

Green Accountability Call for Proposals FAQ

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What are the GPSA's objectives and scope?

On June 12, 2012, the World Bank's Board of Directors approved the Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA). The mission of the GPSA is to expand opportunities, through grants and knowledge sharing, for civil society and governments to work together to solve pressing governance and development challenges such as fighting poverty and climate change.

To achieve its goals, the GPSA provides programmatic, flexible grants to support coalitions led by civil society organizations (CSO) for collaborative social accountability. This process, supported by World Bank teams, engages civil society groups, public sector institutions and citizens in joint, iterative processes that embrace experimentation and support adaptive approaches. The GPSA is governed by a Steering Committee with a balanced representation from CSO, government and donor agencies.

It has over 300 global partners from civil society, foundations, research and academic institutions, and governments. In addition to grants for collaborative social accountability, the GPSA provides a global space for advancing knowledge and learning on social accountability by (1) leveraging the knowledge and learning generated through the GPSA-supported grants, and (2) deepening and expanding networks of social accountability practitioners from CSOs, governments and donor agencies, providing social accountability thought leadership and maintaining a strong knowledge and learning infrastructure that includes systematic convening (including an Annual Global Partners Forum) and online platforms.

The GPSA Green Accountability Call for Proposals

Green accountability creates systemic ways for people to have a voice and role in the climate decisions that most impact their lives. It places citizens and civil society at the heart of climate finance to direct funding, implement solutions, and hold decision-makers accountable for effective and equitable climate action. This GPSA Call for Proposals (CfP) aims to support and develop green accountability among social accountability practitioners and sustainable development CSOs. CSO sub-grants will contribute to ensuring that marginalized communities and local communities have a seat at the climate policy table and improve outcomes and reduce the risks of corruption and capture. You can find out more in the [Additional Information](#) document.

A. Eligibility and Application Requirements

Q: Which entities meet the definition of civil society organizations (CSOs)?

CSOs include legal entities that are part of a broad-based sector of organizations which operate in the public sphere and interact with the state, market, communities and individuals. The sector encompasses a wide range and variety of non-governmental, not for profit entities -including media – associating to advance the interests and values of their members or others based on cultural, economic, social, or other aims. They include charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional organizations, labor unions, workers’ organizations, associations of elected local representatives, foundations and policy development and research institutes, and more. If your organization is a non-profit international inter-governmental organization, it is not eligible to apply for a grant. Please find more details in the **GPSA Operational Manual**.

The GPSA will not support:

- Entities or groups with partisan associations
- Grant applications which include activities which, because of the high inherent risk of political interference, are likely to raise issues related to the World Bank’s mandate as enshrined in its Articles of Agreement. These activities include political dimensions in governance, for instance, support of efforts to help organize political parties, or to the organization, running and monitoring of elections; political campaigning; and
- Grant applications which include sectarian and religious proselytizing activities.

Q: What are the eligibility requirements for applicant CSOs?

Note that for this call it is not a requirement that the main applicant CSO is legally registered in a GPSA opted-in country. Through the Green Accountability CfP, the GPSA aims to select one organization or consortium that will:

- support knowledge and learning on green accountability at the global level, and
- manage grants to local civil society organizations working in the agreed upon targeted countries¹, including country system grants of up to US\$ 250,000, and a few small grants of up to US\$ 25,000.

The selected CSO will:

- Hold legal status as a civil society organization.
- Have at least 3 to 5 years of proven experience in social accountability and/or climate action.
- Provide information about its past and current experience in applying social accountability in environmental and climate work.
- Comply with the following requirements related to management autonomy:
 - ✓ Prepare a logical, achievable implementation strategy, including a sound budget
 - ✓ Confirm that the organization manages its budget with autonomy (financial autonomy). The use of GPSA funds is restricted to the activities included in the proposal budget, should the proposal be selected.

¹ Please keep in mind the list of [GPSA opted-in countries](#) for selecting targeted countries.

- ✓ The organization has a local bank account in the country where it holds legal status and is able/authorized to receive grant funding directly from the World Bank, should the proposal be selected.
- ✓ The main applicant has a representative that is authorized to sign a grant agreement on its behalf with the World Bank, should the grant be selected.

Q: Is formal endorsement of the application by the government required?

No. The government is not required to formally endorse the application, pilot country activities will happen in countries that have already opted-in to the GPSA. The government is given an opportunity to provide comments that may help to strengthen the proposal during the 10-day comment period, after the application has been pre-selected by the GPSA Steering Committee.

Applicant CSOs are also encouraged to reach out to government agencies and to demonstrate that their proposals are linked to ongoing or new opportunities wherein the government has expressed concrete interest in establishing collaborative mechanisms with civil society that involve the use of social accountability.

