



## **Guidelines for applicants**

### **Title of the call**

**Support to CSOs and CBOs is strengthening their governance and management and in implementing actions addressing priorities included in the National Thematic Agendas in Eswatini**

**Submission deadline: 11 May 2026**

**In the framework of the EU-funded project:**

**“Civil Society in Action”**

**PROJECT CODE: NDICI CSO/2024/458-160**

This call for proposal is in the frame of the **Civil Society in Action** project, implemented by COSPE and co-funded by the European Union. Below a summary of the project

<p><b>Objectives of the action</b></p>	<p>&lt;Overall objective(s) (i.e. Impact)&gt; Civil society (CSOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) in Eswatini contribute to the promotion of fundamental values of good governance, policy development and the protection of human rights.</p> <p>&lt;Specific objective(s) (i.e. Outcome(s))&gt; CBOs and CSOs active in the promotion of women rights and gender equality, youth and vulnerable groups' inclusion and participation, social cultural and economic rights promotion and climate justice are strengthened in their capacities, their effectiveness, sustainability and collaboration.</p>
<p><b>Target group(s)</b></p>	<p>8 Coalitions and 120 CSOs and CBOs members of the following coalitions and staff/board members of the Coalitions: CANGO, United Voices for the LGBTQI+ Community, FSEJ, FODSWA, Liphimbo LaBoMake, Youth in Network, PELUM, Yini Loku.</p> <p>6800 people that will directly benefit from the actions implemented by CSOs/CBOs in the communities or at national level.</p>
<p><b>Final beneficiaries</b></p>	<p>Eswatini Civil Society, community members and activists at large</p>
<p><b>Expected outputs</b></p>	<p>Result 1. CSOs, CBOs and their national coalitions/platforms are capacitated, well organized, networked and coordinated</p> <p>Result 2. CSOs and CBOs promote women's rights and gender equality, vulnerable groups participation and inclusion, social cultural economic rights and climate justice, with innovative and impactful methodologies and approaches</p> <p>Result 3. CSOs and national Coalitions monitor, advocate and influence national policy and decision-making.</p>
<p><b>Main activities</b></p>	<p>Work package 1: Transformative Capacity Building for institutional and organizational strengthening of CSOs, CBOs and Coalitions; FSTP (Financial Support to third Parties) to Coalitions, CSOs and CBOs to strengthen their operational capacity, management structure/tools and internal governance. Work package 2: Elaboration of National Thematic Agendas of priorities; Provision of FSTPs to CSOs and CBOs for the implementation of initiatives responding to the identified priorities of the National Thematic Agendas and using the learnt methodologies and approaches. Work package 3: Organization of and participation to Regional and National events and decision making spaces and dialogues; Design, production and dissemination of art and media products for enhancing advocacy on women rights and gender equality, vulnerable groups inclusion and participation, social and economic rights promotion and climate justice; Monitoring of the implementation of ratified international and regional conventions and presentation of findings in dialogues with government departments, policy-makers and development partners.</p>

## 1. Background and definitions

In the frame of the CSA project this Call of proposal aims at strengthening the governance and the implementation capacity of local organizations, CSOs and CBOs, members of the 8 **Coalitions** participating in the CSA project: Liphimbo Labomake, FODSWA - Federation of People with disability in Eswatini, United Voice for Diversity, SYN - Swaziland Youth Network, PELUM Participatory Ecological Land Use Management, Yini Loku, FSEJ – Foundation for Socio- Economic Justice and CANGO - Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organisations.

Under this Call:

- **CSOs** are defined as organizations with a geographical national scope, addressing national priorities of the National Thematic Agendas.
- **CBOs** are defined as community/local focused scope organizations, addressing national priorities of the National Thematic Agendas within either geographically - confined radius of activities/operations (from Tinkundla level and below) and/or representing a demographically/niche community of people.

In the frame of the CSA project the 8 Coalitions have elaborated **National Thematic Agendas** in the following thematic areas:

- Climate Justice by PELUM
- Women rights and participation by Liphimbo Labomake
- Youth rights and participation by SYN
- Rights of persons with disabilities by FODSWA
- Socio-economic rights by FSEJ
- LGBTIQ+ community rights by United Voices for Diversity

The **National Thematic Agendas** are comprehensive documents elaborated by the Coalitions, their members and relevant stakeholders that list the main priorities and problems Eswatini face in the identified thematic areas and list possible solutions and stakeholders to be engaged for the solutions of the identified main priorities.

