STAR- Ghana – GESI Call (Small Grants Component)  
Guidelines for Applicants

Guidelines for organisations applying for the Small Grants Component of the Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (GESI) Call

Open to Community Based Organisations (CBOs), District Level Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and other Citizen Groups

Theme: Strengthening Citizen Engagements for Sustainable and Inclusive Access to Quality Public Goods and Services

November 2016
1. Introduction

STAR-Ghana is a five-year voice and empowerment programme (2015 – 2020) supported by UK Aid, the European Union and DANIDA. Its goal is to support a vibrant, well-informed and assertive civil society that is able to contribute to transformative national development and inclusive access to high quality, and responsive public goods and services for all Ghanaian citizens. The programme is in its second phase of implementation, the first phase having ended in April 2015. The current phase builds on the results and learning from Phase 1 to further support citizens in addressing challenges for democratic governance, and to contribute to a more inclusive community and national development process in the long term.

The primary objective of STAR-Ghana is to ensure that all Ghanaians can make their voices heard and actively join in policy decisions and accountability processes that affect their lives. STAR-Ghana’s gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) strategy looks to:

- Support an approach which ensures equal chances for women, girls, men and boys, and a ‘level playing field’ for all social groups,
- Enable collective action and movement building in respect to gender equality and social inclusion.


The term inclusion (and exclusion) is used by STAR-Ghana in reference to

- A wide diversity of social groups, such as people with disabilities, children and youth, older people, slum dwellers, migrants and people living with HIV, and other groups determined to be excluded or in need of support. It is recognised that the exclusion of these groups can be different across locations and regions, depending on culture and custom and other factors.
- Other factors of exclusion, such as location (rural areas, and particularly poor and remote areas of Ghana etc.) and type of civil society organisations (CBOs, community associations, small CSOs, etc.).

Please visit the STAR-Ghana website (http://www.star-ghana.org/) for more detailed information on:

- The STAR-Ghana GESI strategy;
- The report on the Scoping Study which informed this call;
- STAR-Ghana’s Grants Strategy
- Other material which may be of interest to applicants.

To achieve the objectives of its GESI strategy, STAR-Ghana is inviting applications, under the Small Grants component of the GESI call, from interested and eligible civil society organisations.

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1 See Annex 1 for definitions
2. Objectives of the call

This component will provide small grants support to CBOs/NGOs with a district or community base to pilot – or test – innovative (promising and new) strategies with the aim to address GESI issues at the community or district level.

The objectives of the Small Grants call include:

- To strengthen citizen interaction with local governance authorities such as District Assemblies and traditional authorities for sustainable and inclusive access to quality public goods and services.
- Promote citizen empowerment through a greater ability of women, girls and other excluded social groups (and organisations) to engage with district assemblies and traditional authorities to support inclusive, sustainable development.
- Promote increased voice and participation of GESI groups in local governance, including District Assemblies and traditional governance systems.
- Promote increased accountability and responsiveness of district assemblies (including their decentralised agencies) and traditional authorities to GESI groups.

3. Eligible Organisations

Organisations eligible to apply under this component include the following categories of CSOs:

- Small CSOs located outside of urban centres and/or operating primarily at community and district levels;
- Community-based organisations working in rural and/or deprived communities;
- Faith-based organisations located and working in rural and/or deprived communities and working with 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;
- Women-focused and led associations
- Youth and children-focused associations,
- Associations of persons with disabilities.

Special consideration will be given to organisations that are led and staffed by socially excluded people.

Please note: Organisations must be registered with the Registrar-General’s department and with the Ghana Revenue Authority.

4. Focus and Duration of Projects under this call

Under this component, small grants will be awarded to eligible organisations on a competitive basis. Selected organisations will pilot new and innovative approaches to address a range of gender equality and social inclusion issues at community and district levels. These typically will be small scale projects carried out to test ‘what works’ through implementing particular ideas, strategies or approaches to promote gender equality and social inclusion. These will enable CSOs and citizens at the grassroots level to try things out, create together and learn more insights about about advancing gender equality and social inclusion in Ghana, and then implementing promising practices in your community and on a larger scale elsewhere.
This call focuses on the piloting of new or changed strategies and approaches to support citizens’ active engagement with local and/or traditional governance institutions and processes. The goal is to support the identified groups in having a greater voice in governance, better access to good quality public goods and services and/or economic opportunities, better social accountability.

