



STAR- Ghana

GESI Call – Strategic Component

Guidelines for Applicants

Open to eligible civil society organisations

***THEME: Strategic Partnerships and Actions to support
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion***

November 2016

Summary

- STAR-Ghana invites applications for **strategic partnerships to advance gender equality and social inclusion in Ghana**. Funded projects will run for up to three years, and are expected to:
 - Strengthen linkages between activities to influence policy at national level and those of smaller organisations at a regional or local level;
 - Develop, test and apply approaches for movement-building and collective action;
 - Address systemic barriers which limits individuals' and groups ability to realise their rights;
- **Organisations eligible to apply** include registered Ghanaian civil society organisations (CSOs) operating at regional or national levels, and who are actively engaged in policy influencing processes. These include academic and research institutions, professional associations; research and advocacy NGOs; think tanks; private sector associations; and civil society networks, coalitions, alliances and platforms.
- Applicants' proposals should demonstrate **organisational capacity to mobilise or form broad alliances of stakeholders** for long-term engagement and collective action around critical GESI issues. They should also highlight **expertise in influencing policy**.
- Due to this call for proposals' **focus on addressing systematic constraints**, applicants should be explicit on plans to do so when laying out the rationale, strategies and expected results of the proposed project.
- The call for proposals under this strategic component envisions a process of **co-creation with the STAR-Ghana Programme Management Team**: the applicant organisation will then work closely with the team to further develop their proposed strategic partnerships. Partnership and project ideas will be refined in view of STAR-Ghana's identified priority areas around accountability and gender equality and social inclusion dimensions.

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 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 accountability¹ 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. It also seeks to enable collective action and movement building in respect to gender equality and social inclusion. The strategy is aligned with the objectives of

¹ See Annex 1 for definitions

Goal 4 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Achieve Gender Equality, Social Inclusion and Human Rights for all and the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

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, the aged, 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 customs 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 organisation (CBOs, community associations, small CSOs, etc).

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

- STAR-Ghana's 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 **Strategic Grants** component of the GESI call, from interested and eligible civil society organisations (CBOs, community associations, small CSOs, etc.). It should be noted that this call is specifically designed to fund such organisations.

2. Objectives of the call

This component will provide grant support to a number of strategic partnerships to co-develop and implement strategies and projects aimed at helping address systemic barriers to gender equality and social inclusion in Ghana. The objectives of the strategic component to advance gender equality and social inclusion in Ghana include:

- Strengthen the links between advocacy activities at the national level (influencing policy) and the generation of evidence and accountability mechanisms at community level;
- Address and overcome systemic barriers which limit the ability of women and other excluded groups to claim and realise the rights awarded to them by the constitution, national policies and relevant international conventions;
- Develop, test and apply effective strategies and innovations for movement-building and collective action.

3. Eligible Organisations

Organisations eligible to apply under this component include registered CSOs operating at regional or national levels, who are actively engaged in policy influencing processes. Specifically, these include:

- Academic and research institutions;
- Professional associations;
- Research and advocacy NGOs;

- Think tanks;
- Private sector associations;
- Civil society networks, coalitions, alliances and platforms.

Eligible organisations must demonstrate capacity to mobilize citizens and citizen groups and draw on or form alliances of relevant stakeholders for long-term engagement and collective action around critical GESI issues. Priority will be given to organisations which have gender equality and/or social inclusion as central objectives in their mission and vision; and those who demonstrate expertise to strategically engage with GESI issues at the national level, identifying and making use of entry points and opportunities.

4. Focus and Duration of projects under this call

Under this component, STAR-Ghana will work with a limited number of organisations, selected on a competitive basis, to co-develop and implement initiatives which help to address systemic barriers to gender equality and/or social inclusion in Ghana. Indicative areas around which these strategic partnerships could be developed include (but are not limited to):

- 1) Stronger voice, political participation and influence of citizens who have been excluded in governance at all levels (community, district, regional and national levels); and greater accountability and responsiveness of district assemblies and traditional authorities to the stronger voice, political participation and influence of citizens who have been excluded in governance at traditional and district assembly levels;
- 2) Improved and more inclusive, sustainable access to good quality, responsive public goods and services, particularly on health and education;
- 3) Addressing systemic barriers to access to economic opportunities and productive resources for better livelihoods, such as financial capital and land rights for excluded groups;
- 4) Removing systemic barriers to excluded groups' ability to claim and enjoy rights conferred on them by the Constitution and relevant national policies, and international conventions and frameworks.

