Guidelines

Democratic Governance in South Africa

Supporting civil society organisations to use civic technology to promote and popularise the African Governance Architecture (AGA)

13 JUNE 2022

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1. Overview

These guidelines provide an overview of the call (hereafter "the Call") launched by the **Charter Project Africa** in South Africa. The main objective of this document is to enable potential applicants to understand the context of the Call, its scope, priorities, support package, application and selection process and eligibility criteria. This will enable potential applicants to write sound proposals that meet the objectives of the Call.

2. Background

The **Charter Project Africa** is a pan-African project that focuses on the commitmentscontained in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) -the African Union's principal policy document for advancing democratic governancein African Union member states.

The project promotes the use of civic technology to amplify citizens' voices. It does this by providing financial resources, through grants, as well as technical resources,through expertise, to civic initiatives aimed at promoting democracy, particularly those led by under-represented groups. This support is provided in eleven African Union member states - Botswana, Benin, 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 for collaboration between citizens, civic initiatives and African Union decision-makers at national, regional and continental levels - with a focus on digital formats. Particular attention is given to the role and mandate of theAfrican Governance Architecture **(**AGA**)**. In addition, the role of the ACDEG in bringing about positive change in AU member states is monitored, analysed and promoted. The presence of a dedicated secretariat in Addis Ababa helps to strengthen the linksbetween pan- African civil society and African Union policy makers.

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 governancethrough digital media. As part of the project, it plays a major role in civic technologyand digital engagement activities.

Code for Africa (CfA) is the largest federation of data journalism and civic technology labs on the continent, with a presence across Africa. In the framework of this project, it is leveraging its expertise in digital democracy projects as well as its existing digital toolkits and will support the beneficiaries in the implementation of their initiatives.

Democracy Works Foundation (DWF) is a regional democracy support organisation with several offices in Southern Africa. Within the framework of the project, it coordinates regional dialogue and advocacy activities and supports grantees in the region.

The Gorée Institute is a pan-African organisation located on Gorée Island in Dakar, Senegal, which has been supporting peace and democracy in Africa since 1992. Within the framework of this project, it coordinates dialogue and advocacy activities at the regional level and supports grantees in the region.

The European Centre for Development Policy Management is a leading independent think tank on international cooperation. It has a long history of research on regionaland continental governance initiatives in Africa. In this project, ECDPM has the lead responsibility for policy analysis and strategy

development.

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

Despite the **African Union**'s (AU) growing political and institutional framework for strengthening democracy, democratic governance in AU member states faces a variety of challenges, including in Southern Africa. While the translation into domestic law of normative instruments, such as the **African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (**ACDEG**)**, embodying continental commitments to a democratic agenda, has increased in recent years, political transformations across the continent indicate consistency with a decade long trend of democratic backsliding.

Ineffective translation into national policy of the ACDEG is a reminder that domestic politics usually trump continental objectives, especially in a context of weak monitoring and enforcement of regional and continental commitments.

It is in this context that the **African Governance Architecture** (AGA) was established. The AGA is defined as 'a platform for dialogue between different stakeholders with a mandate to promote good governance and strengthen democracy in Africa, in addition to translating the objectives of legal and political declarations into the shared values of the AU'. In essence, the AGA is a platform that brings together state and non-state actors to create synergies in efforts to promote good governance and strengthen democracy in Africa.

3. Priorities of this Call

South Africa was the eighth signatory to the ACDEG legal framework in 2010 and deposited in January 2011 subsequent to Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lesotho, Mauritania, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone. Prior to the ratification and domestication of the charter in 2010, the Human Rights Commission (HRC) made a compelling presentation to South Africa's parliament in support of the charter and its principles further drawing parallels between these and those of the South African constitution. Additionally, they debated that the charter was a useful tool that will enable parliament to evaluate progress being made by South Africa in realising its constitutional commitments. The HRC further called for the appointment of a government entity to be responsible for ACDEG for the ease of reporting.[1]

The African Peer Review Mechanism South Africa Country Review Report (CRR) 2006 noted that one of South Africa's strengths is its progress made in signing, ratifying and implementing international standards and codes.[2] Furthermore, It observed that South Africans do not have a general awareness of the legal instruments the country has acceded to which indicates two factors: South Africa does not popularise the instruments it has signed to or there is insufficient interest from citizens regarding technical and legal standards and codes including the ACDEG instrument.

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[1] Parliamentary Monitoring Group. Accession to the African Charter on Democracy: Briefing. Meeting Summary, 09 September 2010. https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/12329/.
[2] APRM. 2006. South Africa Country Review Mechanism. pp 29

It has been ten years since the domestication of ACDEG in South Africa and yet there is no positive indication that this is a popular and well-utilised legal instrument throughout the country. Based on a lack of participation by some CSOs in consultations on AU protocols, it could be argued that unless organisations in South Africa have had some interactions with the African Union Commission, they are not well versed on its inner workings owing to its very technical nature. A report written by the Wits School of Governance contends that participation and engagement mostly involve academics, well organised CSOs and similar institutions. For general citizens and grassroot organisations however, the knowledge on the status of various AU instruments, processes and the commitments under these is very low.[3]

