

## Partnerships to Strengthen Civil Society

***Guidelines for Applications:***  
***1 to 5 Million SEK per Year***

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## Introduction

These guidelines provide important information on the application process.

Please read them carefully before starting the application. By following the guidance, you will ensure that all requested information is included in the application.

## Information on the application

The application consists of four parts.

**Parts 1, 3, and 4** are completed digitally in the application portal.

**Part 2** consists of a project description and a budget. For these components, two separate templates should be downloaded, completed, and uploaded to the application portal. The templates are available in the “[Document Archive](#)” within the portal.

Applicants may apply to both CSO calls for proposals (SEK 1–5 million per year and up to SEK 1 million per year). However, only one project may be granted.

Organisations that currently receive support under the CSO strategy may apply only if their existing project period ends before the new project period begins.

As a general rule, the forwarding of funds or sub-granting in more than one instance is not permitted and may only be allowed in exceptional cases following a specific assessment.<sup>1</sup>

Applications submitted to Sida are public records and may be disclosed on request. If an application contains sensitive information that should be treated as confidential, please contact [cso@sida.se](mailto:cso@sida.se) for advice on how to submit it.

## PART 1: Formal requirements for applicant organisations

### Who can apply?

The applicant organisation should be a non-profit association or foundation.

- Non-profit associations should be registered and democratically governed, with statutes and an elected board.
- Foundations should be registered and governed in accordance with their founding document and applicable legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> Forwarding of funds and sub-granting means that an organisation receives funding from Sida and then transfers the funds, in whole or in part, to another organisation.

## Additional requirements

For Sida to proceed with the assessment of the application, the following requirements must be met. The applicant organisation should::

- Be based in Sweden.
- Have operated for at least two years, with two complete annual audit reports.
  - For non-profit associations, a decision granting discharge from liability to the board is required.
  - For foundations, the board must have fulfilled its responsibilities in accordance with the applicable legislation and the foundation's founding document.
- Be financially stable. This means that it should not have any outstanding debts with the Swedish Enforcement Authority (Kronofogden) nor be undergoing reconstruction.
- Have an accounting system that enables the separate accounting of project costs (the name of the system should be stated in the application).

## What should be attached to the application?

The following documents should be attached to the application and uploaded to the portal in order to demonstrate compliance with the formal requirements:

Non-profit association	Foundation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organisation registration number/certificate of registration issued by the Swedish Companies Registration Office or the Swedish Tax Agency</li> <li>● Organisation statutes</li> <li>● The two most recent annual audit reports<sup>2</sup></li> <li>● Minutes from the two most recent annual general meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organisation registration number/certificate of registration issued by the Swedish Companies Registration Office or the Swedish Tax Agency</li> <li>● Organisation founding document</li> <li>● The two most recent annual audit reports<sup>3</sup></li> <li>● Minutes from the two most recent annual Board meetings</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> The annual audit report shall consist of the organisations financial statements including an income statement, a balance sheet, notes and a directors' report, and must be signed by the board and an independent authorised auditor

<sup>3</sup> See above.

- Minutes from the annual general meeting at which the board was elected

## PART 2. Guidelines for project applications

This section contains questions about the project, the implementing organisations and the project budget.

The questions should be answered **briefly, clearly and specifically**, in Swedish or English. All main questions are required to be answered satisfactorily in order for the application to be granted funding.

The answers are to be provided using the project description template (Mall för projektbeskrivning 1-5 miljoner per år) and uploaded in the designated location in the call portal. The template can be found in "[Document Archive](#)".

Sida will assess the responses using a scoring model in which each response may be awarded between one and five points.

The project should contribute to one or more objectives of the Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation with Civil Society 2025–2029 (the CSO strategy). Only projects that contribute to the strategy objectives will be considered. The full strategy is available in the "[Document Archive](#)".

