

Annual Program Statement (APS)
Civil Society Support (CSS) Activity
Media, Inclusion and Freedoms Fund

Funding Opportunity Number: APS No. 002

Purpose: To solicit applications for funding from registered civil society organizations (CSOs), media organizations, and private sector organizations to design and implement projects, aiming: 1) To enhance access to free, transparent, and inclusive traditional and new media; 2) To enhance the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in policy making and policy implementation, and 3) To promote constitutional rights and freedoms through raising awareness and influencing policy implementation.

Grant Size: Up to USD 50,000 per grant

Number of Awards: Up to four (4) Grantees

Award Type: Fixed Amount Award (FAA) – the total amount of the award is fixed, and grant installments will be paid upon completion of agreed upon milestones.

Grant Duration: 6 - 12 months

Issuance Date: June 1, 2023

Deadline for Submission of Application: Applications are accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis. The final deadline for application submissions is **5:00 PM on June 15, 2023 (GMT+7)**.

Submission Email: Applications must be submitted electronically via email to GrantsCSSCambodia@fhi360.org

Questions concerning this APS may be submitted via email to GrantsCSSCambodia@fhi360.org.

The contents of this Annual Program Statement are the responsibility of FHI 360 and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Issuance of this Annual Program Statement does not constitute an award commitment on the part of FHI 360; nor does it commit FHI 360 to pay for the costs incurred in the submission of an application. Furthermore, FHI 360 reserves the right to reject any or all applications received.

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Acronyms

APS	Annual Program Statement
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSS	Civil Society Support Activity
FAA	Fixed Amount Award
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion
ICNL	International Center for Not-for-Profit Law
LGBTQI+	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersex +
NGO	Non-Government Organization
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SCA	Strategic Communication and Awareness
UEI	Unique Entity ID
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar

Section 1: What is the Civil Society Support (CSS) Activity?

CSS is a four-year activity (June 2021 – March 2025) supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by FHI 360, a non-profit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions with its implementing partner, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), which works to improve the legal enabling environment for civil society, philanthropy, and public participation around the world.

The goal of CSS is to enhance coordination and collective action among CSOs, improve the enabling environment for civil society, and support innovative methods to advance civic engagement and coordination in public policy dialogue.

CSS is achieving this goal by accomplishing the following three outcomes:

- 1. Outcome 1: Increased coordinated efforts by civil society and media organizations to cooperate for policy reforms.**
 - a. Output 1.1: Increased inclusive coordination and cooperation
 - b. Output 1.2: Strengthened ability of CSOs to collaborate for reforms
- 2. Outcome 2: Improved enabling environment for civic engagement in policy making**
 - a. Output 2.1 Increased legal protection and representation
 - b. Output 2.2 Strengthened coordination, legal compliance, and expertise
- 3. Outcome 3: Incubator tool and innovative approaches for building capacity and partnerships of CSOs and media organizations developed, adapted, and adopted.**
 - a. Output 3.1 Innovation Lab developed to generate innovative CSO tools and platforms
 - b. Output 3.2 Promotion of consolidated lessons learned and best practices of CSO operations

Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) principles will be incorporated across project activities.

Section 2: What is the Annual Program Statement looking to fund?

Background

Space for public participation in policy making in Cambodia is limited and not fully inclusive of disadvantaged and marginalized groups. To remedy this weakness, CSOs need to strengthen their cooperation to promote inclusive public participation in policy dialogue and policy making.

CSS uses a collective action model to promote greater coordination and protection and to enlarge space for innovation leading to collective impact from coordination and policy reform dialogue. CSS is currently supporting four Cluster Anchor organizations, which serve as lead organizations to build collaboration and coordination to advance joint agendas in specific thematic policy areas: 1) fundamental freedoms; 2) natural resource management, land, and environment; 3) access to quality inclusive education; and 4) gender and social inclusion.

Media and social media also provide an important channel for public input into policy making and policy dialogue. The closure or takeover of independent traditional media in Cambodia has restricted opportunities to use traditional media as a channel for policy discussion. While social media has grown in the meantime, social media in Cambodia demonstrates inherent weaknesses as a platform for free, transparent and inclusive public dialogue on policy issues. To address these challenges in the media environment, CSS works with partners to support free, transparent, and inclusive media.

