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Annex II-B

Capacity Development Program for Local and grassroots Civil Society Organizations

(CDP-Lg CSOs)

Guideline for Project Idea/ Proposal Application Template:

March 2026

NOTICE

This guideline serves as the primary reference for preparing and submitting project ideas or project proposal applications for sub-grants to informal CSOs and CBOs.

Application Process

1. The CDP-Lg CSOs Programme invites informal CSOs and CBOs to participate in the call for project ideas or project proposal applications.
2. **Eligibility (Check):** During the submission of project idea or project proposal applications, applicants will be checked for eligibility.
3. **Full proposal Development:** The full proposal will be further developed through a co-creation approach, following the selection of project idea or project proposal applications.

To apply for this grant, applicants must:

1. **Thorough Review:** Review this document thoroughly to understand the requirements and application process.
2. **Project idea or project proposal Form Completion:** Complete the Annex III-B Project Idea/ Proposal Application Template.
3. **Declaration Completion:** Fill out and sign the declaration included in the application form to confirm their understanding and commitment to terms of the grant.

Additional Notes

- Please ensure that all application materials are submitted within the specified deadlines.
- Inaccurate or incomplete applications may result in disqualification from the grant consideration process.
- The sub-grant size is Max. EUR 10,000.00 (Ten thousand EUR only)
- For any inquiries or clarifications, please contact the designated program representatives.

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1. Background information

In last decades, restrictive government regulations hindered CSOs in Ethiopia from actively promoting human rights, democracy, and good governance. Consequently, despite being among the fastest-growing global economies[1], Ethiopia lags behind in most freedom, democracy, and political and civil rights indicators[2].

Political reforms initiated in 2018 marked a new era for Ethiopia's civil society (CS), particularly with the introduction of the Ethiopia Civil Societies Proclamation (1113/2019). After years of regulatory constraints, this proclamation enabled CSOs to engage in rights-based advocacy and democratic processes.

A recent study3 revealed a decline in CSO registration numbers, from 3,077 in 2014 to nearly half that number by 2019. However, as of 2024, over 5,500 CSOs were registered by FDRE ACSO. The majority (84%) are emerging CSOs (type and scope), with a growing number focused on governance and democracy.

While the Civil Society Proclamation No. 1113/2019 has opened up important new space for civil society in Ethiopia, significant gaps in the financial and operational capacities of CSOs limit their ability to engage meaningfully in policy processes. Moreover, although efforts have been made to foster a more supportive environment for registered organizations, the extent of direct support remains limited, and the implications for informal groups and community-based organizations are still unclear continuing to present considerable challenges.

WHH/GAA, in partnership with the Consortium of Self-Help Group Approach Promoters (CoSAP) and the Development Expertise Center (DEC), has secured funding from the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia (EUD) through the Civil Society Fund Plus (CSF Plus) Program. While the CSP Plus-CDP-Lg CSO program primarily supports formal, registered civil society organizations (CSOs), **it also pilot's initiatives to support informal CSOs and community-based organizations (CBOs), aiming to secure legal status to strengthen their role in addressing community-level needs and interventions.**

The overall objective of the program is to contribute to the strengthening of local civil society organizations (CSOs), including informal and CBOs in Ethiopia and thus contributing to them becoming active actors of local level governance and development initiatives. This program is designed to strengthen Ethiopia's civil society through. i) providing technical and financial support and ii) improving of the enabling

[1] World Bank. https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/overview

[2] These include the Global Ranking for Governance, Global Gender Gap Index, political Accountability, World Justice Project Rule of Law Index, and the Political Rights and Civil Liberties index, according to Mapping Study of Civil Society Organisations in Ethiopia funded by the EU-CSF III, the Civil Society Support Programme (CSSP2) and the Authority for Civil Society Organisations (ACSO).

[3] A Mapping of Civil Society Organisations in Ethiopia. 2021.

environment for civil society. In doing so the project will take advantage of the current momentum of the political and legislative reform building on the progress of the EU Civil Society Fund (CSF Plus) Program.