The issues indicated below provide examples of key focus areas identified as essential to achieving the objectives of STAR-Ghana to improve gender equality and social inclusion at the sub-national level, but are not limited to the following:

- Greater accountability and responsiveness of district assemblies to the voices, political participation and influence of citizens who have been excluded in governance at traditional and district assembly levels;
- Better access to good quality public services, particularly health and education;
- Better access to economic opportunities and productive resources for better livelihoods, particularly financial capital, livelihood opportunities and land rights;
- Greater respect of human rights, and better protection of women, girls and other excluded groups.

The proposed project must:

a. Have a maximum length of 12 months and;

b. Not exceed a maximum budget of GH¢150,000.00.

Funding support will be considered for proposed projects which employ one or more of the following practices:

- **Citizen mobilisation:** Identifying a goal to work together to support ‘fresh’ ways to ignite citizen interest, response and actions that say “we care” and “we want to see change”.

- **Alliances and allies:** Forging unusual allies and partnerships for greater gender equality and social inclusion. This can include men and women acting together for gender equality, or powerful groups and excluded groups ‘joining forces’ for social inclusion and drawing on the influence and power of business or regional/global movements and interest groups. The important thing here is to identify who else has an interest in addressing the identified issue(s) or may be interested in working with excluded groups towards win-win outcomes or solutions.

- **Digital and other technology:** Using mobile and web technology as well as local ‘cultural technology’ and popular formats such as local drama to present issues, community evidence collection and analysis, storytelling, video formats and community radio for sensitization, education and campaigns.

5. Application guidance

We expect all organisations and proposed projects to:

- Follow an approach that champions the improvement of gender equality and social inclusion (see Annex 1 for working definitions);
- Test solutions and approaches, take risks with not yet proven/new ideas, engage new voices and/or take to larger scale what has proven to work and;
• Capture and share learning about home grown innovations – ideas, strategies, tools and methodologies that test what works or does not work to advance gender equality and/or social inclusion in the Ghanaian context.

**Section 1: Information about your organisation**

Highlight where your organisation has tested new ideas to support gender equality and social inclusion.

In your proposal please outline the following:

• The level and nature of your staff and board members’ commitment to tackling a range of goals regarding gender equality and/or social inclusion, particularly at senior levels (senior staff and board members).
• Staff capacity to pursue gender equality and social inclusion-focused goals and how you expect to build capacity further
• What percentage of your staff members are from socially excluded communities or groups. It would be helpful to have a breakdown of different groups as part of this.
• How your organisation ensures or will ensure it is accountable regarding the social inclusion of the most excluded, and achieving GESI-related goals.
• How your organisation policies and process support GESI-focused goals
• How your Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system captures progress of activities on addressing gender inequality and social exclusion in your organisation and programmes
• Your ideas for building your own organisational capacity as well as the capacity of your partner organisations for GESI-focused work.

**Section 2: Project summary**

Your proposal will need to ensure that you demonstrate how your project is really informed by a gender and social inclusion perspective and analysis of available information. You should also demonstrate how this links to the idea of ‘doing things differently’, and your understanding of the importance of capturing and sharing learning about tackling the problems of inequality and exclusion in Ghana.

Each section below offers guidance for specific questions in the application form – but please note not all questions are covered.

**Question 3.5 Key challenge:** Outline they key problem(s) or challenge(s) that you want to work on which your identified target group(s) or intended beneficiaries are facing. Why are your identified groups left behind in Ghanaian development and why is it difficult for them participate in and influence decision-making structures which decide how local services are developed, funded and managed? Please consider key contextual factors (such as where an individual lives); political factors (such as limited access to a decision-making forum); the physical environment and infrastructure which impacts on access to services; economic factors (such as access to economic and material resources and livelihoods) and social factors (such as how society views and responds to a combination of someone’s social and economic factors which shape their identity). Focus on the factors that you will be addressing in your project rather than covering all problems faced by your target group.

**Question 3.6 Rationale:** Outline why you have focused on the proposed activities and objectives. Why should this particular particular problem/challenge you have identified be addressed (over other issues)?
Question 3.7: What change do you seek to bring about through your project? Why focus on this change?