CSS also recognizes that restrictions on fundamental freedoms, especially freedoms of expression, association, and assembly, can undermine efforts by civil society to advance joint policy agendas. These freedoms, which are essential in any democratic society, allow citizens to have an impact on policies that shape their lives and well-being. Cambodia's low scores in Freedom House's Freedom in the World Index, including its low scores on categories related to fundamental freedoms, underline the challenges that citizens and civic groups face in exercising their rights of expression, association, and assembly in Cambodia.

CSS' Media, Inclusion, and Freedoms (MIF) Grants will support innovative approaches to pilot emerging new tools, techniques, and approaches in support of thematic policy areas of the clusters — including policy advocacy, public awareness and strategic communications, and the enabling environment for civil society and media. Through this grant program, CSS will fund CSOs, media organizations, and/or private sector organizations to advance public participation in policy dialogue and policy making and contribute to a free and open environment for civil society and the media.

APS Objectives

The Media, Inclusion, and Freedoms Fund, in alignment with the objectives of the CSS project, seeks to support initiatives along three major themes: 1) initiatives that enhance access to free, transparent, and inclusive traditional and new media; and 2) initiatives that enhance the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in policy making and policy implementation. The Media, Inclusion, and Freedoms Fund aims to support initiatives as follows.

Media and Digital Media:

1. **Promote and protect digital rights and internet freedom.** Illustrative examples of initiatives include: (a) Research, analysis, and dialogue on the legal and policy framework for digital media; (b) the creation of digital tools to increase the transparency of social media platforms' decisions about content; and (c) social media campaigns to highlight the importance of internet freedom.
2. **Enhance space for traditional and new media to operate freely, transparently, and inclusively.** Illustrative examples of initiatives include: (a) Building coalitions to promote freedom of the press and freedom of expression; (b) providing support to protect journalists from harassment in the course of their work; and (c) increasing public awareness on the importance of the right to information and open data.

Inclusion:

3. **Empowering youth to influence policies that impact them.** Illustrative examples of initiatives include: (a) Monitoring and analyzing the implementation of national youth policy and other policies that affect youth; (b) increasing participation of young people in youth policy forums; and (c) creating platforms for young people to propose creative policy ideas and policy reforms.
4. **Advance greater inclusion of indigenous populations in policymaking.** Illustrative examples of initiatives include: (a) Campaigning for policy reform on environment and natural resource policies; (b) strengthening indigenous peoples' reporting on natural resource and environment issues in their communities; and (c) conducting research and evidence-based policy advocacy on laws such as the Community Protected Areas Law, the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) regulation, and the Land Law.
5. **Increase the inclusion of persons with disability in policy making processes.** Illustrative examples of initiatives include: (a) Developing campaigns to combat discrimination against persons with disabilities in education, health, and governance sectors; (b) enhancing cooperation to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities in broader policy initiatives; and (c) influencing social media to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in governance.
6. **Strengthening laws and policies that empower women and the LGBTQI+ community.** Illustrative examples of initiatives include: (a) Activities to promote women's and LGBTQI+ leadership; (b) campaigns to combat discrimination against LGBTQI+ individuals in the workplace; (c) policy reform initiatives to increase the influence of women leaders in local councils; and (d) social media initiatives to raise awareness on the challenges faced by indigenous women to access land and potential policy solutions.

Freedoms

7. **Promote and protect constitutional rights and freedoms, especially in the areas of freedoms of association, assembly and expression, and the right to privacy.** Illustrative examples of initiatives include: (a) Campaigns to promote increased freedom of expression online; (b) policy research and dialogues on the impact of specific laws on the right to privacy; (c) creation of online resources to help document and promote the freedom of association; (d) networking and cooperation to identify violations of the freedom of expression and propose remedies for those violations; and e) social media campaigns to raise awareness on fundamental freedoms and engage youth in promoting those freedoms.
8. **Support disadvantaged and vulnerable communities to exercise their constitutional rights and freedoms.** Illustrative examples of initiatives include (a) Campaigns to protect the rights of assembly and expression among indigenous communities; (b) social media campaigns to support LGBTQI+ community members to exercise their fundamental freedoms without fear of discrimination; and (c) public dialogues with youth on freedom of association and assembly.

FHI 360 will provide a maximum of four **grants**, each of which must not exceed USD 50,000, **subject to availability of funding**. Each award activity must have a period of performance between **six to twelve months**. The number of awards and amount of available funding is subject to change and FHI 360 reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this APS.