Q: Can more than one organization pair up in a joint proposal?

Yes, the GPSA encourages partnerships and consortiums amongst CSOs based on the idea that social accountability processes and sector-based knowledge require various types of civil society expertise and capacities in order to be effective. This is especially true for this Call for Proposals that merges issues of social accountability with climate action. Please note that applications can only be submitted by one organization (the lead applicant CSO). You will be asked to describe the partnership scheme in the application form. There is no limit to participating partners in a certain project.

Only the lead applicant (CSO submitting the application form) may be the recipient of GPSA grant funding and thus fiduciary responsible for such funds.

The GPSA allows grant partners CSOs to share grant funds with partner or mentee CSOs. Depending on the type and scope of partners' involvement in project implementation, lead CSOs may enter into a partnership agreement with partner CSOs, or they may agree on a contract for specific activities.

If your organization is a nascent organization with limited experience on social accountability and has an idea or project that is aligned with the priority areas defined in the green accountability Community of Practice, we suggest that you contact GPSA partners in your country and globally in order to seek assistance in looking for a Mentor-partner CSO that could be a good match with your organization, and that would complement in some way what your organization would like to implement.

Q: Can we apply on behalf of a network of CSOs? How does the GPSA consider partnerships and networks of CSOs for the grant application?

CSOs may propose a partnership arrangement with other CSOs for the purposes of preparing and submitting a grant application to the GPSA (please see question above regarding partnerships and who can submit the application.) In this case, partners must be identified in the proposal, and their roles and responsibilities must be spelled out as part of the proposal's (i) implementation arrangements, (ii) project team, and (iii) budget sharing scheme. For instance, partner CSOs may be responsible for implementing one or more components, or for specific roles, such as project management or training, among others. In these cases, depending on the scope of partners' responsibilities, the main applicant may sign a partnership agreement with the partner CSO(s) or may sign a contract (for consultant or training services). In both cases, the main applicant CSO is fiduciary responsible for the funds transferred to the partner. The GPSA-WB might determine the need to review partner CSOs' fiduciary capacity, as well as the partnership agreement.

In the case of existing CSO networks, a network might be able to receive funds from the main applicant if (i) it has a formal role and responsibility over some of the proposal's activities, and (ii) it can receive payment against specific deliverables, in which case it will need to have legal status and the scope of implementation responsibilities might require the preparation of a partnership agreement. In some cases, CSO networks can also be included as informal partners, without being expected to receive funds, even if they are expected to take part in some of the activities to be implemented.

Q: Is there a geographic criterion for the location of the lead CSO implementing the Project?

The main applicant CSO does not need to be legally registered in a GPSA opted-in country. However, CSOs receiving sub-grants from the main CSO to conduct in-country activities, need to be legally registered in an opted-in country. The countries selected to be pilot countries will be determined by the World Bank and the main CSO, and need to be GPSA opted-in countries.

B. GPSA Grant Funding Amounts and Application Budget

Q: Does the funding represent the total envelope for a country or what one CSO can get?

The funding range refers to available funding for a CSO's grant proposals, but the funding can be on-granted to CSOs in selected opted-in countries.

Q: Can we subcontract work? Should we readily indicate this in the proposal?

Yes. Allowable expense categories include international and national-based consultants (individuals or firms).

Q: Will we be expected to report to government what we are doing and account to them on financial expenditures?

Recipients of GPSA funding are responsible for grant's technical and financial reporting to the World Bank only.

Q: Can a CSO hire government officials or pay public institutions for service provision?

No. GPSA grants follow World Bank fiduciary guidelines; procurement guidelines do not allow grant funds benefiting civil society organizations to be used for the purposes of hiring public officials or public institutions.

C. Covered Themes, Sector and Areas in Grant Proposals

Q: Can we cover other themes, areas or sectors not included in this call?

No, grant applications can only address the themes, areas and sectors determined in the Call for Proposals (CfP).

Q: Do we need to have previous experience in the theme, area or sector indicated in the call for proposals?

Having previous experience in the theme, area, or sector indicated in the CfP can strengthen your proposal. However, in some cases, CSOs with experience in social accountability processes lack experience in a certain theme or sector. In previous calls for proposals, many CSOs have partnered with others in order to complement their expertise and capacities. In the past, there were several projects where CSOs with extensive social accountability experience have partnered with those with extensive sector experience. The main CSO will need to have experience with and systems in place for on-granting.

Q: Can proposals focus on implementing activities at the sub-national level only?