2. Subgrating approach and process

This call for project ideas or project proposal aims to select 12 informal and community-based organizations (CBOs) that will receive capacity building and financial support (Max. EUR 10,000.00) in the program period. The eligibility and selection criteria for potential sub-grantees is defined under section 7 of this guideline. A pre-defined, custom-made tool will be employed to assess the application and select 12 informal CSOs and CBOs. Additionally, the program will utilize pre-set quotas based on region. Consequently, micro grants will be distributed among the 12 informal CSOs and CBOs in Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Oromia and Amhara national regional states.

3. Program Objectives

The global objective of the program is to contribute to the strengthening of grassroots and local civil society organizations in Ethiopia and thus enabling them to become active actors of governance and development through financial support to third parties (FSTP) with a total volume of EUR 3.75 million.

The expected results of the programme are:

- Outcome 1/SO1: Increased technical and financial capacities of local and grassroot CSOs, as well as their associations and networks to engage in national, regional, and local development and policy processes, and

Specifically, this call will contribute to

- Improve the capacity and effectiveness of informal CSOs and grassroots CBOs, enabling greater community engagement and civic participation, and fostering stronger community-driven responses to social, economic, and conflict-related challenges through locally rooted initiatives, thereby supporting their transition into formal CSOs and securing legal registration.

4. Thematic Priorities of the Call

The CDP-Lg CSOs program has defined a set of activity headings for the project idea or project proposal. Each eligible informal civil society organization (CSO) or community-based organizations (CBOs) may submit a single application, tailored to their specific objectives in addressing community needs.

The maximum subgrant per application shall not exceed EUR 10,000, with an implementation period of no less than 6 months and no more than 9 months. Eligible interventions must be implemented within the Afar, Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, or Oromia Regions.

Following the submission of the project idea or project proposal, applicants meeting quality and eligibility criteria will undergo a rigorous selection process. Subsequently, selected applicants will be supported in development of a comprehensive proposal addressing one or more of the following thematic areas.

Informal CSOs and CBOs are invited to apply for micro-grants supporting community-driven initiatives in the areas of:

Gender equality and women's empowerment	**Community Awareness on Rights and Social Justice**	**Social Cohesion, Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention**
Projects that strengthen women's roles and rights in the community. *Examples of activities, but not limited to:* ➢ Community awareness on gender stereotypes and equality ➢ Women's leadership training and mentoring ➢ Support for women's participation in local decision-making ➢ Promotion of girls' education and protection	Projects that improve knowledge of labour rights, democratic rights, and social inclusion. *Examples of activities but not limited to* ➢ Awareness sessions on labour rights and wage gaps ➢ Awareness sessions on Child Right ➢ Campaigns against child labour ➢ Community education on civic and democratic rights ➢ Information events on access to justice	Projects that promote peaceful coexistence and reduce tensions, especially in fragile or displacement-affected areas. Examples of activities but not limited to: ➢ Dialogue between IDPs and host communities ➢ Conflict mediation and peace dialogues ➢ Joint community events fostering trust ➢ Local peace committees and early warning actions
Community-Based Protection and Support Mechanisms	**Inclusive Community Governance and Citizen Participation**	**Economic Empowerment and Livelihood Innovation**
Projects that strengthen local systems to protect vulnerable groups. *Examples of activities but not limited to:* ➢ Community protection models for women, children, IDPs, women headed households ➢ Strengthening traditional mutual support systems, such support and revitalizing Idirs, etc. with modern record keeping. ➢ Establishing safe spaces and referral pathways ➢ Support networks for marginalized households	Projects that amplify marginalized voices in community decisions and governance. *Examples of activities but not limited to:* ➢ Training community representatives and local leaders ➢ Supporting citizen engagement in local planning processes ➢ Advocacy forums for women, youth, minorities ➢ Community accountability and consultation meetings	Projects that support sustainable livelihoods, especially for women and youth. *Examples of activities, but not limited to:* ➢ Entrepreneurship and business skills training ➢ Job skills training and vocational initiatives ➢ Employability Skills Training ➢ Technical and vocational skills, entrepreneurship and small business skills, communication and teamwork, digital and ICT skills, as well as job readiness skills including CV writing, interview preparation, and work ethics.
Joint Natural Resource Management and Conflict Prevention		
Projects that encourage shared management of natural resources in conflict-prone areas. *Examples of activities but not limited to:* ➢ Community agreements on grazing land or water use ➢ Joint resource management committees ➢ Environmental rehabilitation and shared resource planning ➢ Conflict-sensitive natural resource governance with Do-No-Harm approaches.		