Like other African states, South Africa is facing several challenges in respect of democratic culture and democratic consolidation. The recently concluded State Capture Inquiry demonstrated how increasing corrupt activity and failure of oversight mechanisms is leading to the collapse of ethical leadership and good governance with an increasing lack of transparency and accountability across government institutions and state entities. Inequality and poverty also threaten to erode access to basic human rights guaranteed in the constitution. Adherence to the rule of law, which is a pillar of good governance is waning and individuals and communities are beginning to reject or bypass formal legal processes of conflict resolution. Violence has become the order of the day, with a scourge of gender-based violence that is making the lives of women and children in the country unbearable. The results of the local government elections that took place on 3 November 2021 reflected a trend of disengagement of voters as the low turnout figures show – a trend also seen in the 2019 general elections.

As an instrument geared at strengthening and promoting democracy and good governance, the ACDEG could and should be used in the promotion of democracy domestically in South Africa. Civil society, and local organisations in particular, are instrumental in this process.

Civil society can play a key role by identifying and addressing the lack of transparency in the governance of public affairs, the lack of political ethics, growing corruption, the closing down of civic space and by calling and advocating for accountability measures.

This Call seeks to support civil society in South Africa to raise awareness about and utilise the African Charter for Democracy, Elections and Governance to promote, monitor and assess democratic consolidation and democratic culture as well as to strengthen engagement with SADC and the AGA.

The mobilisation of citizens' groups at the various national, sub-regional and regional levels in an inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach should allow for the construction of consensus positions within civil society on the ACDEG and to share them among CSOs and citizens in South Africa as well as with national, sub-regional and regional institutions.

The following areas of democratic governance are to be considered by applicants:
- Participation in public space & public discourse;
- Electoral cycles and elections

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[3] Wits School of Governance. 2017. Civil Society Perspectives on African Union Member State Commitments to Democratic Governance. https://www.wits.ac.za/media/wits-university/faculties-and-schools/commerce-law-and-management/wits-school-of governance/documents/CIVIL%20SOCIETY%20PERSPECTIVES%20ON%20AU%20MEMBERS%20STATE%20COMMITMENTS%20TO%20DEMOCRACTIC%20GOVERNANCE.pdf

- Political accountability
- Democratic culture and political pluralism;
- Participation of youth and women in electoral processes (as key);
- Responsive, transparent and accountable governance.

The concept note must clearly demonstrate how the ACDEG can be used as an instrument in dealing with the democratic challenges pertaining to the themes identified. The concept note should also demonstrate how civic technologies will be used in the course of the project. The proposed projects should also seek to incorporate the following elements:

- ..special attention to **youth participation;**
For example, as indicated in the African Union Manuals on Youth Participation in Political and Electoral Processes in Africa which provide an overview of meaningful forms of involvement, also in post-election review;
- ...a clear focus on **gender equality and women's empowerment.**
For example, with reference to the SADC Gender Protocol which South Africa has ratified.
- ...identifiable **entry points for African Union** policy & programming processes;
For example, by feeding into the policy processes of members of the AGA Platform members, such as the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights ACHPR), or the SADC, and others.

These are only examples. Applicants are free to suggest interventions of their preference, as long as they are linked to the priorities of the call.

4. Scope

The overall budget available for this **Call is EUR 30 000**. This amount will be allocated between **two or three CSOs from South Africa for small grants ranging between EUR10, 000 to EUR 15, 000.** Each organisation will receive a separate grant which will depend on the number of selected organisations. The program will be supported **for an implementation period of up to 15 months** depending on the proposal **(**the duration will be confirmed at the time of contract signature**)**. Each grantee will enter a grant contract with the Democracy Works Foundation (DWF).

Due to the moderate size of the financial support available for each recipient, the Call will give particular attention to the **scaling up**, **adaptation** or **replication** of pre-existing initiatives with an emphasis on incorporating civic technology - if they comply with the priorities of the Call as described above. Financial support can also be used to fund the use of civic technologies in close partnership with a citizens' group or civil society organisation that does not have the expertise to do it alone. Although the **new or novel ideas** may also be funded, these proposals, like all others, must demonstrate their feasibility and likelihood of success within the budgetary limits specified above.

5. Support package

In addition to financial support, the call will provide selected initiatives with additional technical support according to their identified needs.

In summary, the support package is as follows: 6

❖   **Financial support**

Up to EUR15, 000 per grant.

❖ **Technical support**

Provision of integrated technical expertise through the engagement of civic technology specialists.

❖ **Thematic support**

Provision of thematic expertise on democracy support, African Union governance and continental policy development.

❖ **Marketing, communication and development support**

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

❖ **Peer learning and networking**

Facilitation of exchanges between beneficiaries and other members of related civic tech ecosystems.