The five objectives of the CSO strategy are as follows (unofficial translation)::

### 1. Strengthened capacity of civil society in developing countries

1.1 Increased ability of civil society and its target groups to organise on issues related to democracy, human rights and freedom, the rule of law, gender equality, free markets and property rights, accountability, tolerance, anti-corruption and/or peace and security

1.2 Increased efficiency, local ownership and transparency of civil society actors

### 2. Conditions for civil society actors in developing countries to operate

2.1 Strengthened space for an independent and pluralistic civil society

2.2 Improved conditions for dialogue and collaboration within civil society, and between civil society and other actors

2.3 Improved conditions for civil society actors to act independently and find diversified funding

## Guide to the project description

In order to describe the project, the project description template contains a set of questions (1–13 below) to be answered. The template is downloaded from the call portal (see “[Document Archive](#)”).

Below is a guide explaining the information requested. The main questions should be answered, while the guiding questions are intended as support only and indicate what may be appropriate to include in the application.

For further guidance, please refer to Sida’s methodological support for partners, [Methods and materials | Sida](#).

### **1. Vision and purpose of the applicant organisation**

Describe the organisation’s vision and purpose as set out in its statutes or founding document.

### **2. Vision and purpose of the partner organisation(s)**

Describe the vision and purpose of the partner organisation(s). Where possible, include a link to their website.

### **3. The partnership**

Describe the partnership between the applicant organisation and the partner organisation(s).

#### **Guidance:**

- How long have the organisations been collaborating?
- How did the partnership originate?
- What is the added value of the partnership for both organisations?

### **4. Experience**

Describe the applicant organisation’s experience of development cooperation and/or other experience relevant to the project.

#### **Guidance:**

- Provide examples of relevant results from previous projects and/or cooperation with organisations in developing countries.
- How are roles and responsibilities distributed within the applicant organisation.
- How is gender equality integrated in the organisation and its work?

## 5. The capacity of the partner organisation

Describe the capacity of the partner organisation(s) in the country where the project is being implemented.

**Guidance:**

- How long has the partner organisation existed?
- How many people does the organisation reach through its activities?
- What relevant experience does the partner organisation have?
- How are roles and responsibilities distributed within the partner organisation?
- How is gender equality reflected in the organisation and its work?

## 6. The project objectives and expected results

Describe the change the project is intended to achieve.

Describe the project's monitoring plan.

**Guidance:**

- What are the project's objectives and outcomes? How will they be achieved?
- Who are the project's beneficiaries and target groups. Are beneficiaries' inclusion in decision-making processes strengthened?
- Which actors are expected to change their behaviour or ways of working?
- Does the project aim to influence decision-makers to adopt or strengthen laws and regulations that protect civil society space?
- What significance does the change have for the beneficiaries?
- Does the project respond to locally identified needs or strengthen people's ability to organise?
- What signs of change are expected, for example shifts in behaviour, attitudes or relationships?
- How will changes be observed and followed up? What monitoring and follow-up methods will be used?

## 7. The project's relevance to the CSO strategy

Describe which objective or objectives of the CSO strategy the project contributes to and how.

**Guidance:**

The alignment and relevance to the objectives of the CSO strategy should be clear and consistent throughout the application. The CSO strategy is available in the "[Document Archive](#)".

## 8. Projektet structure

Describe how the projected will be implemented.

**Guidance:**

**Context and timeframe:**

- Where and during what time period will the project be implemented?

**Actors:**

- Which organisations will implement the project, how are they anchored in the partner country and what legitimacy do they have with the target group and beneficiaries?
- How are roles and responsibilities shared between the organisations and are these set out in formal agreements?

**Implementation:**

- How will the participating organisations contribute to the project's goals?
- What activities will be carried out?

**Aid and development effectiveness:**

- To what extent do the local actors have ownership of and engagement in the project?
- How is the project aligned with partners' own goals, systems and monitoring?
- How will the project's results be sustained after the project ends?
- How does the project take into account partnership, transparency, accountability and donor coordination?

**Principles:**

Describe how the project incorporates the principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination and openness and transparency.

*Participation:* Are relevant actors engaged, and can the target group and beneficiaries meaningfully contribute to and influence the project outcomes?