Section 3: Minimum Eligibility Criteria

To meet minimum eligibility criteria for a grant award, the applicant or its grant application must:

1. Be an **officially registered entity/organization in Cambodia** (NGOs/CBOs need to be registered with the Ministry of Interior and companies need to be registered with the Ministry of Commerce);
2. Operate as independent non-politically affiliated organizations;
3. Have been active for a minimum of the last one (1) year;
4. Have at least three (3) full-time staff members, comprising program management & finance staff and active governing board members; and
5. Follow all instructions provided in Section 4 of the APS.

The following are **not** eligible to receive grant support:

- Individuals and political parties;
- Military, police, or other armed groups;
- Government or semi-governmental institutions or media organizations (semi-governmental institutions and organizations that are 50 percent or more government-financed or -owned); and/or
- Faith-based organizations that exclude beneficiaries from other faiths.

Grant applications will first be checked for basic eligibility. Applications that are not eligible will not be considered by the **Grant Evaluation Committee**.

Section 4: Submission Instructions

The applicant should submit a Concept Paper that describes its innovative approach and a summary of the proposed activity. FHI 360-CSS will not review concept papers that do not meet the instructions listed below and requirements detailed elsewhere in this APS.

1. All concept papers must follow the template in **Annex 1**, must **not exceed 2 pages** (excluding a cover page), and must respond to all requirements of this APS.
2. All concept papers must be submitted in either Microsoft Word or PDF format to GrantsCSSCambodia@fhi360.org.
3. Formatting: All concept papers must be formatted using Times New Roman 12 font type with single spacing and one-inch margins on all sides.
4. All concept papers must be submitted no later than the deadline on the cover page of this APS (or subsequently announced deadlines if additional reviews are announced).
5. All concept papers must be submitted in English.

Section 5: Selection Criteria

All concept papers that meet eligibility criteria will be reviewed on a rolling basis and evaluated by a **Grant Evaluation Committee** against the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
1. Relevance and importance of the target advocacy area	20
2. Feasibility of the proposed approach	20
3. Originality and innovativeness of the proposed approach	20
4. Attention to Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)	20
5. Likelihood for the proposed approach to have a significant impact within the targeted 6–12-month grant window	10
6. Organizational capacity to implement the proposed project	10
TOTAL	100 points

Throughout the evaluation process, CSS shall take steps to ensure that members of the Grant Evaluation Committee do not have any conflicts of interest or the appearance of such with regard to the organizations whose applications are under review. A Grant Evaluation Committee member shall be considered to have the appearance of a conflict of interest if that person, or that person’s spouse, partner, child, close friend, or relative works for or is negotiating to work for or has a financial interest (including being an unpaid member of a Board of Directors) in any organization that submitted an application currently under the committee’s review. Members of the committee shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from parties to the awards.

Section 6: Application Process

- ✓ Concept Paper Stage: Applicants must first submit a Concept Paper responding to the requirements in this APS. The Concept Papers will be reviewed on a rolling basis and assessed based on the evaluation criteria described in Section 5. FHI 360-CSS will invite successful Concept Paper applicants to submit full applications.
- ✓ Full Application Stage: The Applicants that are invited to the next stage will be provided with additional information on the Full Application process, including a Full Application template, budget template, and budget narrative template.

Notification: The applicants that are invited to submit a Full Application will be notified by email. If you would prefer to be notified by telephone, please let us know in your Concept Paper. An invitation to submit a Full Application does not guarantee that an applicant will receive a grant. As part of the grant selection process, FHI 360-CSS team will conduct due diligence in order to assess if the organization has the capacity to manage a FHI 360 grant.

Unsuccessful applicants also will be notified by email.

Section 7: Disclaimers

- 1) FHI 360 may cancel this APS and/or not make awards;
- 2) FHI 360 may reject any or all of the responses to this APS;
- 3) Issuance of an APS does not constitute a commitment by FHI 360 to make awards;
- 4) If an applicant fails to follow APS instructions, FHI 360 reserves the right to disqualify its application;
- 5) FHI 360 will not reimburse applicants for the cost of preparing and submitting an application to an APS;
- 6) FHI 360 may award grants for only part of the activities listed in an APS; and
- 7) FHI 360 reserves the right to check an applicant's donor references if the applicant continues to the Full Application stage of the process.