



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Promoting Robust Assessment of Civil Society Engagement in the Republic of Congo EITI Process

The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) invites proposals to develop a submission, in response to the call for views issued in advance of the Republic of Congo's upcoming EITI validation, which addresses civil society engagement and the enabling environment for civil society participation in the EITI process in the Republic of Congo.

Grant amounts are not fixed, but successful proposals will have a budget not exceeding \$7,500. The deadline for applications has been extended to April 22, 2022.

Background

The Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is the leading global standard for the good governance of oil, gas, and mineral resources. The EITI Standard requires the disclosure of information along the extractive industry value chain: from licensing, to extraction, to management of revenues by government, to the contribution of these revenues to the economy and society. This transparency is meant to support accountability in how a country's natural resources are extracted. Any country with an extractive industry sector is eligible to join the EITI Standard.

The EITI Standard is currently implemented by more than 50 countries, including the Republic of Congo, which has been an EITI member since 2007.

Civil society engagement is essential to the EITI process. Each EITI implementing country has a multi-stakeholder group (MSG) made up of government, civil society, and extractive company representatives. The MSG makes decisions on how the EITI Standard is implemented in the country. More broadly, engagement by civil society representatives outside the MSG is critical to ensuring not only that the EITI Standard is properly implemented to promote transparency in the extractive industry value chain, but that this transparency can be deployed to ensure accountability and good governance of the extractives sector.

The EITI Standard reflects the critical role played by civil society in natural resource governance. Among other requirements, the EITI Standard mandates that

implementing countries must ensure that “civil society [is] fully, actively, and effectively engaged in the EITI process,” and that “there is an enabling environment for civil society participation.”¹

EITI reviews country compliance with these requirements through regular assessments known as “validations,” with consequences for countries which fail to comply. Under a new validation procedure recently adopted by the EITI Board, four weeks prior to each validation, the EITI Secretariat will launch a public call for views on stakeholder engagement in the EITI. All submissions in response to this call are due by the commencement of the validation. These calls for views provide an excellent opportunity for CSOs to highlight concerns about civic space in EITI implementing countries and to promote accountability for restrictions imposed on civil society.

The Republic of Congo’s next EITI validation is scheduled to commence on July 1, 2022. We anticipate that a call for submissions relevant to the validation will be issued by the EITI Secretariat on or about June 1, 2022. This call for submissions is likely to follow the format of calls issued for previous validations, accessible [here](#).

Project Activities

ICNL invites proposals to develop a submission, in response to the EITI call for views issued in advance of the Republic of Congo’s upcoming validation, which addresses civil society engagement and the enabling environment for civil society participation in the EITI process in the Republic of Congo.

ICNL anticipates that successful proposals may involve the following activities:

1. Conduct desk research which will involve (i) reviewing the publication [*Assessing civil society engagement in the EITI process: A guide to providing validation inputs on EITI Requirement 1.3*](#), developed by ICNL in partnership with Publish What You Pay (PWYP); and (ii) other relevant materials relating to the Republic of Congo’s [prior validation in 2019](#), including the review of corrective actions pertaining to civil society engagement in the [final assessment by the EITI International Secretariat](#), and the [Board’s decision](#);
2. Prepare a short (5-7 page) draft background section in French summarizing the civic space environment in the Republic of Congo, which addresses the issues that the [2021 Validation Guide](#) recommends to be considered “for contextual purposes” under EITI Requirement 1.3;

¹ Per EITI guidance, the “EITI process” includes “expressing views related to EITI activities” and “expressing views related to natural resource governance,” not just participating in EITI meetings, reports, and activities. Moreover, “civil society representatives” are “not limited to members of the multistakeholder group,” but encompass any representatives “substantively involved in the EITI process.” This includes representatives more generally engaged in advocacy about EITI or natural resource governance. So, the EITI Standard requires implementing countries to provide an enabling environment for broader civil society participation in natural resource governance.

3. Conduct interviews with civil society groups working on the extractive sector and civic space issues in the Republic of Congo, including local and international CSOs where relevant, to obtain information about:
 - a. inclusion of civil society in EITI meetings, reports, and activities;
 - b. restrictions on civil society engagement in EITI meetings, reports, and activities, and in advocacy regarding natural resource governance;
 - c. concerns about the Republic of Congo's prior validation report and the rating for civil society engagement ("meaningful progress"); and
 - d. critiques of the EITI process or how restrictions on civic freedoms are being deployed against civil society engaged in the EITI process; and
4. Prepare a draft report in French (10-15 pages) addressing the following questions in the context of the Republic of Congo's participation in EITI:
 - a. Are civil society organizations able to engage in public debate related to the EITI process and express opinions about the EITI process without restraint, coercion or reprisal?
 - b. Are civil society representatives able to operate freely in relation to the EITI process?
 - c. Are civil society representatives able to communicate and cooperate with each other regarding the EITI process?
 - d. Are civil society representatives able to be fully, actively and effectively engaged in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the EITI process?
 - e. Are civil society representatives able to speak freely on transparency and natural resource governance issues, and ensure that the EITI contributes to public debate?
5. By June 1, 2022, provide a combined draft submission (15-25 pages) incorporating the draft background section and report prepared under #3 and #5 to ICNL for review and feedback.
6. By July 1, 2022, based on input from ICNL as appropriate, revise the draft submission and submit the combined final submission to the EITI Secretariat.

