assembly. The National Development Plan III⁷ has adopted the human rights approach as a cross cutting theme in all government's development interventions. These rights to articulate a voice, associate freely and assemble should be extended to all citizens.

⁶ Equal Opportunities Commission Act: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_isn=88099&p_lang=en

⁷ National Development Plan III 2020/21 – 2024/25, National Planning Authority (2020), Kampala, Uganda

Possible thematic areas of intervention to promote human rights in Uganda

This section supports the implementation of existing human rights and gender equality policies and laws. It advances the need for legislative reforms, empowering of citizens to claim their rights, and assist duty bearers in fulfilling their obligations to a fair and just society. Critical to the enjoyment of human rights is the protection of human rights defenders and the media who are often at the front line in pursuit of truth and justice. Fundamental to the promotion of rights is information sharing and training of key stakeholders to appreciate rights and responsibilities.

*The following **specific thematic areas** aim at empowering citizens and other stakeholders to meaningfully engage in the promotion and protection of human rights in Uganda:*

- a) Systematic documentation and profiling of human rights abuses and share findings with responsible government agencies for accountability purposes.
- b) Advocate for the litigation and prosecution of individual perpetrators and institutions implicated in perpetrating human rights abuses/violations using the Constitution and enforcement of the Human Rights Act.
- c) Network with human rights agencies and use regional and global mechanisms to address human rights violations in the country.
- d) Carry out collective judicial advocacy to push back on restrictions such as the Anti-money Laundering and Anti-terrorism Acts.
- e) Building strong civil society networks and coalitions with human rights agencies for collective advocacy against the shrinking civic and political space.
- g) Uphold gender equality legislation in Uganda by engaging communities to advocate for the enforcement of the existing gender responsive laws and policies, and initiate reforms for their improvement.

iii) Improving citizens' inclusion and engagement in decision-making processes at local and national levels

The National Development Plan⁸ notes that good governance is the panacea towards accelerated development in economic and social sectors of a nation. A stable, people-centered, and well managed government is a prerequisite for socio-economic development. According to the Uganda Vision 2040, the tenets of good governance are “*constitutional democracy, protection of human rights, rule of law, political and electoral processes, transparency and accountability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality and security*” The National Development Plan identifies one of the key governance results for the next five years as “*Changing the Corruption Perception Index from 26% to 35%*”. Corruption is the major cause of under-development. Due to corruption, poverty deepens, unemployment skyrockets, the cost of living continues to spike, quality healthcare and education become inaccessible. Interventions will be designed to focus on the manner and processes in which Ugandans are governed at the local and national levels. Central to good governance is the delivery of social services in the country.

There are ongoing challenges in service delivery in the country. Numerous attempts by Government to fix the problem have produced limited success as evidence by some failures along the service delivery chain. For example, the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 created opportunity for millions of children to enroll in primary one. However, the system

⁸ National Development Plan III 2020/21 – 2024/25, National Planning Authority (2020), Kampala, Uganda

still struggles to account for over 16 million children that never completed primary school education.

After close to 15 years of implementing a National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), government admitted failure and enlisted the military to take over some aspects of the program under the “Operation Wealth Creation-OWC”. The Youth Livelihoods Fund, the OWC and other initiatives parallel to the main sectors are not registering substantive gains. Local governments, whose role in decentralized governance is to bring high quality social services closer to the population, have had decreased budget ratios from about 48% of in 2000/2001 to the current 15% of the national budget.

CSOs have urged government to make the extractives sector more transparent and better involve the citizens in the development of the oil and gas sector.

Possible thematic areas to promote good governance at local and national levels.

Generally, there is a deterioration of the quality of public services and the rise of private providers on the one hand. There is need to monitor service delivery through the decentralisation process; strengthen citizen engagement for government accountability and natural resource governance; improve access to information; and promote political consciousness over a wide range of public issues. It is in the day-to-day discussion of issues that directly concern their personal lives, such as access to health care, water or education, that they are awakened to link them to the quality of leaders they elect.