Question 3.8 Strategies: Please detail how you intend to bring about your identified objectives related to gender inequality and social exclusion. State why you have identified particular strategies.

Possible focus areas for action include (but are not limited to):

1) **Strengthened voice, participation and influence** of socially excluded groups in governance at traditional and district assembly levels, with the view to improving the accountability and responsiveness. This includes actions aimed at ensuring that government commitments^ to women and girls and other excluded groups are implemented fully, such as on access to social protection, economic opportunities and productive resources like financial capital, livelihood opportunities and land rights.

2) **Access and quality of public services, particularly health and education**, also sanitation and housing. This includes actions aimed at ensuring that government commitments to women and girls and other excluded groups are implemented fully.

3) **Access to economic opportunities and resources for improved livelihoods**. This includes actions aimed at ensuring that government commitments to women and girls and other excluded groups are implemented fully, such as on access to social protection, economic opportunities and productive resources like financial capital, livelihood opportunities and land rights.

4) **Claiming rights and increased adherence to the protection of human rights** of women, girls and other excluded groups – with a focus on laws and legislation, as well as socio-cultural norms and discriminatory practices or stigma

**Question 3.10 Activities**: Please outline what exactly your project will do to implement the above strategies. How do each of your activities support your objectives? What is it about them that makes them a promising solution for identified challenges in Ghana?

Please also outline how your proposed project fits with the following STAR Ghana’s identified areas of practice:

- **Citizen mobilisation** – Specifically outline how you will ensure that the voice and meaningful involvement of the most excluded will be supported. Outline how you will work together with other CBOs who address similar issues, and how you will ensure you are building on existing momentum and opportunities at the community and/or regional level.

- **Working with unusual alliances and allies to strengthen the ability of civil society to work together in new/innovative ways** – Outline how you will engage allies and stakeholders to change restrictive social norms which limit people’s access to voice and influence. STAR-Ghana is keen to ensure more powerful groups or your partners do not hinder your efforts, so please also provide detail on how you will make sure this does not happen.

- **Application of digital technology, social media and other new technology** – if your project proposes to develop and use new technologies, specifically outline how you would overcome barriers that socially excluded groups and individuals face when accessing technology and information. You should also consider how accessible and easily understandable the created content will be, and how identified groups can be involved in creating this content.

^ The Ghana National Gender Policy, Social Protection Policy, the Child and Family Welfare Policy, the Disability Act, the Domestic Violence Act, and to some extent the Women’s Manifesto for Ghana (which is not a government policy but is pertinent to this call).
Please note: We expect to see a description on how you have and will ensure that people who are socially excluded have led and will lead the development and implementation of your project. Which groups and organisations will you work with? How will those who are persistently socially excluded – often because they face multiple discriminations – be included in your project? For example, if you focus on young people, how you will ensure that young women from poorer backgrounds are meaningfully involved? Demonstrate how you will undertake meaningful, fair engagement of the identified excluded groups or minorities.

STAR would also like you to outline what new ideas, components or approaches are being tried/tested through your activities?

**Question 3.11 - communities/organisations/government actors:** Organisations are encouraged to build partnerships with different stakeholders/actors, including media organisations, government agencies and other CSOs operating at district or regional levels. The purpose of this is to enable more innovative and joined-up actions. Particular consideration will be given to proposed projects that build convincing partnerships between various stakeholders to strengthen accountability through citizens’ actions.

Please also outline:

- Your project partners and their demonstrated organisational commitment to gender equality and social inclusion;
- How the planned partnership is well-placed to make use of existing influence, expertise and past experience to drive change on gender inequality and social exclusion, potentially in the long term;
- What your partners offer to the proposed workplan – in respect to GESI, ‘doing things differently’ and learning;
- How you will ensure partner commitment to GESI-focused goals, including developing a memorandum of understanding (a signed agreement on the ways of working), incorporating GESI issues in their M&E systems (recording project progress, results and learning);
- How you will ensure that the ideas, approaches and perspective of smaller/less powerful partners genuinely inform project design, development, implementation, monitoring and learning. Also provide detail on how you will ensure that smaller partners are recognised and paid for their efforts and contributions.

**Question 3.12: Beneficiaries:** Please provide detail on who your target groups are – people and groups that are considered socially excluded. Please explain how each group will benefit (specifically, their ability to influence your project as well as broader political decisions that affect their lives).