At the same time the 8 Coalitions have supported their members in identifying their capacity needs and competencies through the process of **need assessment**. In this exercise the Coalitions' members have filled up need assessment forms that have led to the elaboration of personalised Organizational Development Plans (ODP) that list the needs of the member organizations and identify actions the organizations propose to respond to the capacity needs.

Through this call for proposal, COSPE, in collaboration with the 8 coalitions and the EU aim at responding to the identified priorities listed in the National Thematic Agendas and to the CSOs and CBOs needs listed in their ODPs.

In order to allow all CSOs and CBOs to apply, taking into consideration their capacities and structure, this Call was designed with three Lots: **Lot 1, Lot 2 and Lot 3**, that share the same objectives, but offer different amount of grants according to the capacities, competencies and governance structure of the different organizations. The three lots foresee different reporting mechanisms. In particular, through this Call, **Lot 1 and Lot 2** require the Applicant to adopt an **output-based** approach in the proposal submission and reporting stage, while **Lot 3** a **cost-based** approach.

The **Output-Based Approach** focuses on what the project delivers: concrete products, services, or deliverables (e.g., training completed, platforms developed, beneficiaries reached). Accountability is tied to results, not activities. Budgets will be linked to outputs and at reporting stage no financial

report will be submitted but narrative reports with attached supporting documents and means of verifications to demonstrate the achievement of the outputs.

The **Cost-Based Approach** focuses on how much money is spent, usually broken down by budget lines (human resources, materials, travel, etc.). Accountability is tied to expenditures, not achievements. At the reporting stage a financial report will be submitted, together with the narrative report, with attached relevant supporting documents as requested by the donor, for each and every expenditure.

## 2. **Objectives of the call for proposals**

The **General objective** of the Call is to strengthen the capacities of CSOs and CBOs to promote women' and youth' rights and equality, PWD and LGBTIQ+ people's rights, participation and inclusion, climate justice, and socio-cultural-economic rights.

The **Specific objectives** are:

1. To support CSOs and CBOs in addressing internal governance and management weak areas identified during the need assessment;
2. To implement concrete actions addressing/responding to the priorities included in the National Thematic Agendas.

Interested organizations can submit a proposal to respond to the objectives above, by applying to Lot 1, Lot 2 or Lot 3. The three lots offer different amounts of grants according to the capacities, competencies and governance structure of the Applicant.

## 3. **Eligible activities**

Eligible activities have to contribute to the achievement of **the two specific objectives of this Call**, as reported above and in particular:

1. strengthening their organizational structure, aiming at overcoming/addressing some of the weaknesses identified in the initial need assessment and priorities reported in the **Organizational Development Plans** (ODP);
2. implementing initiatives responding to the thematic priorities of the **National Thematic Agendas**, by:
  - 2.1. clearly addressing/responding to one or more priorities of the National Thematic Agenda of the coalition the Applicant is applying through (only for members of SYN, UVD, Liphimbo Labomake, FODSWA, FSEJ, PELUM);
  - 2.2. (optional) promoting priorities under the National Thematic Agendas of the other coalitions involved in the CSA project (only for members of SYN, UVD, Liphimbo Labomake, FODSWA, FSEJ, PELUM);
  - 2.3. responding to one or more priorities of any of the six National Thematic Agendas (only for CANGO and Yini Loku members).

In addition, eligible **activities** include the following.

- Training/ consultancies/workshops/meetings/events
- Elaboration of internal documents (studies, research, analysis, policies)
- Purchase of services, products and equipment
- Communication, dissemination and visibility
- Advocacy initiatives

- Provision of services.

### 3. **Eligible Applicant**

CSOs, CBOs belonging to one of the CSA coalitions, that have attended the Need Assessment exercise proposed by their Coalitions and have submitted the final Need Assessment Document.

Under Lot 1 **eligible Applicants and Co- applicants are:** CBOs, belonging to one of the CSA coalitions, that have completed the Need Assessment exercise proposed by their Coalitions and have submitted the final Need Assessment Documents.