*The following **specific thematic areas** could contribute to address the governance bottlenecks in Uganda:*

- a) Advocate for the strengthening of policy, legal, and institutional frameworks for good governance.
- b) Strengthen citizens inclusion and engagement in decision-making processes at local level by sharing key information, facilitating participation in planning and budgeting at local and national levels.
- c) Support service delivery tracking/monitoring through grassroots citizen networks to expose the crisis of service delivery and demand for redress, with a focus on health, agriculture and education.
- d) Conduct research on decentralization and recommend policy reforms, and advocate for greater investment in public sector service delivery.
- e) Empower communities to hold government accountable in natural resource governance with a focus on oil and gas, and the extractives industry.

iv) Improving an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organizations in Uganda

An enabling environment for civil society is the political, economic and social space in which civil society representatives operate. Today, in many parts of the world, this space has come under considerable pressure, thus seriously undermining inclusive sustainable development as a whole.

Civil society and civil society organizations (CSOs) play a vital role for development by way of providing citizens an opportunity to gain, gather, hold and exchange information, to participate in

shaping development policies and partnerships, to initiate and oversee the implementation of these policies, and to claim their legitimate rights as citizens. For many decades, CSOs have contested existing power structures and defended the rights of vulnerable people. However, in recent years civil society has observed an opposite trend that portrays growing efforts to restrict CSO operations.

Thus, the presence of a vibrant, strong and free civil society is essential in order to guarantee sustainable development and to provide incentives for social and democratic change. The ability of civil society actors to engage with government on policy concerns through dialogue and advocacy is a key component of the enabling environment for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, noted: *“Human rights will not improve much without the direct participation of a robust, free, and independent civil society - yet we are seeing increasing examples of State policies and actions that deliberately suppress, sideline or deter important civil society activities.”*⁹

Possible thematic areas to promote an enabling environment for CSOs

The following specific thematic areas could contribute to promoting an enabling environment for CSOs in Uganda:

- b)** Facilitating state-civil society engagement to support an enabling environment for civil society.
- c)** Innovative outreach and sensitization of marginalized groups and communities on NGO laws and implementing regulations; initiatives to include and integrate such groups in broader advocacy efforts to strengthen the legal environment.
- d)** Innovative public outreach initiatives to deepen public understanding of the importance of civil society, the impact of restrictive laws on civil society, and to encourage involvement in efforts to enhance civic space.
- e)** Advocating for reform of restrictive legal and policy frameworks affecting association, assembly and expression rights of CSOs and media.
- f)** Addressing capacity gaps that contribute to misinterpretation and misapplication of relevant legal frameworks by both government and CSOs.
- g)** Addressing deficits in the management of assemblies and strengthening accountability mechanisms for assembly rights violations.
- h)** Increasing CSO understanding on online assemblies and online and offline community organizing.
- i)** Advocating to address the digital divide (accessibility, affordability, infrastructure).

Applicants may propose interventions in only one DRG area, or a combination of two, three or four.

Although this Annual Program Statement provides specific thematic areas in which proposed interventions may be classified, the call is open to other DRG areas that CSOs may be working on. CSSA encourages applicants to suggest their own innovative DRG activities based on their

⁹ The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights during a press conference on October 18, 2012. See, <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12675&LangID=E>

own work. Proposals should also have a tangible impact in Uganda and, to the extent applicable, should strive to benefit historically excluded or marginalized communities.

C. FUNDING PRIORITIES

CSSA will give priority to applications from individual and umbrella CSOs that:

1. Carry out activities that are national in scope and/or cover the CSSA's priority geographic areas, which include the districts of: Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, Nwoya, Gulu, Lamwo, Lira, Omoro, Masindi, Mbarara, Rubirizi and Kampala;
2. Have a proven track record of engaging in advocacy on democracy, rights, and governance;
3. Form coalitions that seek to address issues of mutual concern across communities and regions, and/or issues that are relevant on both local and national levels;

CSSA will not review concept papers that include the following activities:

- Support for or lobbying on behalf of a particular political party;
- Religious activities;
- Humanitarian activities;
- Theoretical research; and
- Any construction activities.