**Questions 3.13: Link with current and past projects:** If building on a current or past project, provide detail on how you will draw on learning from these experiences. How will you ensure that new ideas, approaches and tools are tested if your project builds on current or past projects?

**Questions 3.14: Risks:** The involvement of socially excluded people and groups in a project can create risks for them, and can affect the project’s success. This creates a need for a review of risks and the development of strategies for managing and reducing these risks. In this section outline what risks you expect to encounter and how you plan to manage these risks.

Project design and implementation should not accidentally strengthen existing inequalities.

**Questions 3.16: Learning:** This section is looking at how you will capture insights and learning about ‘home grown’ innovation on tackling gender inequality and social exclusion in Ghana; and how you plan to document and share these – and whom you will share them with. How will the project’s
communications processes engage socially excluded groups in the delivery of the proposed project? How will it ensure that messages support STAR-Ghana’s goal to improve the voice and influence of socially excluded people and groups?

Section 4 – Results
Ultimately STAR wants to support civil society to support women, girls and other excluded social groups’ empowerment through their greater ability to engage with district assemblies and traditional authorities for inclusive, sustainable development. Please outlined the specific changes you are looking to achieve towards this goal.

Section 5 – M&E
We expect you to demonstrate commitment to collecting data that can be separated by specific factors associated with exclusion and discrimination (such as disability, gender, age, location). You do not need to have a track record on this.

We expect you to capture, document and share lessons about what works and what does not work for tackling a particular gender equality and social inclusion challenge in your chosen context in Ghana. You are invited to use tools and approaches most relevant in your context, and where you have skills and experience. This learning does not have to be a written report format. It can be captured for example in photographs, storytelling or radio programming.

5. How to Apply
- Interested organisations should visit: [http://www.star-ghana.org/](http://www.star-ghana.org/) and download an application form. Alternatively, organisations can request that an application form be sent by email.
- These forms should be completed and submitted by email to the STAR-Ghana address on the application form.
- Deadline for submission of competed application forms will be 5th January, 2017.
- Shortlisted applications will be notified within 4 weekss after close of application period by email.

Interested organisations are invited to information sessions to be held as follows:

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Location</th>
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Information provided during the information sessions will also be circulated to those who have registered interest but are unable to attend.

For enquiries, please email us at the following address: info@star-ghana.org or call (0302) 774488 / 7012404 between 9am-5pm on weekdays.

**Annex 1:**

**Working definitions**

- **Accountability** – The condition of being accountable and responsive for something and to someone. For STAR, it specifically refers to:
  - *Transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs and delivery of public services* by government, traditional authorities and private enterprises to citizens.
  - *Greater citizen representativeness and accountability in the governance structure* of government, traditional authorities/institutions and private enterprises.
  - *Effectiveness of civil society’s voice in influencing national policy and ensuring accountability* through more open political space for dialogue between citizens and the state.

- **Gender equality** - Gender equality is the absence of discrimination on the basis of gender in opportunities, in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in access to services. It is the full and equal exercise by men and women, girls and boys of their human rights. In this situation: women and men, girls and boys have equal rights and equal access to socially and economically valued goods, resources, opportunities and benefits; the different gender roles are valued equally and do not constitute an obstacle to their wellbeing and finally; the fulfilment of their potential as responsible members of society is possible.

- **Social inclusion** - Social inclusion is the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of diverse individual and groups to development opportunities. These barriers may be formal (written laws on spousal property, for instance), or they may be informal (e.g. time village girls spent carrying water instead of attending school). In short social inclusion is about evening the playing field by making the “rules of the game” more fair.

- **Social exclusion** - Social exclusion is a process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged (for example denied resources or recognition) because they are discriminated against on the basis of social characteristics. For example, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status disability, HIV status, migrant status or where they live.

Please note, STAR-Ghana’s GESI strategy places both gender equality and social inclusion at the programme’s core – supporting meaningful engagement of women and other socially excluded groups and individuals. Although they overlap, they are notably different concerns to be addressed in their own right, to avoid that one effort is being implemented in a way that harms the other.

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3 See Star Ghana GESI Strategy for references
4 A reference to the spoken or unspoken rules about how things are done