Concept Note

Approach to the Media and GESI Calls
1.0 Introduction
This document provides guidance for the design and implementation of STAR-Ghana’s GESI and Media calls.

It should be read alongside the programme’s key strategies, including the Grants and Non-Grants strategies, the Technical Approaches paper (TAP) for embedding a PEA approach in programme development and implement and the GESI strategy.

2.0 Overall Approach to the Calls
The Programme’s Grants and Non-Grants strategy (attached as annexes 1 and 2) will provide the overall framework within which the Media and GESI calls will be implemented.

3.0 Media Call
a- Two components of the call are proposed:
   i. a strategic partnerships component to develop strategic partnerships with a limited number of national/regional media organisations; and
   ii. an Open component to support local/community media organisations pilot approaches to working with citizens/local communities on locally salient issues;

b- Strategic Partnerships component:
   i. Limited to national level media organisations with capacity to convene national conversations and support actions focusing on issues/areas identified in the PEA and scoping study;
   ii. Call will invite concept notes from interested organisations for consideration by the SC;
   iii. PMT will provide technical assistance to short-listed applicants, over approximately 4 weeks, to develop full project proposals for sign-off by SC. The purpose of the TA is to ensure that shortlisted applicants have the capacity to undertake necessary analysis and develop strategies which help deliver project objectives and overall programme Outcomes.
   iv. Signed-off projects will be implemented over programme duration or up till September 2018 depending on decision regarding independent national entity;
   v. Strategic partners will be supported with grants, technical assistance, relationships brokering, mentoring, etc. # to implement projects. They will also be supported to link into or develop relevant communities of practice for learning and alliance building;
   vi. Criteria for strategic partnerships will be developed by the PMT and approved by the SC as part of the Call development process.

c- Open Component:
   i. The Open component will target and support media organisations located in or operating at district/community levels;
   ii. Projects under this component will be short-duration, maximum of 1 year, and will focus on helping media organisations and citizen groups pilot ways of working to address locally salient issues;
   iii. A one-step call process will be adopted; however applicants whose proposals are approved by the SC will be supported in the course of implementation of their projects to learn and adapt their strategies to developments in their contexts;
   iv. To avoid a scatter-gun approach to this component, resulting in a large number of projects which do not contribute to a bigger picture, the Open call will be framed around a number of key areas identified in the PEA/scoping study.
4.0 GESI Call

The GESI call will aim at: supporting CSOs engage with relevant stakeholders on systemic constraints to GESI in Ghana; and helping to catalyse citizens’ actions to address locally salient GESI issues. The dual purpose will shape the design of the call.

a- Strategic GESI Partnerships Component: This component will focus on the first part of the call purpose, i.e. the development of strategic partnerships addressing systemic barriers to GESI in Ghana. Eligible organisations will mainly be national level CSOs with the capacity and legitimacy to convene and catalyse broad-based CSO actions and engage with strategic level state actors;

i. A 2-stage process will be used for the application process: stage 1 will invite concept notes from eligible organisations while stage 2 will be a co-development (with the PMT) of full proposals for approval by the SC;

ii. Stage 1 will invite concept notes from eligible CSOs around identified GESI issues or areas. The SC, with support from the PMT, will assess submitted concept notes and shortlist a number for Stage 2.

iii. Stage 2, which should take at least 4 weeks, will involve shortlisted organisations and the PMT working together to further analyse the context, understand the issues and actors better and develop proposals which respond to the ‘mini PEA’. These proposals will then be presented to the SC for review and sign off. It is expected that taking off the pressure of competition will help create safe spaces for constructive dialogue on the most sustainable strategies to address the issues and to forge a partnership based on shared objectives.

iv. After sign-off, STAR-Ghana and the strategic partners will continue to work together, guided by the adaptive programming approach, to implement and harvest and share learning from the projects.

v. Not all shortlisted organisations will be approved by the SC for strategic partnerships. The prospective partner will have to demonstrate during the Stage 2 process a willingness to be open-minded and innovative in its thinking, should have a threshold level of capacity and show transparency in its engagements with the programme and other stakeholders, particularly smaller less powerful CSOs with whom it is working.

vi. In addition to the grant contract, STAR-Ghana and the strategic partners will develop and sign partnership agreements which will clearly spell out the common objectives they seek to achieve and how they will work together to achieve these objectives. This is to separate the compliance and ‘policing’ aspect of the relationship from the co-ownership of the project.

b- Small grants Component: The small grants or innovative grants component will provide small grants support, based on competitive bids, to support the piloting of innovative strategies to address GESI issues at the community or district levels.

i. This will be a 1-stage application process. Interested eligible organisations will submit bids in response to the requirements of the Call for PMT assessment and SC approval. However, the SC may request the PMT to support specific organisations whose proposals are innovative but require additional technical assistance to fine-tune.

ii. Despite being an open component, to enable aggregation of results and the use of evidence generated for policy influencing, applicants will be required to focus their proposals on a limited number of issues/areas identified in the PEA and/or GESI Scoping study;

iii. Eligibility will be limited to:
   - Small CSOs located in and/or operating primarily at community and district levels;
   - Community-based organisations working in rural or deprived communities;
   - Faith-based organisations located and working in rural or deprived communities and working with particular excluded social groups;
- Town, village and community associations;
- Farmer-based organisations, fishermen and women associations representing peasant or small-scale food farmers or small-scale fishermen or fish processors;
- Youth associations,
- associations of persons with disabilities.

iv. The PMT will develop a strategy for implementation phase technical support to approved CSOs to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their projects. This will include opportunities for peer learning and communities of practice;

5.0 Timelines
A proposed work-plan for the GESI and Media Calls is attached as Annex 2 to this document.

6.0 Budget