

Frequently Asked Questions on CIVICUS Solidarity Fund (CSF)

1. What is CIVICUS?

CIVICUS is a global alliance of civil society organisations and activists dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world. We were established in 1993 and since 2002 have been proudly headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa, with additional hubs across the globe. We are a membership alliance with more than 10,000 members in more than 175 countries.

2. What is the CSF?

The CSF is a member-led and member-resourced fund that aims to promote civil society diversity and resilience and seeks to provide meaningful resources and support to members in need through flexible grants.

3. Why the CSF?

Belonging to a global movement for change that stands in solidarity is a central tenet of membership in the CIVICUS alliance. In this spirit, CIVICUS membership fees are allocated to the CIVICUS Solidarity Fund (CSF) to resource our voting and associate members.

4. Who can access the fund?

The fund is accessible to [CIVICUS members](#) that normally struggle to access resources and support due to restrictions in the space where they operate, their organising characteristics (unregistered, recently established organisations, etc) or simply who they are and what they challenge: small CSOs (formal and non-formal), individual activists, movements - particularly from historically oppressed and marginalised groups - and early-stage social advocates and social entrepreneurs that are contributing to transformational impact in the communities served.

5. How to become a member?

There are two types of CIVICUS membership: voting and associate

Voting Members: Voting membership is for individuals and organisations who want to commit to collectively **set the agenda and priorities for the CIVICUS alliance**. Members input into CIVICUS' Strategic Priorities, nominate and elect the Board of Directors, and play a leadership role in key activities by convening events, steering campaigns and co-designing programme initiatives. Voting members contribute their fee towards the Membership Solidarity Fund, which enhances alliance solidarity and civil society diversity and resilience. Contribution for individuals and organisations with an annual income of \$80k or less is optional. Voting members will be verified as legitimate and credible civil society actors who align with CIVICUS' values and principles.

Associate Members: Associate membership is for those who are committed to citizen action and civil society. They are legitimate and credible civil society actors who align with CIVICUS' values and principles. Associate members organise, support, speak up, champion or advocate for citizen participation and civil society on local, national, regional and/or global levels. Member engagement opportunities are regularly shared with associate members. Associate membership is free.

You can become a member [here](#).

6. What is the Membership Advisory Group (MAG)?

The [MAG](#) are representatives of CIVICUS members nominated and selected by our members to oversee the CSF. They are a dynamic team of leaders who form the decision-making body for the CIVICUS Solidarity Fund. The MAG has the special task of reviewing CSF applications, selecting the grantees and making important decisions about funding and applicant support. In addition, the MAG mentors successful grantees as they develop and execute their projects. This exemplary team is composed of CIVICUS members from around the globe.

FAQs about the Application Process

7. Who is eligible to apply?

Applications are open to all types of CIVICUS members - organisations and individuals with voting or associate membership status - which meet the following criteria.

- You must be a CIVICUS voting member or associate member. *To become a CIVICUS member, [follow this link](#). To verify your membership status please send an email to membership@civicus.org.*
- You are both a national and a resident of an eligible country* **and** your work has a direct impact in strengthening civil society or citizen action in one or more of these countries.
- You belong to the same group or community whose issues you are trying to address. For organisations, this implies that you are constituency-led. For example, an organisation working to increase youth participation in civil society is constituent-led if its leaders and members are young people.
- You find it hard to access funds because of government bans, bureaucracy/donor requirements and are seriously risking having to stop your activities for lacking resources.
- You haven't been awarded the CIVICUS Solidarity Fund before.
- The activities associated with the grant can be completed within 12 months.
- Funding requests of between 1.000 USD and 10.000 USD.
- For individual applicants: You must belong to a movement/collective which will ultimately and clearly benefit from the grant assigned to the individual and the

activities they will plan with these resources.

*For this round, eligible countries are those rated “repressed” or “closed” in the CIVICUS Monitor:

Closed: Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Burundi, CAR, China, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Laos, Libya, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Syria, Turkmenistan, UAE, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Yemen.

Repressed: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Honduras, India, Kuwait, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mexico, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of the Congo, Russia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.

