

## Guidelines

### Democratic Governance in Africa

#### *Civic technology and the African Governance Architecture*

22 December 2021

# Table of contents

<b>Overview</b>	3
<b>Background</b>	3
<b>Priorities of this Call</b>	4
<b>Scope</b>	7
<b>Support package</b>	8
<b>Application &amp; selection process</b>	8
6.1. Indicative timeline	9
6.2. Call for proposals	9
6.3. Screening, initial evaluation and shortlisting	9
6.4. Final evaluation, due diligence & award decision	10
6.5. Negotiation, finalisation and contracting	10
<b>Eligibility criteria</b>	11
7.1. Recipients	11
7.2. Geographic focus	12
7.3. Costs	12
<b>Further information</b>	12

## 1. Overview

These guidelines provide an overview of the call (hereafter the 'Call') launched by the **Charter Project Africa**, in partnership with the **African Union Civic Tech Fund**. The primary purpose of this document is to allow prospective applicants to understand the Call's background, its scope, its priorities, its support package, the application and selection process as well as the eligibility criteria. This will allow prospective applicants to write strong proposals that align with the objectives of the Call.

## 2. Background

The **Charter Project Africa** is a pan-African project focused on the commitments contained in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) – the central African Union policy document to advance democratic governance in African Union member states.

The project promotes the usage of civic technology to amplify citizen voices. This is achieved by providing financial resources, through grants, as well as technical resources, through know-how, to civic initiatives pursuing democracy, particularly those led by underrepresented groups. This support is delivered in eleven African Union member states – Benin, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, and Zambia – as well as at regional and continental level.

The project also opens spaces of collaboration between citizens, civic initiatives and African Union policy makers, at national, regional and continental levels – with an emphasis on digital formats. A particular focus is given to the role and the mandate of the African Governance Architecture (AGA). Further, the role of the ACDEG in achieving positive change in African Union member states is monitored, analysed and promoted. Presence through a dedicated Secretariat in Addis Ababa ensures that linkages between pan-African civil society and African Union policy makers are strengthened.

The project is implemented by a consortium of six African and European organisations:

[AfricTivistes](#) is a pan-African union of bloggers and web-activists across the continent. It promotes democratic values, human rights and good governance through digital media. In the project, it assumes a major role in civic technology and digital engagement activities.

[Code for Africa](#) (CfA) is the continent's largest federation of data journalism and civic technology laboratories with a presence across Africa. In the project, it leverages its expertise in digital democracy projects as well as its existing digital toolkits and will support the grantees in implementing their initiatives.

The [Democracy Works Foundation](#) (DWF) is a regional democracy support organisation, with multiple offices across Southern Africa. In the project, it coordinates dialogue and advocacy activities at regional level and supports grantees in the region.

The [Gorée Institute](#) is a pan-African organisation located on Gorée Island in Dakar, Senegal, supporting peace and democracy in Africa since 1992. In the project, it coordinates dialogue and advocacy activities at regional level and supports grantees in the region.

The [European Centre for Development Policy Management](#) (ECDPM) is a leading independent think tank on international cooperation, and has a long-standing work stream of policy research on Africa's regional and continental governance initiatives. In the project, ECDPM assumes main responsibility for policy analysis & strategy development.

The [European Partnership for Democracy](#) (EPD) is a pan-continental network of European democracy support organisations, based in Brussels, Belgium. It supports democratic initiatives across the world. In the project, it is primarily responsible for the engagement vis-à-vis the AGA and acts as the consortium lead.

The **African Union Civic Tech Fund** is a pan-African initiative designed to contribute to achieving ambitious goals contained in the policies of the African Union (Agenda 2063 and Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa, 2020-2030). It responds to the need to drive forward meaningful citizen participation in spaces of governance through the innovative use of data and digital technologies to address governance and development challenges while recognising the central importance of Africa's youth in shaping the future of the continent.

