Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA)
First Call for Proposals
Questions & Answers

The following list of questions and answers is updated weekly and contains the questions received from CSOs (civil society organizations) interested in applying for GPSA grant funding. You may contact the GPSA Helpdesk if you have any question or write to gpsa@worldbank.org

**Application Requirements and E-Application Platform**

*Does the application platform offer the chance to edit your application, or is it a “one time enter&submit”?*

Yes, you will be able to save your application as a draft and to submit it only when you’re ready. Please visit www.worldbank.org/gpsa and click on the link to the First Global Call for Proposals. From there, click on the link to the GPSA E-Platform, which contains all the information required to prepare your proposal.

*What are the administrative documents required for this project application?*

Please visit www.worldbank.org/gpsa and click on the link to the First Global Call for Proposals. From there click on the link to the GPSA E-Platform, which will direct you to all the information and documents that are required to complete the application.

*Would CSOs be disqualified for sending proposals only in the [name of country] language?*

All applications, without exception, must be submitted in English. We do not have the capacity to translate proposals from 12 different languages to English, as would be needed to allow the Roster of Experts to review them. Organizations can work off-line in their local language and get their own proposals translated before uploading them into the competition platform.

**CSOs Eligibility and Partnership Arrangements**

*My country is not listed among the ‘opted-in’ countries. Is my country eligible? Can I submit a proposal?*

No, only CSOs from opted-in countries are eligible to submit proposals for this Call. Several countries in all regions across the world are in the process of opting in. Those countries that have opted in by the time of the next Call for Proposals will be included at that time.

*Can more than one organization pair up in a joint proposal?*
Proposals should be submitted by ONE organization (the applicant CSO). The partnership/coalition scheme can be described in the proposal, but for operational reasons it is only the applicant which would be the recipient of GPSA grant funding and thus the one held accountable, should the proposal be selected. Experience and expertise of coalition or partnership members will be assessed and taken into consideration, but not their fiduciary capacity.

In the case of a CSO legally established in one of the priority countries could an international CSO participate as a partner (not being the main applicant)?

Yes, an international CSO may be a partner but it is the CSO, legally established in one of the participating countries which submits the proposal as the executing organization, and which will be the recipient of GPSA grant funding should the proposal be selected. The rationale behind this is that the GPSA was created to support organizations in the South, rather than transferring funds to the north. The Grant Application Form contains a question about the “role of partners” in the proposal.

What entities and from what regions/countries can be the partners of the main applicant? What I understood is that they must be from the same countries that have opted in. Given the context of civil society in our country, it is doubtful that one local organization can partner only with other local organization for capacity building activities or mentoring activities. So, please clarify the eligibility of the partners.

While the main applicant must be a legal entity in one of the GPSA participating countries, its partner(s) may be from other regions/countries. It is the main applicant the one that would be the recipient of GPSA funding should the proposal be selected. There is a question in the application about the "role of partners" and where any partnership arrangements should be spelled out.

Would the GPSA allow a project in which the project management structure is composed of a consortium of international non-governmental organizations; or various stakeholders who have decided that together the project would be more effective which in turn will work with grassroots organizations in the country. This set up would be led by one clearly identified and registered organization in the country which has opted-in. Would the GPSA allow/authorize a project based on such a project management structure?

The consortium arrangement would be fine, but only the main applicant CSO would be the potential recipient of grant funding; the applicant may in turn hire international consultants (firms or individuals) to be part of the Project Team, but it is only the recipient who would be responsible for the grant management, as well as in terms of the grant legal agreement with the WB.

Can one organization be both an applicant and a partner in a different project?

Yes.
Is there a limit of participating partners in a certain project?

No.

The call for proposals states, ‘CSO networks based and operating in’. Can an organization apply if the organization operates in one of the designated participating countries, but has legal status in the United States?

Only CSOs with legal status in one of the participating countries can apply to the GPSA.

It does not seem to indicate in the guidelines that we need to be a 501(C) 3 organisation. Can you confirm if this is the case?

Applicant CSOs do not need to be US-registered nonprofit organizations. They are required to be legal entities in any of GPSA’s participating countries.