CSOs from GPSA shortlisted participating countries may propose to implement social accountability initiatives or programs at the national or sub-national level. Irrespective of the scope, activities must be aligned with the priorities defined in this CfP. In general, the themes prioritized also include references to linking and coordinating social accountability efforts with public sector institutions at the national level. Thus, even if implementation of social accountability activities takes place at the sub-national level, the proposal must connect them to broader processes, particularly to reform efforts led by central-level ministries or other public sector institutions beyond limited geographic areas.

The GPSA supports efforts by CSOs to scale-up and expand social accountability processes beyond “pilot” or micro-areas. If the proposal targets a specific sub-national area, you must explain why this area is targeted, and how will project activities link to national-level policies and to efforts to establish sustainable social accountability mechanisms at a large scale.

Q: What are the technical criteria used for selecting the grant applications?

Proposals are assessed based on the following criteria:

Focus on specific green accountability challenges

Ability to focus on concrete green accountability challenges in the form of well-defined public policy problem or issues, using supporting data evidencing it and showing the relevance of the proposed target problem to the areas prioritized in the call for proposals.

Experience in managing and disbursing grants to other organizations.

Proven track record of and expedient systems in place for managing global and/or regional on-granting projects which include managing due diligence assessments, setting clear objectives, a theory of change, and monitoring and evaluation components. Ability to clearly and reasonably lay out the project management for the green accountability on-granting in the application within the stated timeframe of the project will also be rated.

Approach to state-civil society collaborative engagement

Ability to reflect GPSA's problem-solving, solution-driven approach by providing well-articulated and convincing answers to three key questions:

- Which public sector institutions can solve the problem and what are they already doing to solve it?
- Why will they be interested in establishing a collaborative framework with CSOs to produce meaningful feedback and support citizens' active participation in setting public policy, improving service delivery, and making public decision-making more inclusive?
- What type of problems will this collaborative framework help them to solve in public institutions and across climate-development nexus?

Justification of social accountability approach

Ability to provide a sound rationale for the need to establish new or strengthen existing social accountability mechanisms and processes:

1. Why the proposed approach will work better than past or existing initiatives -or add value to an existing initiative- to promote citizens' active participation, including vulnerable groups, through social accountability.
2. Key aspects that will help the approach to become sustainable after the project's closing, as well as the aspects considered to expand or scale up the approach (through both state-led and civil society-led actions and mechanisms).
3. Roles of public sector institutions, CSOs and citizen groups throughout project implementation, and how the roles will evolve as the social accountability process becomes sustainable or is scaled up.
4. How the proposed approach will complement and add value to public service delivery and institutional/management processes. In which ways will social accountability mechanisms help to make a difference in the targeted sector?
5. How the approach will combine multiple, inter-connected actions and tactics, including at the sub-national and national levels, to promote state's responsiveness and accountability.

Collective action through partnerships and coalition-building

The proposal acknowledges the need to engage different stakeholders within and outside government to address the stated challenges. It includes formal or informal partnership arrangements with a clear allocation of functions according to each actor's expertise, outreach capacities and influence.

The proposal includes partnership arrangements with other CSOs based on complementary expertise and outreach capacities. It puts forth a reasonable and fair scheme to share grant funds with partner CSOs, according to implementation roles and responsibilities.

Appropriate Budget

Clarity and reasonableness of the proposal's budget as reflected in (i) the balance between the proposal's duration and the requested budget, (ii) a realistic allocation of budget resources amongst the applicant CSO and any partner CSOs with clear and specific roles, including less-experienced CSOs that are included as "Mentee CSOs".

Q: How does the GPSA define Social Accountability?

Social accountability is a form of citizen engagement defined in World Bank reports as the "extent and capability of citizens to hold the state accountable and make it responsive to their needs" (World Bank 2012, 30-31, cited in Grandvoininnet et.al, 2015) Grandvoininnet et.al. (2015) conceptualize social accountability as the interplay of five constitutive elements: citizen action and state action, as well as information, interface, and civic mobilization.

In practice, social accountability takes place as a process within dynamic socio-political contexts, and entails the use of public spaces and fora, mechanisms and "tools", including formal (i.e., mandated by laws and regulations) and informal (set up or organized by CSOs and citizen groups themselves) for engaging people and communities in meaningful and inclusive participation and deliberation aimed at public problem-solving, and, ultimately, at increasing public transparency and accountability as well as improving public governance and accelerating development. There can be, however, other outcomes and results expected of social accountability processes, such as empowering citizens to claim their rights and demand accountability or reducing corruption, among others.