6. Application and selection process

The selection process will work as follows:

i.   Applicants are to submit expressions of interest in the form of a comprehensive concept note.

ii. Once expressions of interest are received, reviewed, and evaluated, the qualifying two to three initiatives will be selected and expected to submit a full proposal with clear timelines and budget.

iii. The selection of the potential grantees will be subject to the extent to which the concept note demonstrates how the ACDEG can be used as an instrument in dealing with the democratic challenges pertaining to the themes identified, the use of civic technology and focus on youth and women.

iv. The shortlisted applicants at concept stage will be technically guided by DWF to develop full proposal/project documents.

v.   Whilst the applicants are developing the full proposal, DWF shall conduct a due diligence appraisal of the shortlisted applicants

vi. Final award of the grant to the shortlisted applicants will be subject to the organization's passing the due diligence appraisal particularly with regards to legitimacy and existence of the organizations on the ground

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

6.1 Indicative timetable

Publication of the Call for applications	**13 June 2022**
Deadline for submission	**3 July 2022**
Announcement of qualifying initiatives	**22 July 2022**
Deadline for finalization and submission of full proposal and completion of due diligence	**12 August 2022**

Negotiation, finalisation and award by	31 August
Implementation	September 2022 – 31 August 2023

6.2 Expression of interest

The application period is open immediately and closes on **3 July 2022 at 11:59 PM(GMT)**. This means that potential applicants will have a period of approximately 3 weeks to prepare and submit their concept notes. The online application form is available at the following link: https://civictechfund.africa/apply-for-support/botswana. Only concept notes submitted via the online application form will be considered.

Applicants should also submit the following supporting documents:
- Copy of registration certificate;
- List of Board members and their contact details

Upon submission of the concept note, applicants will receive a confirmation that their concept note has been received. If this confirmation is not received, please contact info@civictechfund.africa, mentioning the title of this call.

6.3 Screening, selection and due diligence

All applications will be subject to an administrative check to establish whether the information required by the online application form has been provided. In addition, applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria (see section 7 below).

After passing this administrative check, applications will be subject to an assessment. The following three evaluation criteria will be assessed:

- Relevance to priorities (as described in these guidelines);
- Technical viability of the proposed initiative;
- Experience and operational capacity of the implementing organization;
- Elements of added value (as described in these guidelines) ;
- Expected impact on the proposed target groups;
- Sustainability;
- Cost-effectiveness; and
- Efficiency.

Based on this initial assessment, the successful applicants will be shortlisted to submit a full proposal and potentially receive a grant, subject to passing the due diligence appraisal. **Individual feedback on why proposals were not successful cannot be provided due to resource implications.**

The successful applicants will be required to develop their concepts into full proposals complete with workplan, full budget and a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework whose templates will be shared after the concept stage. During this period of finalizing proposals DWF will simultaneously conduct a due diligence on the selected applicants. Applicants will be asked to provide additional financial documentation, such as the most recent organisational business plan/strategic plan, audited annual financial statements and recent financial statements, including organisational performance indicators**, if available**.

6.4 Negotiation, finalisation and contract signing

The responsible staff of the Democracy Works Foundation (DWF) will interview the selected applicants and make comments and requests regarding the proposed initiative. A number of additional documents may need to be completed by the applicant. Once all comments have been considered and additional information and documents have been provided, a grant agreement will be signed between each applicant and the management team.

7. Eligibility criteria

Potential applicants should pay particular attention to the following eligibility criteria which determine whether they can be considered.

7.1 Beneficiaries

The Call will focus on providing support to non-profit organisations (CSOs, NGOs, Associations etc.) active in the civic space and the civic technology ecosystem and in democratic governance.

In summary, the eligibility criteria are as follows:

- The organisation must be registered in South africa;
- The organisation must be a legal entity;
- The organisation must be non-governmental, independent of local or regional government;
- The organisation can be a non-profit organisation, but must - in this case – be strongly committed to advancing civic participation.
- The organisation must be able to sign a grant agreement;
- The organisation must not have received any unfavorable opinions, either from its own auditors or from those of its donors;
- The organisation shall have policies and/or practices in place to ensure the ethical management of personally identifiable information;
- The organisation must not have been judged for fraud, corruption, participation in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity.

In addition, the beneficiaries 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 foster innovation, sustainable growth and/or large-scale change in policies, behavior and systems;

- The organisation has an approach that fundamentally adopts a sustainable balance to solve social and/or economic problems;

- The organisation has established local, regional and/or national partnerships to optimize its model and deliver its mission on a larger scale;

- The organisation has the capacity to grow in terms of its ability to manage additional resources and the work associated with expansion;

- The organisation can already show evidence of the impact of its work and can indicate how additional resources will increase its impact;

- The organisation can demonstrate how the intervention supported by the appeal will be sustained.

7.2 Geographic focus

Activities should be implemented in South Africa.

7.3 Costs

Beneficiaries will be asked to submit a budget with the costs necessary to achieve the agreed results. These types of eligible costs are the following:
- Staff costs;
- Expert fees;
- Travel expenses;
- Software purchase costs;
- Consumable costs (activities);
- Costs of service contracts;

The ineligible costs are as follows:
- Debts and service charges;
- Provisions for potential future losses, liabilities or commitments;
- Purchase of land, vehicles or buildings or office rental;
- Foreign exchange losses.

8. For more information

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to send an email to nompumelelo@democracyworksfoundation.org copying info@civictechfund.africa and mentioning the title of this Call.