Are international NGOs which are registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau, that is, which have an approved FD1, eligible to apply for the GPSA?

Only NGOs registered as legal entities in the opted-in countries are eligible to apply. Please note that the applicant would be the recipient of GPSA funding should the proposal be selected, and therefore, GPSA’s counterpart for the purposes of the grant legal agreement, including fiduciary arrangements.

We [an International NGO] are considering applying for the GPSA in a number of countries. My understanding is that this [International NGO] would be entitled to apply for the GPSA in more than one country. Can you confirm this?

International NGO affiliates in the participating countries would be eligible to apply, insofar as they are legal entities in those countries. A multi-country proposal would be eligible as long as the applicant is registered as a legal entity in any of those countries; in addition, the proposed activities must be aligned with the priority areas indicated in each one of the country call for proposals.

Does the application, in the above instance (International NGO with national affiliates) come from the International NGO or from the national affiliate?

The national affiliate. The applicant CSO must be a legal entity in any of GPSA’s participating countries, as such organization is the one considered to be the recipient of GPSA grant funding, and thus subject to fulfilling fiduciary requirements should the proposal result selected.

Please note that the applicant [national affiliate in this case] is required to provide financial statements corresponding to the local affiliate’s office and not to those of the international NGO; therefore, the proposal budget must also be designed on the basis of the local affiliate’s budget only.
Can a similar project be implemented simultaneously in two countries (for example Bangladesh and Moldova)? Can an organization submit more than one proposal for different countries?

Yes, as long as each project is aligned with the priorities defined in each country call for proposals. A CSO may submit more than one proposal for different countries as long as it complies with the eligibility requirements set out by the GPSA. The applicant CSO must be a legal entity in any of the GPSA’s participating countries.

In the case of an international non-governmental organization which is operating in a country that has opted in but is currently in the process of being registered with the official authorities: (a) Would you allow this international non-governmental organization to respond to the call? And (b) Would it be possible for this international non-governmental organization to apply through another international organization which is being officially registered?

The response is no, as the applicant organization must be a legal entity at the time of applying. (b) The recipient of GPSA funding must be the executing organization who will actually implement the project. Therefore, the INGO cannot apply through another organization, as it is the latter that is legally responsible before the GPSA and considered to be the executing organization.

Are universities considered as professional organizations or research institutions?

Universities are considered research or academic institutions as long as they qualify as non-governmental or not-for-profit organizations.

As Joint Stock Company acting in the field of [name of field], can we submit an application for the GPSA grant?

The call for proposals is open to civil society organizations (CSOs) only, which are legal entities in GPSA’s participating countries. CSOs include legal entities that fall outside the public or for profit sector, such as non-government organizations, not-for-profit media organizations, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional organizations, labor unions, workers’ organizations, associations of elected local representatives, foundations and policy development and research institutes.

Regarding the ‘proven track record in Social Accountability’: how many years does this mean exactly?

The organization should have at least 3 to 5 years of experience in this field. The Application Package includes a required attachment about the Project Team and Prior Experience, which includes a question about prior and ongoing projects of the applicant CSO for at least the past 3 to 5 years. In addition, Part 3 of the main Application Form requires applicants to provide the names and contact information of three people that may provide references about the applicant CSO.
Please visit the GPSA’s e-application platform, where you may download a Word version of the Application Form as well as the application’s required attachments (Proposal Budget, Project Team and Proposal Results Framework).

Could you please indicate in which form an international CSO not being legally established in one of the priority countries, could apply for a GPSA grant for “off-cycle capacity building and knowledge grants”?

The First Call for Proposals does not cover “off-cycle capacity-building and knowledge grants”. CSOs from GPSA participating countries may include capacity-building activities in their proposals. All grant applications must include a Knowledge and Learning (K&L) component.

GPSA Grant Funding Amounts

If GPSA financing should not exceed 50% of the organization’s total operating budget, this means that only very big organizations would be able to get more than 500,000USD. It also means that the smaller ones are from the start disadvantaged. Overall, the conditions under this call fit perfectly more advanced and to certain degree more sophisticated civil societies. This call does not reflect the realities in our country, in terms of the capacity of our CSOs to access this call.