The **GPSA's approach to social accountability** emphasizes several key elements:

- **Solution-driven approach** → In order to address specific governance and service delivery problems that affect peoples' well-being, the starting point is the identification of problems whereby meaningful citizen participation and feedback is needed to better understand their causes and to develop appropriate solutions.
- **Context-specific** → Issues and problems are set within an understanding of the context of actors, institutions and processes already involved in them, including those that have an interest or are affected by the issue, those that oppose or propose certain solutions.
- **Collaborative engagement** → Both the informed, inclusive participatory process and the actual feedback that is generated through social accountability must be

shared and discussed with relevant public sector institutions and actors, primarily those with the decision-making power to translate the feedback obtained into actual changes aimed at improving governance and development processes. CSOs can establish terms of collaboration with public sector institutions for information-sharing, capacity-building and joint action aimed at problem-solving. Terms must be clear and periodically revised in order to protect and preserve civil society's independence.

- **Multi-stakeholder coalitions and partnerships** → The complexity of governance and service delivery problems calls for the concerted action of actors that have direct and indirect interests in supporting their resolution. It also requires the combination of diverse types of expertise, outreach capacities, and influence to work simultaneously on the range of dimensions involved.

The approach thus assumes that, in order to be effective, social accountability processes must engage both citizens and public sector institutions, especially those with decision-making power to address the issues raised by citizens and CSOs. It is a double-way process, and as such, it cannot rely only on assumptions based on citizen action only. Therefore, the proposed process must be as explicit regarding the actions on the part of public sector institutions (and of other relevant stakeholders such as the private sector, the media, etc.) that will be required for it to be considered a plausible and realistic approach.

For civil society organizations and groups, the choice of social accountability mechanisms and tools is grounded on several considerations, such as a cost-benefit analysis of alternatives and sustainability prospects, an analysis of the political-institutional context, an assessment of needs and problems regarding the service delivery chain or the management process, among others, as well as of “entry points” for introducing the process, particularly when there aren't any existing formal mechanisms or spaces such as those established by law. An assessment of existing capacities and incentives of the actors to be engaged, including service users, CSOs, service providers and public sector institutions is another critical consideration when determining social accountability strategies.

Q: Would collaboration with policymakers (i.e. government) be an important consideration in the selection process?

Yes. For the GPSA it is critical that the information generated through social accountability mechanisms be used by public institutions as a basis for improving specific public services, programs and management processes. You will see that there are very concrete questions about this in the [Application form](#).

The idea of “collaborative social accountability” has evolved over time based on the GPSA's experience supporting CSOs through grants. The GPSA supports social accountability processes and mechanisms that respect and preserve civil society's independence and autonomy, while at the same time strengthen collaborative civil society-state engagement. Public sector institutions

can go beyond the Government or Executive branch. They may include Parliaments, Supreme Audit Institutions, Regulatory Agencies, Ombudsman, etc.
For more information, please check GPSA grant projects [here](#).

D. Grants Selection Criteria

What does the selection process look like?

The GPSA Secretariat coordinates the grant applications' review process. Please note that the grant is only awarded once the grant is approved by the World Bank after the CSO has passed internal World Bank due diligence. The review process consists of the following steps:

1. Eligibility check. Applications received are checked for compliance with the following basic eligibility requirements, namely:>(a) Alignment of proposal's objective with the priority areas defined in the call for proposals, (b) Main applicant CSO has legal status as a non-profit or civil society organization (see also CSOs Eligibility Requirements); and (c) Main applicant CSO has provided verifiable information of its experience on climate and/or social accountability in the past 3-5 years and has provided three references that can attest to the organization's institutional record and implementation capacity.
2. Technical quality review. Applications are reviewed by a Roster of Experts (RoE) to assess their technical quality following the selection criteria specified in the previous section. The role of the experts is to provide advice on the technical quality and soundness of proposals; for this, individual reviewers will use an evaluation matrix, including a standardized point scale, which will assist the Secretariat in ranking the proposal(s) and to inform the final selection of proposal(s) to be recommended before the GPSA Steering Committee.
3. Steering Committee pre-selection. The Steering Committee considers the proposal(s) recommended by the Secretariat and approves it. The GPSA Secretariat publishes the pre-selected proposal(s) online.
4. Commenting and due diligence. Pre-selected proposal(s) are sent to the governments of targeted countries for a 10-day comments period, after which they are published online for a 5-day period for public comments. In parallel, proposals undergo a full due diligence assessment.
5. Project package. The GPSA Secretariat considers any comments received, including the results of the due diligence assessments, and addresses these with potential grant partners. The Secretariat prepares a "project package" for each approved grant proposal following internal World Bank project processing requirements.
6. Signing of Grant Agreements. World Bank Global Director and grant winners sign Legal Grant Agreements.
7. Publication of grant winners. The GPSA Secretariat posts the list of grants' winners along with approved proposals on the GPSA website.