This list represents one approach to development of a submission, and ICNL encourages applicants to propose alternative approaches to the development of an EITI submission. Regardless of the approach proposed, the final submission must be provided to the EITI Secretariat by July 1, 2022. Proposals should have a budget not exceeding \$7,500.

Application Instructions

To apply for a grant, applicants must submit the following items **in French**:

- Application coversheet (see below);
- Proposal (no more than five pages);
- Line-item budget (no more than USD \$7,500); and
- Resumes/CVs of person(s) responsible for the proposed project.

Applicants are also encouraged, as feasible, to submit a French-language writing sample (no more than 20 pages), preferably addressing a policy or legal topic.

Content of Proposal

In *five pages or less*, please describe your proposal to: (1) develop a submission, in response to the call for views issued in advance of the Republic of Congo's upcoming EITI validation, which addresses civil society engagement and the enabling environment for civil society participation in the EITI process in the Republic of Congo.

Please ensure that your proposal includes the following information:

- A clear description of proposed activities;
- Proposed activity plan and timeline for the project, which must result in provision of a submission to the EITI Secretariat by July 1, 2022;
- Reference materials to be consulted in preparing the submission;
- Stakeholders to be engaged in the development of the submission, including local and international civil society organizations (CSOs) working on the extractive sector and civic space issues in the Republic of Congo.
- Applicant's relevant experience. This should include, as appropriate: (1) any experience working on issues relating to civic space and/or natural resource governance, including the EITI process, in the Republic of Congo; (2) any experience with and connections to civil society groups working on civic space and natural resource governance issues in the Republic of Congo; and (3) any experience developing technical submissions or reports in French.

Please also attach a line-item budget (does not count toward the 5-page limit for the proposal). Successful proposals will have a budget not exceeding \$7,500.

Eligibility Requirements

Open to any not-for-profit organization, civil society representative, academic, or other partner with experience with civil society and natural resource governance in the Republic of Congo. Proposals from community-based organizations and organizations representing marginalized groups are encouraged. Applicants should be based in the Republic of Congo.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following factors:

- Compliance with eligibility requirements and application procedures;
- Detail and reasonableness of project proposal;
- Experience working on, and developing technical reports relating to, civic space and/or natural resource governance in the Republic of Congo;
- Extent of networks with civil society groups working on civic space and natural resource governance issues in the Republic of Congo; and
- Demonstrated ability to develop technical submissions or reports in French.

How to Apply

Interested applicants can apply by completing the application coversheet and submitting it, along with all required documents, by email (see instructions below).

Additional Information

Prior to receiving the final grant disbursement, the grant recipient will be required to document submission of a final report to the EITI Secretariat, by no later than July 1, 2022, which addresses civil society engagement and the enabling environment for civil society participation in the EITI process in the Republic of Congo.

Please contact us via email at africa@icnl.org should you have questions.

Deadline

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until **April 22, 2022**.

Application Coversheet

Please complete the coversheet and submit it, along with your proposal and other application documents, to africa@icnl.org. Please ensure that the subject of your email is "EITI Republic of Congo Validation Submission -- Grant Application 2022."

Full Name:

Position:

Organization:

Mailing Address Line 1:

Mailing Address Line 2:

Mailing Address Line 3:

Country:

Email Address:

Telephone Number:

Fax Number:

Click on the boxes below to indicate that you have properly completed the application.

- I have attached a proposal that is no more than five pages in length.
- I have attached the CVs of person responsible for the project.
- I have attached a line-item budget of no more than \$7,500.

ABOUT ICNL

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW (ICNL)

ICNL works with governments, civil society organizations, and the international community in more than 100 countries to improve the legal environment for civic space around the world. We believe that when people have the space to come together, positive, lasting change can be made. To achieve this vision, individuals must be able to join together, speak out, and take action to make the world a better place. Since 1992, ICNL has worked with our partners at all levels to promote and protect an enabling legal environment for civil society. Our international staff includes experts in all aspects of the laws governing free association, assembly, and expression, spanning from the local to global contexts. We also foster a worldwide network of organizations and individuals with in-depth expertise on a diverse range of issues relevant to civil society. Learn more about our work and browse our research at www.icnl.org.