The 50% limit refers to the breakdown by year of GPSA grant funding, which may not exceed 50% of the organization’s total annual budget, understood as the sum of GPSA funding plus total funding from any other sources. For example, a CSO with an annual budget of US$100,000 CAN present a grant proposal for US$500,000 to be implemented in five years. This example assumes fixed annual GPSA disbursements of US$100,000. In this case the annual budget would total US$200,000, whereby GPSA funding would represent 50% of the organization’s annual budget.

The Proposal Budget asks applicants to indicate the organization’s annual budget for the current or past fiscal year (e.g. 2012 executed budget or 2013 approved budget), and to indicate Year 1 requested amount as a percentage of the organization’s annual budget. Applicants should use the current or past fiscal years as the basis for estimating GPSA requested annual disbursements throughout the project period.

Proposals should be put forth for an estimated duration of 3 to 5 years; while the objective is to provide sustained funding for a long period, GPSA funding should not be the only source of funding of the organization. While indicative funding ranges are between USD 500,000 - 1 million, requested amounts below this range may be considered.

For smaller CSOs lacking the fiduciary capacity to manage large grant amounts, GPSA also offers the possibility of putting forth a proposal under a "mentoring" arrangement. In this case, a smaller CSO (the "Mentee") would partner with a larger, well-established CSO (the "Mentor"), whereby the latter would be the main applicant and the recipient of GPSA funding. On-granting or sub-contracting arrangements with the Mentee(s) CSO(s) in such a case are allowable and encouraged. However, the Mentor organization should be a registered legal entity in one of GPSA participating countries.
If your organization has an idea or project that is aligned with the priority areas defined in one of the country calls for proposals, but finds itself in a situation similar to the one described above, we suggest that you contact the World Bank Office in your country in order to seek assistance in looking for a Mentor-partner CSO that could be a good match with your organization. Alternatively, you could seek partners outside your country that would complement in some way what your organization would like to implement. In the latter case, your organization would be the main applicant and thus the recipient of GPSA funding.

**What percentage of the project is covered by the World Bank (what are the criteria)?**

The GPSA may cover 100% of the project cost. However, requested amounts’ breakdown by year should not exceed 50% of the organization’s annual budget for said years.

**Funding amounts: Does the funding range represent the total envelop for [name of country] or what one CSO can get?**

The funding range refers to available funding for CSOs’ projects, not to the total envelope for each country.

**From your guidelines it is clear that the applying organization must be a legal entity based in one of the opted-in countries, but we could not find (financial) guidelines related to possible consortium partners from outside these countries or the percentage of the project budget that could be spent on non-opted-in country staff costs. Is it allowed to include NGO’s or consultants from outside the opted-in countries in the project budget?**

GPSA Application Guidelines do not set limits on the amount of grant funding that may be allocated to cover for international or national-based consultants (individuals or firms). In this respect, projects may propose to hire consultant services to deliver specific products or activities (e.g. capacity-building).

The Proposal Budget, however, includes a list of questions (the “Budget Narrative”) which requires the applicant to explain and justify the proposed budget, particularly in relation to operating costs (including the allocation of grant funding to cover for project staff salaries and other overhead costs, such as office maintenance, utilities and communications costs).

In addition, selection criteria include cost-effectiveness of the proposal budget, which should reflect a reasonable funding allocation between overhead costs and funding for specific activities included in the proposal.

**Can we subcontract work? Should we readily indicate this in the proposal?**

Yes. Allowable expense categories include international and national-based consultants (individuals or firms). As indicated in the Proposal Budget template, any expenses related to the proposal must be clearly spelled out there.
Will you be expecting us to do only this work in order for you to cover 50% of our organization budget? Can we actually hire more staff to manage this program?

GPSA grant funding is intended to support an organization’s specific project and not the overall organization’s budget. If you have a specific project or program that is aligned with GPSA’s Call for Proposals, you may consider hiring additional staff, and include this in the application.

Will we be expected to report to Government what we are doing and account to them on financial expenditures?