5. Crosscutting priorities

This call for project idea or project proposal will prioritize projects that effectively integrate cross-cutting issues such as human rights promotion, gender equality, women digital rights, democratic principles, good governance practices, children's rights, Do-No Harm and environmental sustainability. Please note that this aspect will be given significant weight during project evaluation.

6. Project and call promotion sessions

WHH and its co-applicants will conduct virtual project and call promotion sessions for the program target regions via online digital platforms to inform interested applicants about the action's objectives and the

call for project idea or project proposal. These sessions will cover the objectives, programmme strategies, eligibility criteria, priorities, requirements, and other relevant details. The sessions will be held in both English and Amharic languages and will last for three hours (3hrs). Potential applicants are welcome to attend any of the sessions via Microsoft Teams, 13 April 2026, 2:30 to 5:30 PM (local time)

7. Criteria and Rules for this Call for project proposal/ Idea.

7.1. Eligible Organizations' selection criteria for this call

Selection Criteria for Informal & Grassroots CBOs (IG-CBOs)

i. Community Roots and Legitimacy
- Demonstrated origin within the target community (e.g., community development groups, self-help groups, youth clubs and functional youth structures, women's rights organizations and associations, women's rights watch groups, community action groups, communities of practice, Iddirs, consortiums of Iddirs, peace committees, older people's associations, volunteer groups, social institutions, or similar movements).
- Recognized by local authorities or community structures (kebele/woreda letters, endorsements, minutes, testimonies).
- Clear evidence of trust, acceptance, and active participation by community members.

ii. Target Group Focus
- Proven focus on **marginalized or vulnerable populations** (e.g. women, youth, people with disabilities, food-insecure households and others).
- Activities directly contribute to **economic and/or social well-being as well as democratic rights** of the target groups. Organizational capacity building initiatives should be included.
- Community needs are clearly articulated and locally defined.

iii. Operational Presence and Coverage
- Actively operating at **townships, village, woreda or Kebele level**.
- Regular engagement with the community (meetings, actions, services, mobilization).
- Evidence of ongoing or recent activities (within the last 12–24 months).

iv. Organizational Nature and Size
- Informal or semi-informal structure (not legally registered as an NGO/CSO).
- Very small operational setup:
  - Less than four personnel (working staff or volunteers)
  - Operates mainly through volunteers.
- Simple leadership or coordination mechanism (committee, focal persons, elders, youth leaders, etc.).

v. Relevance and Alignment of Activities
- Activities are relevant to the intended program objectives and thematic areas provided under Section 4 of this document (e.g. livelihoods, social cohesion, rights, peace building, gender equality etc.).
- Should be Community-driven initiatives.
- Demonstrated ability to mobilize people and local resources.

vi. Basic Functionality and Reliability
- Minimum ability to plan and implement small-scale activities.
- Informal but consistent ways of decision-making and accountability within the group.
- Willingness to improve basic documentation, reporting, or coordination if supported.

vii. Integrity and Accountability
- No evidence of harmful practices, discrimination, or misuse of community resources.
- Transparent handling of community contributions or funds (even if informal).
- Open to oversight and collaboration with partners.

viii. Learning and Partnership Readiness
- Willingness to engage with external partners (NGOs, local government, donors).
- Openness to capacity strengthening (governance, safeguarding, basic financial practices).
- Demonstrated motivation to grow impact while remaining community anchored.

- Volunteer mobilization capacity
- Alignment with program priorities.

7.2. Rules of the call

The following rules will apply to all applicants at all stages of the grant management process:

- Eligible informal CSOs and CBOs which meet all the criteria indicated in section 12.1. can apply.
- Only successful applicants will be invited to the development of full proposal to secure the grant through co-creation activities.
- Each organization is expected to submit applications for interventions in only one geographic region/regional state. Applications from a single informal CSO for multiple regions or multiple thematic area will be considered ineligible.
- Any application received after the deadline, or incomplete submission of required documents will result in rejection of the application.
- All application should be prepared and submit in English language.
- Applicants will not be reimbursed for the costs that were incurred in the preparation and submission of the project idea or project proposal. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.
- An application may be rejected at the project idea or project proposal write-up stage due to the following reasons:
    - Failure to meet the call's expected quality standards or requirements
    - A major finding during the due diligence assessment
    - Unforeseen circumstances that impact the program's viability
- The CDP-Lg CSOs program reserves the right to engage in discussions and negotiations with any applicant regarding the content, structure, or budget of their proposed project at any stage. The program also retains the right to fund any or none of the grant applications received.
- The objectives and contents outlined in the project idea or project proposal cannot be altered during the cocreation of the full proposal development stage.
- Any error or significant discrepancy related to the application guidelines may lead to the application's rejection.
- Handwritten applications will be accepted. Project idea or project proposal encouraged to be typed and submitted in English Language.
- Any instance of plagiarism in the preparation of the project idea or project proposal will result in the application's rejection
- The budget must be presented in Ethiopian Birr (ETB) and accompanied by an equivalent amount in Euro (EUR) for ease of comparison.

7.3. Eligible and Ineligible costs:

7.3.1. Eligible costs

Only eligible costs will be reimbursed. Eligible costs are actual costs incurred by the applicant which meet all the following criteria:

- they will incur during the implementation period of the action.

- They are indicated in the estimated overall budget for the action.
- They are necessary for the implementation of the action.

The reimbursement of eligible costs will be based exclusively on the actual costs incurred by the small grant recipient, and upon presentation of documents (invoices, receipts and other official vouchers) justifying the expenses incurred.

7.3.2. Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest).
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities.
- costs declared by the applicant and financed by another action or work program.
- bonuses included in costs of staff.
- negative interest charged by banks or other financial institutions.
- credit to third parties.
- salary costs of the personnel of non-nationals.
- purchase of land, vehicle and major capital assets will not be supported.
- Penalties
- Overhead costs

8. Application procedure and deadline

Applications must be submitted in strict adherence to the project idea or project proposal instructions outlined in the application template annexed to these guidelines (Annex III-B). Applicants must strictly follow the specified format and complete the paragraphs and pages in the prescribed order. Please fill out the project idea or project proposal carefully and with utmost clarity to facilitate a thorough assessment.

Within the project idea or project proposal, applicants must provide an estimated grant amount and an indicative percentage of the operational and program cost components of the action. A detailed budget will be required only from selected applicants during the cocreation stage of the application process.

The project idea or project proposals must be submitted via email to application-FSTP-ETH1229@welthungerhilfe.de

or hand delivery submit to WHH or co-applicants' office located at the address indicting in the table below before the call deadline.

Name of Organizations	Local Address	Region
Consortium of Self-Help Group Approach Promoters (CoSAP), Oromia Liaison Offices	*Jimma, Aniley Timret, kebele 05, Behind Teka Hotel, Tell number 0917025518-Contact Person-Meselech Mamo*	Oromia National Regional State
	Adama Timret Lelewut, Aba Geda sub city, Buta woreda, inside Adama City finance and Economic development office, Contact Person Tigist Ejigu, Phone number 0921074772.	
	Addis Abeba, Lideta sub city, Woreda 10, Behind National Tobacco enterprise, P.O. Box 26720, Code	

	1000, Tel:+251115525251/ +251969632828/ +251930014725	
Development Expertise Center (DEC)	*Afar regional office, Semera city, Hayu Keli Kebele 02, Near to Awash Bank, Tell. +251 913 768 403*	Afar National Regional State
	Development Expertise Center (DEC) Benishangul Region, Assosa Area Office, Assosa Town, Woreda 1 around Yetebaberut Gas station, Regional Health Bureau or Tena Sefer, Tel. 0917050505	Benishangul Region
Welthungerhilfe (WHH)	*Bole Sub city, Woreda 03, House No. 2084, P. O. Box 1866 Tel. 00251-11-6624 765 Fax. 00251-11 6624 731*, Around Japan Embassy off Ramada Hote, Addis Ababa Ethiopia	Addis Abeba

Hand delivery of the project idea or project proposal is also acceptable if applicants face challenges accessing electronic services. In such cases, applicants must submit a sealed and stamped two copies of the application with an application cover letter and all required documents. Upon submission, applicants must ensure that their application is registered and obtain a signed and dated certificate or letter acknowledging receipt.