To do so, the African Union Civic Tech Fund supports initiatives, particularly those led by or relevant to youth, that strengthen citizen engagement through the innovative use of data and digital technologies, or, in other words, that can support targeted civic technology solutions. The objective is to demonstrate effective models of citizen participation, support the scalability of initiatives, and influence policy to support replicable and/or scalable civic technology initiatives and transformative citizen-led actions across the African continent. The African Union Civic Tech Fund includes a virtual accelerator program organised by AfriLabs.

The African Union Civic Tech Fund is hosted by the African Union, managed by EPD and financially supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

### 3. Priorities of this Call

The African Union's stated vision is "An Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena." This vision suggests a collective aspiration for good governance anchored on the key

pillars of democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law. These principles have been affirmed as shared African values through the adoption of the ACDEG and other related policy documents. Beyond proclaiming African shared values, it has also been recognised that these values can only truly come to life if the continent embraces a transformative governance framework that emphasizes public participation and centres people's needs on policy making.

It is in this context that the African Governance Architecture (AGA) was established. AGA is defined as "a platform for dialogue between the various stakeholders who are mandated to promote good governance and strengthen democracy in Africa, in addition to translating the objectives of the legal and policy pronouncements in the AU Shared Values." Essentially, AGA is a platform that brings together both state and non-state actors with a view to creating synergies in the efforts to promote good governance and strengthen democracy in Africa.

AGA brings together the AU organs, departments and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) while also inviting the engagement and input of non-state actors such as the private sector, development partners, civil society and the diaspora. The AGA has been an essential platform in facilitating thematic dialogues among these stakeholders and in expanding spaces for input from previously marginalised groups such as the youth and women in as far as regional policy making on democracy and governance is concerned. It is for this reason that a vibrant and sustained relationship between civil society and AGA remains an important plank to ensuring that a people-driven Africa is realized.

Through AGA, civil society can inform policy making on democratic governance by participating in the dialogues convened by the AU organs or create their own spaces for dialogue and invite policy makers or mandate holders to participate. Civil society is also a valuable partner in the dissemination of the relevant normative instruments such as the ACDEG and helping the public understand how they apply in their daily lives. Civil society is also critical in the process of monitoring the progress being made towards realising the goals of strengthened democracy and good governance- this is through the research work and engagements they undertake with the public at the most local level. Civil society also plays a pivotal role in pursuing remedies for victims in the event the State or private actors violate rights and fundamental freedoms. These remedies include proposals on legal and policy reform as well as calling on those organs with an oversight mandate to act.

**This Call seeks to support civil society to fulfill such efforts. More specifically, it will enable the deployment of civic technology to strengthen democratic governance, structuring their interventions in a way that allows their own and/or citizens' engagement with members of the AGA platform.**

Applicants should propose ideas that either...

- ...address problems of democratic governance (at a national or multinational level) with the primary focus of feeding into relevant policy and programming processes of at least one of the members of the AGA platform; or

- ...focus primarily on at least one member of the AGA platform and enable strengthened participation of citizens and/or collaboration with civic initiatives.

The following areas of democratic governance are to be considered:

- Participation in public space & public discourse;
- Electoral cycles and elections;
- Rule of law & orderly transfers of power between governments;
- Democratic culture and political pluralism;
- Responsive, transparent and accountable governance.

The following members of the AGA platform are to be considered:

- AU organs
  - AU Peace and Security Council
  - Permanent Representative Committee
  - AU Commission (including the Democracy and Electoral Support Unit)
  - African Court on Human and People's Rights
  - African Commission on Human and People's Rights
  - Pan-African Parliament
  - AU Specialised Technical Committees
  - African Peer Review Mechanism
  - Economic, Social and Cultural Council
  - AU Advisory Board on Corruption
  - African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
  - African Union Commission on International Law
  - NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency
- Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
  - East African Community (EAC)
  - Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)
  - Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
  - Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD)
  - Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
  - Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
- AGA Secretariat.

For example, initiatives may therefore propose to leverage civic technology in order to...