Under Lot 2 **eligible Applicants** are: CSOs, belonging to one of the CSA coalitions, that have completed the Need Assessment exercise proposed by their Coalitions and have submitted the final Need Assessment Documents. **Eligible Co- applicants** are either CBOs or CSOs belonging to one of the CSA coalitions, that have completed the Need Assessment exercise proposed by their Coalitions and have submitted the final Need Assessment Documents.

Under Lot 3 **eligible Applicants** are organizations that respond to All the following criteria:

- CSOs belonging to the targeted coalitions, that have completed the Need Assessment exercise proposed by their Coalitions and have submitted the final Need Assessment Document;
- CSOs that have a strong governance and in particular that have a Constitution, Financial & procurement policy/ procedures and Human Resources Policy;
- CSOs that have a banking account in the organization's name; and can open a dedicated bank account at the agreement signing stage;
- CSOs that have managed a minimum amount of SZL 300,000 cumulatively in the last 3 years.

**Eligible Co-applicant** are either CBOs or CSOs belonging to one of the CSA coalitions, that have completed the Need Assessment exercise proposed by their Coalitions and have submitted the final Need Assessment Documents. CSOs /CBO should have a dedicated bank account in the organisations name on the agreement signing stage.

### 4. **Overall amount, Size of Grants and Grant management**

The overall amount available for this Call is **SZL28,900,000**

**Lot 1 and Lot 2:** the budget of the proposal will be from a **minimum of SZL 200,000 to a maximum of SZL 260,000**. The grant will be managed through an Output-based approach.

**Lot 3:** the budget of the proposal will be from a **minimum of SZL 500,000 to a maximum of SZL 600,000**. The grant will be managed through a Cost-based approach.

Organizations who apply **under Lot 1 and 2**, who do not have the financial capability or are not in the condition of opening an organizational bank account, must request one of the Coalitions under the CSA project to play the role of **Fiscal Host** for the financial management of the project. The Applicant will include a percentage in the budget as Fiscal Host fee, equal to the **10%** of the overall budget.

Fiscal Hosting arrangement should be confirmed through an agreement letter with the host to be submitted alongside the application. Fiscal hosts should have a dedicated bank account for each of the grantee funds. A fiscal host can host more than 1 grantee.

COSPE reserves the right to recommend the engagement of a fiscal host and the consequent modification of the proposal's documents, after the approval of the proposal, before the signing of the grant contract, if the expected requirements are not met.

5. **Co-funding:**

No co-funding will be requested to the applicants.

6. **Location**

The project will be implemented in eSwatini.

7. **Project duration**

Minimum duration of the implementation of the grant is **9 months**, maximum duration of the implementation of the grant is **15 months**.

8. **Visibility**

Note that the applicant must comply with the visibility rules of the EU. For this purpose, in case of the award of contract the applicant shall follow the instruction included in the contract.

9. **Number of applications and grants per applicant**

Each organization **may not submit more than one application, as applicant or co-applicant**, under this Call for proposals and may not be awarded more than one grant under this call for proposals.

Two organizations may collaborate in one proposal and apply together as applicant and co-applicant for the implementation of 1 project:

- For **Lot 1**: Applicant and co-applicant must be CBOs.
- For **Lot 2 and 3**: Applicant must be a CSO, co-applicant can be either a CSO or a CBO.

10. **Eligibility of costs: costs which may be taken into consideration for the grant**

**Eligible costs:**

- They are incurred during the implementation of the Action as specified in the Sub-grant contract. This means that the costs shall relate to activities performed during the implementation period.
- They are indicated in the overall budget for the Action (on the annexed budget format)
- They are necessary for the implementation of the Action
- In case of Cost-based option (Lot 3) the costs are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the Grant Beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of Eswatini.
- In case of Output-based option (Lot 1, Lot 2) the costs are coherent and consistence with the foreseen and realized Outputs and they are reported according to the indications mentioned below (see table with indicative supporting documents)
- They comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

**Non-eligible costs:**

1. Debts and debt service charges (interests);
2. Provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
3. Investments
4. Fines, penalties
5. Costs declared by the Beneficiary and financed by donors or by other EU-funded actions;
6. Currency exchange losses;

7. Credits to third parties;
8. Costs related to non-eligible activities
9. Indirect costs

The sum of the percentage of the main budget headings **1 (Human resources)**, **3 (Equipment and supplies)** and **4 (Local office)** must be equal to a **maximum of 35%** of the overall budget.

