

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: Southern Africa Online Platform for Civic Space

The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) is pleased to invite proposals to develop and pilot an interactive online platform or application for civic space in Southern Africa. The aim of the platform is to promote greater synergies and coordination amongst civil society organizations (CSOs), media organizations, academics, amongst others, operating in countries in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) for information-sharing, strategic action and dialogue on civic space trends in Southern Africa. One grant will be awarded for an amount of up to **\$15,000 USD**. The project must be completed no later than **December 15, 2022**.

ICNL is an international not-for-profit organization that promotes an enabling legal environment for civil society, freedom of association, assembly and expression, and public participation around the world. ICNL has provided technical, research and capacity-building assistance to support the reform of laws affecting civil society organizations (CSOs) in over 100 countries. Learn more about ICNL's programs in Africa [here](#).

Background

In 2019, prompted by the growing threats to civic space in the East African region, ICNL developed an East Africa Civic Space Online Platform as an interactive forum to foster learning and information sharing on civic space developments and trends in East Africa. The initiative arose after ICNL's partners in the region recommended that ICNL develop a system to facilitate ongoing dialogue among CSOs, media and other groups working on or affected by civic space restrictions in East Africa. The platform has enabled members to increase joint strategic action and advocacy on civic space issues both at national level, and across the region, and to engage influential policy actors, including at the East African Community level. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, with its negative impact on free movement and physical assembly, only served to reinforce the utility of the platform.

Considering that society is becoming ever more digitally connected and reliant, and building on the opportunities, achievements and learning of the East African platform, ICNL now invites CSOs based and operating in the SADC region to submit a proposal with innovative ideas and approaches to developing a similar online platform, with the aim to strengthen collective action to address civic space constraints and improve the enabling environment for civil society in Southern Africa. ICNL will provide technical assistance to the grantee as needed.

Proposal Instructions

To apply for a grant, applicants must submit the following fully completed items via email to africa@icnl.org with the subject “**Southern Africa Online Platform for Civic Space**”

- Proposal Coversheet; and
- Proposal and Budget (**no more than \$15,000**) using the provided template.

Proposal Requirements

Using the template provided, and strictly adhering to the sentence limits included therein, please address:

- The action to be addressed in the project;
- Your organization's experience and expertise relating to the action;
- Impact statement and proposed deliverables;
- Proposed timeline for project activities; and
- Contingencies and/or adaptations, if any, to handle delays, impediments, etc. stemming from COVID-19 safety measures.

Examples of suggested action can include:

- i. Innovative action to consult organizations that might benefit from such an online platform on content, features, design, usability, goals of the platform etc.
- ii. Engaging a developer to design the online platform and system and the security of the system.
- iii. Mapping potential users.
- iv. Developing guides for the use, content, moderation of the platform, and the use of information.
- v. Administering the platform, including membership, content and discussion topic generation, moderation, updates, etc.

These are illustrative examples, and we encourage applicants to suggest their own innovative activities. Proposals should also strive to include and benefit historically excluded or marginalized communities.

Eligibility Requirements

Proposals are welcome from registered non-profit organizations and networks operating in any SADC country. The successful applicant will have a wide reach or membership of CSOs working on civic space issues, i.e., responding to threats or violations of the association, assembly and expression rights of civil society in Southern Africa.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following factors:

- i. Compliance with eligibility requirements and application procedures;
- ii. Experience in the proposed project area;
- iii. Ability to comply with grant requirements and deadlines;
- iv. Quality of proposal, including innovation, feasibility and likely impact;
- v. Timeline for the project;
- vi. Reasonableness and level of budget;
- vii. Reasonable indicators and clearly articulated project deliverables and impact;
- viii. Sustainability of the proposed project beyond the grant period.

Additional information

Interested applicants can apply by completing the **application coversheet and proposal template** and submitting it to africa@icnl.org. Please ensure that the subject of your email is: **“Southern Africa Online Platform for Civic Space”**

Only successful candidates will be contacted. This call for applications does not constitute an obligation or commitment of any kind by ICNL, nor does it commit ICNL to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

All grant recipients will be required to submit progress reports during the grant period and a final report on the use of funds, activities conducted, and outcomes of their projects prior to receiving their final grant disbursements. **All project activities must be completed no later than December 15, 2022.**

Deadline

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis; the final deadline for applications is **March 31, 2021.**