...engage citizens and civic initiatives in dialogue and exchange and contribute evidence to African Union policy process relevant to democratic governance, for example the African Governance Report;

...allow citizens and civic initiatives to make use of African Union tools, for example the recent African Union Manuals on Youth Participation in Political and Electoral Processes in Africa;

...enable citizens to make their voices heard at the regional and continental level on key problems with democratic governance within their constituencies, for example by encouraging participation in digital councils, fora, etc.;

...enable citizens to better understand and interact within political decision-making processes relevant to democratic governance at the African Union level;

...enable citizen journalism in the context of monitoring governance performance and promoting responsiveness, transparency and accountability, e.g. by sourcing, opening and analysing public data;

These are only examples. Prospective recipients are free to suggest interventions of their preference, as long as they correspond to the priorities outlined above.

Particular added-value elements are...

- ...a decided focus on **youth involvement**;
- ...a clear emphasis on **gender equality & women's empowerment**;
- ...a recognisable **pan-African approach**.

## 4. Scope

The overall budget available under this current Call is **EUR 128 000**. This amount is to be awarded to four initiatives, which can receive up to **EUR 32 000** each. The winning proposals will be supported over an implementation period of **approximately seven months** (to be confirmed at the time of contracting). The recipient will enter a grant contract agreement with EPD.

Due to the moderate size of financial support available to each recipient, the Call will pay particular attention to the **upscaling, adaptation or replication** of pre-existing civic tech initiatives - if they are in accordance with any of the priorities described further below. The financial support may also be used to fund the deployment of civic technology in close partnership with a particular citizen group or civil society organisation that does not have the expertise to do so on its own. While the **ground-up development of original ideas** qualifies for funding as well, such

proposals, like all others, need to demonstrate feasibility and probabilities of success within the budget ceilings specified above.

## 5. Support package

Aside from the financial support, the Call will provide selected initiatives with additional technical support according to their identified needs.

In sum, the support package looks as follows:

### 1. Financial support

- Up to EUR 32 000 per initiative.

### 2. Technical support

- Provision of embedded technical expertise through the engagement of civic tech specialists.

### 3. Thematic support

- Provision of thematic expertise on democracy support, African Union governance & continental policy-making.

### 4. Marketing, communication & showcasing support

- Facilitation of access to decision-makers at the African Union level as well as the international development community.

### 5. Peer-to-peer learning & networking

- Facilitation of exchange between recipients and other members of related civic tech ecosystems.

## 6. Application & selection process

The selection process consists of **two steps**: the submission of the **expression of interest** and, once the received expressions of interest have been reviewed and evaluated, the submission of the **full proposal** by shortlisted applicants.

The following provides an overview of the application and selection process from the publication of the guidelines to the start of implementation.

### 6.1. Indicative timeline

Publication of guidelines	<b>22 December 2021</b>
Deadline to submit expression of interest	<b>23 January 2022</b>



Announcement of shortlisted applicants	<b>4 February 2022</b>
Deadline to submit full proposal	<b>27 February 2022</b>
Negotiation, finalisation & award	<b>March 2022</b>
Implementation	<b>April - October 2022</b>

## 6.2. Expression of interest

The application period is open immediately and will close on **Sunday, 23 January 2022, 23h59 (East Africa Time)**. This means that prospective applicants will have a period of roughly 4 weeks to prepare and submit their concept notes.

The online application form is available at <https://civictechfund.africa/apply-for-support/aga>. Only concept notes submitted via the online application form will be considered.

Upon submission of the concept note, applicants will receive a confirmation that their concept note has been received. If such a confirmation is not received, please get in touch with [info@civictechfund.africa](mailto:info@civictechfund.africa), mentioning the title of this call.

## 6.3. Screening, initial evaluation and shortlisting

All expressions of interest will undergo an administrative check that establishes whether the information required by the online application form has been provided. Further, applications will be assessed through the eligibility criteria (see Section 7 below).

Upon passing this administrative check, the applications will undergo a first assessment. At this stage the following three evaluation criteria will be assessed:

- Relevance to the priorities (as described in these present guidelines);
- Technical viability of the suggested civic tech initiative;
- Experience and operational capacity of the implementing organisation.

Based on this initial evaluation, expressions of interest will be shortlisted. All applicants will receive an official response with the outcome of their expression of interest by **Monday, 7 February 2022**. However, individual feedback on the reasons on why expressions of interest have been unsuccessful cannot be provided due to the resource implications.