Under this component, there are three entry points for civil society coalitions, movements and networks to influence and support the planning, implementation, monitoring and the evaluation of government programmes on gender equality, social inclusion and social protection at the national, regional and district levels:

- Supporting CSO engagement and collaboration with, and influence of, national and local government - for example the MDAs, MMDAs and sub-structures on turning government policies into sustained impact in service development, delivery and resource allocation.
- Engaging citizenry and CSOs in participatory monitoring of government policies and programmes, using social accountability mechanisms (both formal and informal, locally relevant mechanisms)
- Supporting CSO sensitization, collaboration and awareness creation of citizenry in all 10 regions about their rights and entitlement and the desired objectives, outcomes and impacts of a targeted policy or programme. Any sensitisation must be

conducted hand in hand with the development, testing and application of effective strategies and innovations for movement-building and collective action.

A two-stage process will be used for this call.

- Stage 1 invites applications from eligible organisations (See Section 3). STAR-Ghana looks to encourage a wide range of applications. STAR-Ghana's Steering Committee will assess all submitted concept notes and shortlist applicants.
- Selected organisations will receive an invitation to Stage 2, where they can develop their ideas in more detail and with greater consideration of STAR-Ghana frameworks. It should be noted that once a concept note is selected for Stage 2, organisations are certain to be approved for grants and support – pending due diligence processes.
- Stage 2 invites the selected organisations to work with the STAR-Ghana Programme Management Team to develop full project proposals. In particular, attention will be paid to developing more detailed analyses of the contexts, mapping of relevant actors and existing initiatives etc. Additionally, discussions between applicants and the STAR-Ghana team will further:
 - Frame the role of strategic partners as intermediary organisations addressing practical grassroots issues also at the national level;
 - Revisit strategies on movement building and collective action around gender equality and social inclusion, based on best practice in Ghana and elsewhere;
 - Identify priority areas for learning about Ghanaian approaches: what works and what does not work in the context of Ghana.

These full proposals will then be presented to the STAR-Ghana Steering Committee for an additional review and sign off. Projects funded under this component will be for a maximum duration of 3 years, with a budget not exceeding **GHS 800,000**.

5. Application guidance

Each section below offers guidance for specific sections and questions in the application form. Please note that not all questions are covered individually.

Section 1: Information about your organisation

STAR-Ghana is looking to support organisations which strive to provide inclusive environments for women and other socially excluded groups and individuals.

Question 1.9 – GESI mainstreaming: 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, including 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 if you would specify which groups are represented in your organisation, and to what extent.
- How your organisation ensures or it will ensure it is accountable regarding the social inclusion of the most excluded, and achieving GESI-related goals. is ensured within your organisation.

- How your organisation's policies and process support GESI-focused goals
- How your Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system captures progress of activities and policies on achieving gender equality and social inclusion goals within your organisation (such as increasing numbers of staff from socially excluded groups).
- Your ideas for building your own organisational capacity as well as the capacity of your partner organisations for GESI-focused work.
- Your existing and envisioned relationship with partners, specifically how you work collaboratively with other NGOs and CSOs.

Section 2: Programmatic Competencies

In this section, the STAR-Ghana Steering Committee expects to see evidence and examples of your experience in supporting and leading on programmes that have a focus on gender equality and social inclusion.

Question 2.1: Here, you are expected to demonstrate your capacity to promote gender equality and social inclusion within programmes – this can include specific activities, policies etc.

Question 2.4: Here, you are expected to demonstrate your capacity to mobilize citizens and citizen groups, and to draw on or form alliances of relevant stakeholders for long-term engagement and collective action around critical GESI issues.

Section 3: Concept Note

This details your proposed project idea that you are requesting support from STAR-Ghana for. You will need to demonstrate how this project is fundamentally informed by a gender and social inclusion perspective and analysis of available evidence. We expect all proposed projects to follow an approach that champions the improvement of gender equality and social inclusion (see Annex 1 for working definitions).

Question 3.3 Geographical coverage: We expect your project to link remote and socially excluded areas with national level efforts. Please also specify why you have chosen a specific district or region.

Question 3.4: Target group: 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).

Question 3.6: Objectives: What do you aim to achieve? What changes do you seek in the lives of people who are socially excluded and the organisations and institutions they seek to influence? How do your objectives fit with STAR Ghana's objectives?

Question 3.7 Rationale: Please explain here why you have chosen these objectives?

Question 3.8 Systematic challenges and constraints: Spell out the specific challenge(s) or problem(s) related to gender inequality and social exclusion in Ghana that the proposed project seeks to tackle. Why are your identified target groups left behind in Ghanaian development; and why is it difficult for them to 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 3.10 Project strategies: What are the strategies you have identified which will address the challenge you have outlined? How will you ensure that STAR-Ghana's support will contribute to increasing gender equality and reducing social inclusion?

Some examples may 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 commitments² 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

Please detail *how* you intend to work towards addressing your identified strategies. Briefly describe what your activities are that makes them a promising approach to address your identified challenge in Ghana?