*Accountability:* Who is responsible, at different levels, for the situation the project seeks to address? Are there sufficient capacity and mechanisms for people to hold those responsible to account?

*Non-discrimination:* Which people are affected by the project, why are their rights being violated, and does the project include the most discriminated against and marginalised groups?

*Openness and transparency:* Does the target group have sufficient information to participate meaningfully in society? Does the project contribute to strengthening openness and transparency in society?

**Thematic areas:**

Briefly describe how the project addresses the following thematic areas.

*Reduced poverty:* Which groups living in poverty are affected, and how? Which key causes of poverty does the project address? Poverty is multidimensional and may relate to resources, power and influence, opportunities and security.

*Human rights:* How does the project strengthen the human rights of the target group, and how are duty bearers involved?

*Climate and environment:* Whether, and if so how, the project contributes to positive effects on climate and the environment. How any environmental and climate-related risks are managed within the project.

*Gender equality:* How does the project contribute to increased gender equality, what challenges exist and is there a risk that the project could lead to reduced gender equality?

*Peace and security:* Can the project contribute to positive effects on peace and security and are there conflict-related risks that may affect the project's implementation or results? Is there a risk that the project itself could exacerbate existing conflicts or create new ones?

## 9. Risks

Describe the main internal and external risks that could affect the project.

Describe how the organisation identifies, assesses and manages risks.

## 10. Anti-corruption

Confirm that the organisation has reviewed and will comply with Sida's requirements to prevent corruption, as set out in Sida's General Conditions (paragraph 13). See "[Document Archive](#)".

## 11. Management of corruption risks

Describe the forms of corruption present in society, and in the sector in which the project is implemented, and how the project can counter them.

Describe the risks of corruption that could affect the project and how they are managed.

Describe the procedures in place to monitor all implementers' handling of corruption within the project.

### Guidance:

Corruption risks and the negative impact of corruption on development cooperation should be taken into account throughout the implementation of the project. Sida defines corruption as the abuse of power, trust or position for private gain. Common forms of corruption include giving and taking bribes, disloyalty to principals, extortion, harassment, favoritism and nepotism,

embezzlement, fraud, conflict of interest and illegal financial contributions to political organisations.

In the application, take into account the distinction between:

- Corruption as a development obstacle: corruption in the partner country or sector, and the risk that the project's objectives are affected by corruption in society.
- The risk of corruption within the project itself: the risk that resources are misused or that abuse of power affects the project.

## 12. Amount applied for

State the amount applied for and the project period.

Describe how the organisation finances its own contribution. The organisation's own contribution should consist of liquid funds raised, for example through donations, sponsorship, membership fees, lottery proceeds and income from the sale of goods..

Note that the amount applied for may not exceed 85 % of the **project's total cost**. The remaining 15 % must be covered by the organisation's own contribution.

Please note that the organisation's own contribution may not consist of public funds, including public funds from Sweden or other countries.

## 13. Budget for project implementation

Justify why the proposed budget is needed to implement the project.

Complete the budget template and upload it to the designated location in the call portal. See "[Document Archive](#)"

### Guidance:

The budget should be clearly linked to the project and be specified by calendar year.

All costs for salaries and remuneration in Sweden should be specified, including taxes and social security contributions.

The budget should include:

- The total amount requested for the project from Sida
- The organisation's own contribution corresponding to 15 % of the total budget, not 15 % of the amount applied for from Sida
- The total budget, that is the amount applied for and the 15 % own contribution
- The amount to be forwarded to the local partner organisation(s)

- Staff costs for the Swedish organisation
- Administrative costs in Sweden (for example premises, accounting systems etc)
- Travel costs
- External services
- Audit costs for the local organisation
- Audit costs for the Swedish organisation
- Other contributions to the project (financial contributions from other actors)

## PART 3. Relevance to the CSO strategy's thematic priorities

In this section of the application, indicate which priorities in the CSO strategy the project contributes to. The thematic priorities will influence the selection based on an assessment of diversity and pluralism. This section is completed digitally in the on-line call portal.