#### **6.4. Final evaluation, due diligence & award decision**

The shortlisted applicants will be invited to develop a full proposal by **Sunday 27 February 2022, 23h59 (East Africa Time)**. Together with the full application, a number of additional documents will be requested from applicants including a detailed budget and a MEL framework. **Specific instructions and templates will be sent by email to shortlisted applicants.**

In addition to the three evaluation criteria mentioned above (relevance, technical viability, experience & operational capacity), the following four criteria will also be assessed for full proposals:

- Added-value elements (as described in these present guidelines);
- Expected impact on proposed target groups;
- Sustainability;
- Cost-effectiveness.

The evaluation of the full proposals will be conducted by the Charter Project Africa's Project Management Unit (PMU) composed of representatives of Consortium members.

At this stage, a due diligence process will be conducted: applicants will be asked to provide additional financial documents, such as the most recent organisational business plan, audited annual financial statements, and recent financial statements, including organisational performance indicators, if available.

Based on this, the strongest proposals will be identified and passed on for approval by the Charter Project Africa Steering Committee and African Union Civic Tech Fund Selection Committee.

However, individual feedback on the reasons on why proposals have been unsuccessful cannot be provided due to the resource implications.

#### **6.5. Negotiation, finalisation and contracting**

The responsible EPD staff (hereafter the 'Management Team') will engage with the selected applicants and provide comments and requests in relation to the proposed initiative. A number of additional documents may have to be completed by the applicant. Once all comments have been addressed and additional information and documents have been provided, a grant agreement will be signed between each applicant and the Management Team.

## 7. Eligibility criteria

Prospective applicants need to pay close attention to the following eligibility criteria that determine whether they can be considered.

### 7.1. Recipients

The Call will focus on the provision of support to not-for-profit and for-profit organisations (e.g. social enterprises) acting within the civic space & the civic tech ecosystem.

In short, the following eligibility criteria exists for recipients:

- The organisation must be a legal entity;
- The organisation must be a non-governmental, independent of local, regional and central government, political parties and religious institutions;
- The organisation can be a not-for-profit organisation or a for profit organisation, but must - in both cases- be strongly committed to advancing civic participation.
- The organisation must be registered in an African Union Member State;
- The organisation must be able to sign a grant agreement;
- The organisation must not be bankrupt or being wound up nor having its affairs administered by the courts;
- The organisation must not have received an adverse audit opinion, either by its own auditors or its donors' auditors;
- The organisation must have policies in place and/or practices in place to guarantee the ethical management of personal identifiable information;
- The organisation must not have been the subject of a judgment for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity.

In addition, recipients of the Call must adhere to several (but not necessarily all) of the following high-level guiding principles:

- The organisation's activity is positioned to effect innovation, sustainable growth, and/or large-scale policy, behaviour, and systems change;
- The organisation has an approach that fundamentally adopts a sustainable equilibrium to solve social and/or economic problems;
- The organisation has local, regional and/or national partnerships in place to optimise its model and execute its mission on a larger scale;

- The organisation has the capacity to expand in terms of ability to manage additional resources and the work associated with the expansion;
- The organisation can already show evidence of the impact of their work and can indicate how additional resources will increase their impact;
- The organisation can demonstrate how the intervention supported through the Call will be sustained.

## **7.2. Geographic focus**

Activities can be of national or transnational scope. Activities may therefore be implemented in one or more African Union Member States.

## **7.3. Costs**

Recipients will be asked to submit a budget with necessary costs to deliver the agreed results. Such eligible types of costs include:

- Staff costs and expert fees;
- Travel and subsistence costs;
- Purchase costs for equipment and/or software applications;
- Costs of consumables;
- Costs of service & supply contracts;

Ineligible costs include:

- Debts and service charges;
- Provisions for losses, debts or potential future liabilities;
- Purchases of land or buildings;
- Currency exchange losses.

## **8. Further information**

For any further questions, please feel free to write an email to [info@civictechfund.africa](mailto:info@civictechfund.africa), mentioning the title of this call.