Please include concrete actions on how you will work towards the sustainability of your efforts and if relevant how/why your efforts constitute innovative practice. STAR-Ghana is particularly keen to support action in the following areas:

- Engaging and collaborating with the national and local government to improve the inclusion of marginalised groups (socially excluded) and individuals;
- Participatory monitoring of government action to improve gender equality and social protection and ensure effective implementation;
- Sensitization, collaboration and awareness creation by civil society organizations among different marginalised (socially excluded) communities on the desired objectives, and operations of the gender equality and social protection programme.

Explain how you will make sure that people who are socially excluded have been and will continue to be meaningfully involved in the development and implementation of your. Also, outline how those who are persistently excluded even within your target groups will

² 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).

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.

Question 3.12 Partners: Applicants are particularly encouraged to explore opportunities for formal and informal alliances, networks or coalitions for the implementation of their proposed actions. Such opportunities may include (i) building innovative partnerships between civil society, media stakeholders and/or the private sector; (ii) linking actors across levels of governance (community, district, regional and national); (iii) enabling collaborations between actors working on complementary issues and/or promoting movement building on critical GESI issues.

Please also outline:

- Your project partners and their demonstrated organisational commitment to gender equality and social inclusion and learning.
- How you will ensure partner commitment to GESI-focused goals in your programme (including in your selection process of partners and in your ongoing relationship with them), including the commitment to learn about processes and practices on GESI.
- How will you 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 recompensed for their efforts and contributions.
- How the planned partnership is well-placed to make use of existing influence and expertise to drive positive change on gender inequality and social exclusion in the longer term;

Question 3.9 Results and Impacts: Please outline how the envisioned results and impacts link to the overall aims of STAR-Ghana and the GESI call for proposals.

Question 3.11 Links to other stakeholders and initiatives: Where applicable, provide detail on how your intervention will link with or complement other stakeholders' work, including through the sharing of learning.

Question 3.16 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 to involve them fully in the development of your project, as well as in a review of risks and developing mitigation strategies. In this section, outline what risks you expect to encounter and how you plan to manage and mitigate these risks. Project design and implementation should not accidentally strengthen existing inequalities.

Question 4.3 Learning and communications: This section is looking at how you will capture and share insights and learning on tackling gender inequality and social exclusion in Ghana. How will the project's communication processes engage socially excluded groups in the delivery of the proposed action? How will it ensure that messages support STAR-Ghana's goal to improve the voice and influence of socially excluded people and groups?

Where relevant, include information regarding how you will work with the media to amplify the findings from your work and messages. Also outline how you will ensure lesson learning on GESI will be responded to where necessary within your project.

Section 4: M&E

Outline how your M&E indicators will capture progress on achieving GESI objectives, including (but not limited to) how you will collect disaggregated data that captures multiple

discriminations (such as gender, disability, age, location etc.), and how it will inform your own programmatic learning.

In your proposal, please outline how you will process, capture and share learning about what works and does not work to tackle problems of gender inequality and social exclusion in the Ghanaian context. You are invited to use the tools and approaches most relevant in your context, and where you have expertise and demonstrated success with effective communication and uptake. Thus, learning does not have to be a written report format. It can be captured for example in photographs, storytelling or radio programming.

6. How to Apply

- Interested organisations should visit <http://www.star-ghana.org/> and complete the online application form.
- This form should be completed and uploaded by 5th January, 2017 at 17:00 GMT, after which the portal will be closed.
- Shortlisted organisations will be informed by 24th January, 2017. They will then be invited to meet with the STAR-Ghana Programme Management Team to discuss Stage 2 of the process.

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

No.	Location	Venue	Date	Time
1.	Accra	Du Bois Centre	12 th Dec 2016	10:00am
2.	Kumasi	Noda Hotel - Fumesua	13 th Dec 2016	10:00am
3.	Cape Coast	Cape Coast Hotel	13 th Dec 2016	10:00am
4.	Sunyani	Tyco City Hotel	14 th Dec 2016	10:00am
5.	Takoradi	Akroma Plaza Hotel	14 th Dec 2016	10:00am
6.	Koforidua	Capital View Hotel	15 th Dec 2016	10:00am
7.	Ho	St. Steven's Hotel	20 th Dec 2016	10:00am
8.	Tamale	Gillbtt Training Centre	14 th Dec 2016	9:00am
9.	Bolgatanga	Extee Crystal Hotel	16 th Dec 2016	10:00am
10.	Wa	Nuoyong Empire Hotel	21 st Dec 2016	10:00am

Information provided during the information sessions will also be circulated to those who have registered interest but are unable to attend.

Please visit our [website](#) for more information on STAR-Ghana, its grant processes and for the full report of the Scoping Study which informed this call.

For enquiries, please contact info@star-ghana.org or call (0302) 774488/7012404 between 9am- 5pm on weekdays.

Annex 1:

Working definitions³.

- **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'⁴ 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.

³ See STAR-Ghana GESI Strategy for references.

⁴ A reference to the spoken or unspoken rules about 'how things are done'.