D. CRITERIA

CSOs legally registered in Uganda are eligible to submit concept papers for this APS. Applicant organizations should meet the following criteria:

- Have at least five years of operational experience. As a rule, CSSA will not provide "start-up" funding, although CSSA may make a rare exception if sufficient evidence is presented to show that the organization's leadership has adequate prior experience and the organization is capable of filling a niche that has been underserved in the past;
- Have a governance structure that ensures proper rotation of leadership and separation of powers, including, at least a Board of Directors, a Chairperson, and an Executive Director. If the above criteria are not met, the applicant must submit a proposed reform process that will work towards meeting these standards;
- Have a transparent system of bookkeeping that complies with the Ugandan legislation and International Accounting Standards (IAS). If such a system is not in place, the grantee must work closely with CSSA to ensure that accurate financial management and transparent book keeping systems are developed;
- Must not be a debtor and must have cancelled any debt to the state or arranged for debt collection prior to receiving the first disbursement of CSSA grant funds;
- Must operate as an independent non-politically affiliated organization;
- Must not be debarred, suspended, excluded or otherwise ineligible to receive US government funding;
- Must be in very good standing in the civil society community, among the constituencies that they represent, and the donors that have supported them;
- Must be registered and have a national tax identification number (TIN); and
- Civil servants, political appointees, members of the current parliament, staff of public broadcasting companies, and/or leaders of political parties cannot participate in a CSSA funded project as directors or as grant-remunerated participants.

SECTION II – GRANT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Application submission procedures

CSSA will accept Concept Papers only in English. Applicants must submit the following documents:

- A Concept Paper and a Project Budget
- A copy of the organization’s strategic plan

Submitted Concept Papers must be the original and sole work of the applicant organization. Plagiarism will result in disqualification from the grant competition.

CSSA will retain all materials and documents submitted by applicants. It will not use this information for purposes other than concept paper review and will not share it with other persons or institutions, except when required by Ugandan law or requested by USAID. Please note that in line with our donor coordination efforts, we will share the names of the applicants and a short description of their respective projects with other Ugandan and international programs that support CSOs in Uganda.

2. Preparation instructions

Page Limitation: Concept Papers should be specific, complete, presented concisely. Concept Papers shall be written in English and typed on standard A4 paper, single spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font with each page number consecutively. The Concept Paper (not including the Cover Page, Budget and Annexes) *should not exceed 5 pages*.

Technical Application: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the recommend Application Form template in Annex 1.

Annexes: The annexes shall include:

- i) Background information about the applicant organization, including capacity (not more than 1/2 page)
- ii) Organizational Chart
- iii) Past Performances
- iv) Profiles of 3 key personnel
- v) Strategic Plan

E. SELECTION CRITERIA

Concept Papers will be evaluated based on the following factors:

- i. Compliance with eligibility requirements and application procedures;
- ii. Experience in the proposed project area;
- iii. Experience and expertise of the management team;
- iv. The general financial strength of the organization;
- v. The organizational structure and good governance practices of the applicant;

- vi. Past performance in achieving positive results when implementing activities to those proposed;
- vii. Ability to comply with grant requirements and deadlines;
- viii. Quality of concept paper, including innovation, feasibility and likely impact; and
- ix. Reasonableness and level of budget.

F. SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Deadline: Interested CSOs should submit a Concept Paper and required documents by Tuesday, July 5, 2022, no later than 5:00 pm Kampala time, as MS Word to cssa-uganda@ewmi.org with the subject: *3031-2021-004, ACS Grants: Democracy, Rights, and Governance*.

Late Applications: All applications received by the deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness and programmatic merit according to the specifications outlined in these guidelines and the application format. Concept Papers that are submitted late or incomplete will not be considered.

Only successful candidates will be contacted. This call for Concept Papers does not constitute an obligation or commitment of any kind by CSSA, nor does it commit CSSA to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

This grant is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this RfA are the sole responsibility of East-West Management Institute, Inc. and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.