The application form must be accompanied by the following supporting documents:

1. Proof of the association's existence (letter of existence/ recommendation letter) at local (city administration/Woreda, Kebele) level
2. Association's written bylaw (any form)
3. Completed project idea or project proposal Form (Annex III-B)

Deadline: The deadline for project ideas or project proposal submission is 22 April 2026, time: 18:00 (6:00 pm local time). Applicants are strongly advised to submit their project idea or project proposal well in advance to avoid potential complications arising from heavy internet traffic or internet connectivity issues, including electricity failures.

Please note that the deadline is strictly enforced. project idea or project proposal received after the deadline will not be considered.

Complaints. For any complaints, applicants may send an appeal through the WHH Compliant Email Ethiopia.complaints@welthungerhilfe.de Or call over +251 993 730 424. In addition, you can send your complaints in Telegaram and WhatsApp by using the phone number +251 993 730 424. Moreover, there are Compliant Boxes at regional application centers for hand delivery compliant submissions.

9. Assessment of applications

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the program assessment team. All applications will be assessed by the internal process defined in FSTP manual. If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the CSO eligibility stated in Section 12.1, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

10. Administrative Checks

During the administrative check the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.

- Proof of the association's existence (letter of existence/ recommendation letter) at local (city administration/Woreda, Kebele) level
- If the project idea or project proposal satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in Annex III-B, Instructions of the grant application form. This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that sole basis, and the application will not be evaluated further.

11. Application Evaluation

The application that passes the administrative checks will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action. The project idea or project proposal will receive an overall score, out of 100 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check the compliance with the instructions on how to complete the project idea or project proposal.

Section	Maximum Score
Administrative eligibility check - Legally registered (letter/ certificate of registration, recommendation letter)	P/F[4]
1. Relevance of the action	**35**
1.1. How relevant is the proposal to the priorities of the priorities of this micro-grant call?	10
1.2. How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the target locality/ community?	10
1.3. Who are the beneficiaries (sex, status, age, etc. disaggregated direct and indirect beneficiaries) of your project? Have their needs (as rights holders and/or duty bearers) and constraints been clearly defined?	15
2. Design of the action	**65**
2.1. Do the proposed actions respond to the analysis of the problems involved? What are the overall and specific objectives of the proposed project?	20
2.2. Are the activities feasible and consistent in relation to the time frame and the budget proposed?	20
2.3. Do the proposed actions consider key stakeholders and external factors (risks and assumptions)?	10
2.4. Budget analysis	15
Maximum total score	100

Once all project ideas or project proposals have been assessed, a list will be drawn up with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score. Only 12 applications with a score of at least 50 will be considered for further proposal cocreation stage.

Applicants will receive a letter indicating the reference number of their application and the respective results. Applicants who had to submit their application by post, private courier service or hand-delivery will receive the letter by email or by post if no e-mail address was provided. The selected applicants will subsequently be invited for the development of full grant proposal in cocreation approach.

[4] P-Pass and F- Fail

12. Additional information-

12.1. Operational definition for eligible CSOs

Eligible CSO	Eligible Criteria
Informal and Grassroots community-based organizations (IG-CBOs):	**Informal and Grassroots Community-Based Organizations (IG-CBOs)[5]:** • Are grassroots people's organizations originating within the community, such as: ➢ Community development groups ➢ Self-help groups ➢ Youth clubs and functional youth structures ➢ Women's rights organizations and associations ➢ Women's rights watch groups ➢ Community action groups ➢ Communities of practice ➢ Iddirs and consortiums of Iddirs ➢ Peace committees ➢ Older people's associations ➢ Volunteer groups ➢ Social institutions or similar movements • Work for the advancement of the economic and social well-being, as well as the rights, of marginalized communities. • Typically have fewer than 4 personnel (staff or volunteers). • Operate at township, city, woreda, or kebele, and village levels. • Organized to directly address immediate concerns of community members, with activities spanning economic, social, and rights issues. • Not formally registered, lacking defined organizational structures, financial management practices, and standard systems of governance[6]. • Recognized by local legal bodies with some evidence of proof. • Should demonstrate willingness to transition into formal CSOs through a structured improvement and graduation process, culminating in official registration with the appropriate government body.

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[5] Adapted from WHH 's CivSoc_Self Assessment tool

[6] The contractual conditions with IG-CBOs will be decided later in the contract signing stage.