Why the CIVICUS Monitor’ country ratings? The CIVICUS Monitor launched its [2020 Report](#) where it listed a set of [recommendations](#) addressed to the donor community, more specifically to “*provide long-term, unrestricted and core support for civil society in countries where civil society is facing increasing restrictions from states*”. For this round of applications, we are hoping to reach countries with a highly restricted environment where the CIVICUS Solidarity Fund can contribute in building resilience of groups most commonly involved in civic space incidents from contexts of restricted spaces.

*As identified by the [CIVICUS Monitor](#)

2. What we fund:

- Your application and/or proposed initiative strengthens your community and/or the work that you do, making the world a better place for everyone. If you are requesting core funding, the mission of your organisation or yourself should be aligned with the above.
- Costs of legal action, media coverage, travel/participation support to mission-aligned events and enhancing safety/wellness of activists and their communities are admissible.
- The CSF will also accept proposals for core or unrestricted funding. This includes funding to sustain the daily activities of your individual advocacy work or your organisation’s work. This can include salary for personnel, office rent, etc.
- You are trying to address a specific problem or need for a particular community. You are aiming to accomplish innovative ideas also geared at assisting or enhancing the needs of a targeted community.

3. What are Who we do NOT fund:

- Applying for core funding as a way to build reserves for your organisation. We understand that during disruptive moments like what we are currently experiencing, the need to start building “reserves” to prepare for the future are a priority for many groups, organisations and activists, however we unfortunately cannot fund this during this round of applications.
- Non-constituent-led: groups or organizations whose governance and team composition does not reflect the same target population(s) it seeks to serve or represent.
- Individuals that don't identify with/belong to at least one of the eligible communities/groups for this call.
- Commercial (for-profit) enterprises or activities.
- Organisations or individuals that are not from the eligible countries.
- Funding to implement activities related to basic service provision*.

* Basic services include education, health, nutrition, housing and sanitation, among others. The provision of basic services is considered a core function of governments, but civil society individuals, groups and organisations also play a key role in supporting this function.

4. What is the selection criteria used for the CSF?

There are 8 main criteria for assessment. The information provided below aims to help applicants understand what the Membership Advisory Group (MAG) will be looking for when making their decisions. Each criterion is evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5.

- Clearly bring about lasting changes or a positive impact in your organisation/group/community.
- Clearly explains the problems, challenges, and what you are going to do about them.
- Clearly benefits the applicant's broader community.
- The proposal is designed from and by the impacted community.
- Faces difficulty being funded from other sources.
- Takes an innovative approach or is a bold action.
- Includes specific and clear activities on a reasonable timeline. For requests of core funding, MAG will assess if the costs you are requesting are clear and on a reasonable timeline.
- Demonstrates that the organisation or individual has the commitment to carry out the proposal.

Note: The MAG will give preference for applications from individuals and groups identified by the CIVICUS Monitor as those most commonly involved in incidents in which their rights are violated: women, labour rights, youth, LGBTQI+ and environmental rights.

5. What countries are eligible to apply?

For this round, eligible countries are those rated “repressed” or “closed” in the CIVICUS Monitor:

Closed: Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Burundi, CAR, China, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Laos, Libya, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Syria, Turkmenistan, UAE, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Yemen.

Repressed: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Honduras, India, Kuwait, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mexico, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of the Congo, Russia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.

6. In which languages can I apply?

English, Spanish and French.

7. How many applications will be selected?

For this round, we are expecting to select approximately 5 applications.

Technical Queries

8. How to apply?

Apply online via the official application link at our [webpage](#).

9. What If I am not able to complete an application online?

You can also apply by email. You can download the application form in the official application link and send it to solidarityfund@civicus.org indicating “Application for CSF” in the email subject.

10. When is the deadline for application?

The application deadline is 7 June 2021.

11. Who do I contact for queries or further information?

For further information please contact the CSF team at solidarityfund@civicus.org.

12. What is the duration of the grant?

Our grants last up to 12 months.

13. Can I submit more than one application?

No. Only one application is allowed.

14. When would I know if I am accepted for the CSF?

Awarded proposals will be communicated via email no later than August 2021 only to successful applicants.

15. Will I receive feedback if my proposal was unsuccessful?

We will invite all unsuccessful applicants to a live feedback session.