### 1. Which priorities does the project contribute to?

Select one or more thematic priorities. These should be clearly linked to the project description in Section 2.

- Strengthened capacity of the partner organisation with a focus on internal democracy and gender equality
- Strengthened capacity of the partner organisation with a focus on financial management
- Strengthened capacity of the partner organisation with a focus on organisational development, participation of target groups, performance management, etc.
- Strengthened capacity of the partner organisation for accountability
- Poverty reduction through job creation, decent working conditions,
- Poverty reduction through trade
- Poverty reduction through interventions to support free markets
- Poverty reduction through education
- Counteracting corruption
- Improved health for the most vulnerable
  - Support for health systems
  - Support sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Democracy and human rights that promote freedom and decrease oppression
  - Support for democratic institutions and democratic governance

- Support for strengthening the rule of law principles
- Support for human rights defenders
- Support for freedom of expression
- Support for strengthening freedom of association
- Support for strengthened property rights
- Support for LGBTIQ rights
- Support for rights for people with disabilities
- Support for religious minorities
- Support for children's rights
- Support for biodiversity
- Support for climate adaptation
- Support for other environmental and climate issues
- Support for women's participation in political decisions and in peace processes
- Support for women's economic empowerment
- Support to counter sexual and gender-based violence
- Strengthened synergies between aid and migration policies
- Improved conditions for peace and security
- Activities at the intersection of development cooperation and humanitarian aid to save lives and alleviate suffering
- Other ... Specify what

## 2. Geographic focus

In which country or countries will the project be implemented?

Only activities in ODA countries (developing countries) are approved for applications. See link for which countries are approved recipients for development cooperation [DAC List of Aid Recipients.pdf](#).

## PART 4. Declaration

In this section the applicant declares that the organisation is aware of the basic conditions for receiving grants and will comply with the applicable conditions. Please read the attached documents on the links carefully.

### 1. Confirm that the applicant organisation has received information about OpenAid and Sida's processing of personal data.

Sweden has adopted a transparency guarantee, which means that public information on Swedish development assistance, such as documents and data

relating to a programme or project, is made available on Openaid.se. Further information is available at: <https://openaid.se/about-openaid>

The processing of personal data is governed by the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Sida may process personal data relating to Sida's partners and their employees in order to carry out its mandate as a government authority. The legal basis for Sida's processing of personal data is the performance of tasks carried out in the public interest. Sida's website contains information on the rights of data subjects under the GDPR as well as contact details for Sida's Data Protection Officer: <https://www.sida.se/om-sida/om-webbplatsen/anvandning-av-personuppgifter>

**2. Declare that the applicant organisation:**

Has no links to violent extremist ideologies or extremism.

**3. Declare that the partner organisation or organisations:**

Have no links to violent extremist ideologies or extremism

**4. Declare that the application form has been completed truthfully.**

## Sida's assessment of applications

Applications are assessed in competition, which means that an assessment is made of approved applications based on which ones are of the highest quality and are considered to contribute to the strongest results in achieving the objectives in the CSO strategy. Finally, how the projects in the whole group of applications will contribute to diversity and pluralism in support for civil society in developing countries is considered.

**Part 1** contains formal requirements that must be met for an application to be assessed.

**Part 2** The project application is assessed using a scoring system where each question can give 1-5 points. Acceptable answers are required for all questions in order for an application to proceed in the assessment process.

**Part 3** States relevance to the *strategy, thematic and geographical focus*. This information is combined with information on the *type of partner organisation* and the *target group* in the developing country that the project is aimed at. These five factors are then considered in Sida's assessment of diversity and pluralism.

Sida considers these five factors of diversity to ensure that approved projects as a whole contribute to diversity and pluralism for civil society in the recipient countries. An application that is assessed to be of good quality and contributes to increased pluralism for civil society actors in the recipient countries may therefore be given priority over applications that do not contribute to increased pluralism but have higher scores on the application in Part 2. Finally, it is a comprehensive assessment that determines which applications are granted support. Sida's decision cannot be appealed.