11. **Contributions in kind**

Contributions in kind (e.g., valorisation of existing equipment, donations, volunteer works) are not considered actual expenditure and are not eligible costs.

12. **How to apply**

Applicants must submit their applications in **English**. The application consists of the application form, narrative proposal, budget and logical framework using templates provided under this call of proposals. Hand-written applications will not be accepted. The application form, narrative proposal, the budget and the Logical Framework are the documents requested and compulsory to be submitted for the evaluation. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL relevant information concerning the action.

13. **Where and how to send the Applications**

The applications MUST be uploaded on the Thubelihle platform [www.thubelihle.org](http://www.thubelihle.org) by the Applicants.

In order to be eligible all Applicants and co-applicants are required to be registered on the platform. The registration might take some time and it is strongly suggested that each applicant /co-applicant register very much in advance of the submission of the application.

Applicants may request assistance from their Coalition and COSPE for the registration in the platform and for the application phase until **7 days** before the deadline submission deadline.

The following are the email address you can contact for clarifications and support:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>email</b>
COSPE	<a href="mailto:fundile.mamba@cospe.ngo">fundile.mamba@cospe.ngo</a>
FSEJ	<a href="mailto:briansangweni@yahoo.com">briansangweni@yahoo.com</a>
PELUM	<a href="mailto:programmesmanager@pelum.org.sz">programmesmanager@pelum.org.sz</a>
FODSWA	<a href="mailto:Ntobeko2388@gmail.com">Ntobeko2388@gmail.com</a>
SYN	<a href="mailto:vilakatisizwe@gmail.com">vilakatisizwe@gmail.com</a>
Liphimbo Labomake	<a href="mailto:liphimbolabomake@gmail.com">liphimbolabomake@gmail.com</a>
Yini Loku	<a href="mailto:lokuyini@gmail.com">lokuyini@gmail.com</a>
CANGO	<a href="mailto:bhekani.dlamini@cango.org.sz">bhekani.dlamini@cango.org.sz</a>
UVD	<a href="mailto:nomsambuli@yahoo.com">nomsambuli@yahoo.com</a>

14. **Award of applications**

Applications will be examined by an evaluation committee, composed of 5 persons: 2 representatives from 2 different CSA Coalitions, 2 representatives of the geographic or thematic communities, and 1 representative of COSPE that will check that the application and its annexes satisfy all the criteria specified above, in terms of eligibility of applicants and co-applicants, objectives, outputs, activities, costs. The evaluation committee will then draft a shortlist of the applications that received a higher score, based on an evaluation grid that will be provided to them.

If any of the requested supporting documents is missing or is incorrect, the shortlisted Applicants could be requested to provide them in order to meet the required criteria.

In the frame of the examination of the applications, the evaluation committee will be guided by the following criteria:

<b>Section</b>	<b>Maximum score</b>
<b>1. Operational/Technical capacity</b>	<b>Sub-score 5</b>
Does the applicant have sufficient technical expertise and or human resources to implement the action?	5
<b>2. Relevance of the action</b>	<b>Sub-score 20</b>
How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the CSO/CBO as emerged during the need assessment?	5x2**
How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the related Thematic National Agenda?	5x2**
<b>2. Design of the action</b>	<b>Sub-score 20</b>
How coherent is the overall design of the action? In particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems, take into account external factors and relevant stakeholders?	5
Is the action feasible and consistent in relation to the objectives and expected results?	5x2**
<b>For Lot 1</b> Does the action respond to community-based needs in an innovative way and is it implemented at community level?	5
<b>For Lot 2&amp;3</b> Does the action respond to national priorities in an innovative way and is it implemented at national level and in multiple communities?	5
<b>3. Effectiveness and feasibility of the action</b>	<b>Sub-score 15</b>
Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results?	5x2**
Is the action plan clear and feasible?	5
<b>4. Budget and cost-effectiveness</b>	<b>Sub-score 30</b>
Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5x2**
Are the costs reported in the budget reliable and in line with the cost of living in Eswatini?	5x2**
Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected outputs satisfactory?	5x2**
<b>5.Sustainability of the action</b>	<b>Sub-score 10</b>
Is the proposed project likely to have a tangible impact on the CSO/CBO and communities they represent?	5