Recipients of GPSA funding will be responsible for reporting on grants’ activity and financial progress to the World Bank only.

Can a CSO hire government officials or pay public institutions for service provision?

No. GPSA grants follow World Bank fiduciary guidelines; procurement guidelines do not allow grant funds benefitting civil society organizations to be used for the purposes of hiring public officials or public institutions.

Focus Areas of GPSA Grants

Would it be acceptable for one organization to present two independent proposals on two different areas? For example, one project proposal on the topic of Institutional Development and another smaller project proposal on the topic of Quality of Education.

There is no limit to the number of proposals that individual CSOs may submit. However, please keep in mind that this is an international competitive call for proposals, and as such country proposals enter in a competition with proposals received from other countries as well. Therefore, it is advisable to submit only one proposal with those two components.

If a certain project idea is not in partnership with the Ministry of [name of sector Ministry], and not related to [name of sector prioritized in the country call for proposals], is it eligible? Could we cover other areas/sectors, such as social assistance, justice, human rights?

The project should be aligned with at least one or more of the issues or sectors prioritized in the country call for proposals. Any other issues or sectors would be ineligible.

Is it feasible to explore alternatives offered by the GPSA to work in a province of a country?

CSOs from GPSA participating countries may propose to implement social accountability initiatives or programs at a national or sub-national level. Irrespective of the scope, activities must be aligned with the priorities defined in each participating country call for proposals.
In the project guidelines you mentioned that project grant will be available in 4 areas. Can we accommodate 4 areas/components in a single project or it requires separate proposal to be prepared for 4 separate areas/component of program? The component “Institutional strengthening of applicant CSO(s)” is referring that the fund for capacity building of grant applicant only. Or supporting capacity building of other CSOs?

The four areas referred to in the Application Guidelines are the following:

1. Social accountability initiatives or programs
2. Institutional strengthening of applicant CSO(s)
3. Capacity-building and technical assistance on social accountability
4. Mentoring of nascent CSO(s) by focusing on one or more of the above areas

These are “areas” on which proposals may focus but not necessarily “components”. For instance, proposals that include mentoring arrangements would not include a “mentoring” component, but instead might include areas 1, 2 and 3, or 1 and 2.

The “Institutional Strengthening” area may be designed as a component, and refers to activities focused on the applicant CSO (please see the Application Guidelines for further information on this area). The capacity-building area may also be designed as a component and refers to activities oriented at capacity-building on social accountability that may focus on either the applicant CSO or other CSOs, or both.

Focus areas are not required to be presented neither as individual components nor in separate proposals, and may be articulated into one proposal only.

Please note that the application may contain between 1 to 3 components plus an additional component on Knowledge and Learning (K&L) which is required for all applications.

Selection Criteria Questions

Would collaboration with policy-makers (ie. government) be an important consideration in the selection process?

What is important for the GPSA is that the information generated by Social Accountability mechanisms be used by public institutions. You will see that there are very concrete questions about this in the application template. We want to support social accountability mechanisms that work with autonomy but not in isolation. This is critical to foster change. Please note that public institutions can go beyond the Government or Executive branch. It could include Congress, Supreme Audit Institutions, Regulatory Agencies, etc.

Will the project assessment/evaluation be conducted on the experience of the leader or of all the participants?

That depends on the project’s strategic objectives and expected outcomes, and on the proposed project team and partners; participants’ experience will be assessed insofar as it is relevant to the latter.
**What is the maximum number of proposals that you will fund from each country?**

There is no country allocation. Proposals from the 12 participating countries will compete on the basis of their technical quality.

**Will Government have veto power on the proposals?**

No. They will have 10 days to make non-binding comments after proposals have undergone the technical review stage and a list of pre-selected proposals has been approved by the GPSA Steering Committee.

**Who will evaluate the proposals?**

The first screening will be carried out by World Bank Country Offices to check applications’ alignment with country’s priority areas and applicants’ eligibility. Eligible applications will then undergo a technical review that will be carried out by a Global Roster of Experts. Please see the Application Guidelines for more information on the applications’ review process.