The CHARTER PROJECT Africa
Democracy | Elections | Governance

Guidelines

Democratic Governance in Southern Africa (SADC Region)

Civic technology and the African Governance Architecture

28 March 2023

DEMOCRACY WORKS FOUNDATION.

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1. Overview

These guidelines provide an overview of the call (hereafter "the Call") launched by the **Charter Project Africa** in Southern Africa (SADC region). 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 commitments contained in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) - the African Union's principal policy document for advancing democratic governance in 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 the African 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 links between 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 governance through digital media. As part of the project, it plays a major role in civic technology and 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 regional and 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

Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are an essential pillar of the AGA's institutional framework. Through the 1991 Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (Abuja Treaty), the AU relies on RECs to further citizen engagement and the implementation of shared values such as those of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It is in this context that RECs are expected to play a foremost role in the effective implementation of the ACDEG. The **Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)** was established by member states with the vision to promote the progress and wellbeing of the people of Southern Africa is one such REC and the focus of this call.

Under its strategic document, Vision 2050, the SADC aspires to realise strengthened political cooperation, enhanced democracy, good governance, rule of law, human rights, and human security"

as the foundation for peace, security and good governance. Therefore, the implementation of the ACDEG should form a key component of achieving the aspirations of SADC's Vision 2050. In the effort to promote the ACDEG and its core values in Southern Africa, it is particularly important to establish linkages between civil society and SADC. Civil society can inform policy making on democratic governance by participating in the dialogues convened by policy makers 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 local level.

This call seeks to support civil society in SADC member states to strengthen engagement primarily at regional level with SADC institutions, deploying civic technology to enable their own participation, as well as citizens' engagement with SADC.

Particular **added value** will be attributed to those initiatives considering being active **also at continental level**, exploring how domestic and regional issues could be consolidated by way of cooperation and advanced to transform continental policy making by also **engaging with the AGA platform members.**

The mobilisation of citizens' groups at the various national, regional (and possibly continental) 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 the SADC region, as well as with national, regional (and possibly continental) institutions.

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

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 could be considered:

- Southern Africa Development Community
- 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

● 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 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 SADC and 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, if they correspond to the priorities outlined above.

Particular added-value elements are:
- decided focus on youth involvement,
- a clear emphasis on gender equality & women's empowerment, and
- a recognisable pan-African approach.

4. Scope

The overall budget available for this **Call is EUR 45,000**. This amount will be allocated between **CSOs from the SADC region for small grants ranging between EUR 10,000 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 10 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:

- **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 organisation's passing the due diligence appraisal particularly with regards to legitimacy and existence of the organisations 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	**28 March 2023**
Deadline for submission	**17 April 2023**
Announcement of qualifying initiatives	**9 May 2023**
Deadline for finalization and submission of full proposal and completion of due diligence	**23 May 2023**
Negotiation, finalisation and award by	**15 June 2023**
Implementation	**16 June 2023 – 31 March 2024**

6.2 Expression of interest

The application period is open immediately and closes on **17 April 2023 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. 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, pre-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 organisation;
- 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 work plan, full budget and a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework whose templates will be shared after the concept stage. During this period of finalising 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. Several 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 a SADC country,
- 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 unfavourable 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, and
- 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, behaviour 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 optimise 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 SADC member states.

List of SADC member states:

- Angola
- Botswana
- Comoros
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Eswatini
- Lesotho
- Madagascar

- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Seychelles
- South Africa
- United Republic Tanzania
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

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.