Is the proposed project likely to have multiplier effects? (Including scope for replication and extension of the outcome of the action and dissemination of information)	5
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**Score**

Total score on the greed is **100 marks**

To be considered for subgrant you should have a minimum of **60 Marks**

After the approval of the proposals, COSPE reserves the right to request amendments to approved proposal documents and request additional information before the signing of the contract.

**15. Notification of the Contracting Authority’s comments and final award**

Once a proposal is selected, the Applicant will be offered a **grant contract**. The Applicant (the Grantee) and Co-Applicants, if applicable, will be invited to participate in an information/training event organised by COSPE in a location to be defined.

The purposes of this event are:

- To familiarise with the approach governing this call;
- To be trained on the rules and procedures applicable to the contract.
- To be trained on the administrative rules and procedures for the management of the project.

**16. Contracts, reporting and payments**

The Grantee shall provide all necessary information relating to the implementation of the project, submitting interim reports and a final report, written in English, to the relevant Coalition and COSPE, to serve in particular as support for all requests for payment.

**For Lot 1 and Lot 2:**

The Grantee will receive the amount in **tranches** that will be disbursed according to the milestones that will be developed at contract signing stage. Every Grantee shall provide COSPE with **interim periodical reports** according to different milestones and a **final report**.

**The total pre-financing amount transferred will be up to the 100%** of the contribution for implementation of the Project:

In the event that an output is not fully achieved, a proportionate percentage corresponding to the level of non-achievement shall be deducted from the project’s overall contribution. Where funds allocated to such an output have already been disbursed, the Grantee shall transfer to COSPE the value corresponding to the incomplete output no later than fifteen (15) days following COSPE’s approval of the final report.

**Supporting documents and means of verification** will be attached to the periodical reports and they will vary according to the outputs and sub-outputs. Below is an **indicative table** reporting the requested supporting documents for the different outputs/sub-outputs. The table will be reviewed and detailed for each proposal, according to the proposed outputs/sub-outputs and attached to the grant contract.

Type of Outputs	Supporting documents to be submitted at reporting stage
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People capacitated through training/workshops/meetings	Attendance list, training program, and report, pictures, training material, videos, pre-post test results, media coverage
Improved organizational governance through elaboration of internal documents (studies, research, analysis, policies, manuals and procedures)	Draft and final organizational documents, research papers and methodology, policy documents, activities' pictures
Improved organizational program implementation capacity, through the improvement of the working space, purchase of services, products and equipment	Contracts/agreements, pictures, software license, building plan design and rehabilitation plans
Improved awareness and capacity of local communities through advocacy initiatives and campaigns	Design of visibility and advocacy material, pictures, attendance lists, activity report, media coverage
Community' livelihood improved through the provision of services	Attendance lists, pictures, activities reports, building plan design and rehabilitation plans, media coverage

### **For Lot 3:**

The Grantee will receive the amount in tranches that will be disbursed on quarterly basis. The amount of each tranche will be calculated according to Quarterly Budget elaborated at contract signing stage.

Every Grantee shall provide COSPE with **interim quarterly reports** and a **final report** within 15 days from the end of the reporting period, containing a narrative and a financial section for the activities and expenditures under its responsibility.

The total pre-financing transferred shall amount to **up to ninety percent (90%)** of the contribution allocated for the implementation of the Project. The remaining balance of the grant shall be disbursed upon the submission and approval of the Final Report. The final balance shall correspond to the difference between the eligible expenditures duly accounted for by the Grantee and approved by COSPE, and the total amount already transferred as pre-financing. Such balance shall be disbursed within **one (1) month** of COSPE's approval of the Final Report.

Any unspent and/or ineligible funds received by the Grantee must be transferred to COSPE no later than **fifteen (15) days** following COSPE's approval of the Final Report.

### **List of Annexes**

1. Application form
2. Narrative proposal form
3. Budget form
4. Logical Framework form