



Call for expressions of interest: Convening partners to conduct locally initiated multi-stakeholder dialogues in the framework of the *New Social Contract* project

Application deadline: 15 October 2013

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At CIVICUS, we believe that a prosperous, healthy society depends on the vibrancy of its “civic space” and the ability of all actors, within this society, to engage in collective actions to address shared challenges and aspirations, such as peace and security, an educated and healthy citizenry, economic prosperity, a flourishing natural environment, justice and equity. A strong civic space also requires good governance and functioning decision-making mechanisms.

However, we live in a time of great contradictions: there are deepening economic inequalities *and* unprecedented wealth; an environmental crisis *and* increasing understanding of the reasons and range of effective responses; a growing political inertia *and* an explosion in grassroots activism. Empowered citizens play an important role in creating healthy societies, and yet there are many examples of increasingly restrictive legal environments that limit citizen action. All this suggests that we can do much better at addressing opportunities and issues through improved dialogue, exchange and co-construction amongst all actors.

In order to properly address those complex challenges and demands, societies need to adopt new systemic approaches fostering innovative, cross-sector, decision-making and action strategies. To further this belief and explore new pathways for participation, CIVICUS has recently launched the action-based research project, *New Social Contract*.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT AND LOCAL DIALOGUES

The *New Social Contract* project seeks to:

- stimulate the co-creation of new frameworks to reshape roles and responsibilities of public, private and civic sectors in a more aware and intentional way;
- share new patterns of civic engagement addressing common challenges that could ultimately pave the way to new social contracts.

Through local, multi-level and virtual activities and consultations, *New Social Contract* will gather **compelling examples of collaborations, commitments and action strategies** taking place between diverse stakeholders around the world, including government, business, the scientific community and the civic sector, across a broad range of issues. As part of the envisaged activities, between November 2013 and June 2014, CIVICUS will support and oversee the conduction of up to **8 locally initiated multi-stakeholder dialogues** to be organised by local partners selected through this Call for Expressions of Interest.

The **local dialogues aim at putting into practice the vision and methodology of *New Social Contract* project**, while at the same time offering an opportunity for local partners to engage with other actors on existing common challenges. The local dialogues will not only be an integral part of the *New Social Contract* project but will also offer an empirical and innovative way of assessing and comparing local patterns of civic engagement taking place around the world. The lessons learned through these processes will inform a practical guide on multi-stakeholder engagement that will be shared with a wider audience of civil society actors.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

CIVICUS is looking for potential partners to organise and oversee the conduction of locally-initiated multi-stakeholders' dialogues, following the methodological approach proposed by the *New Social Contract* project. More specifically, we are looking for:

- A **relevant challenge** (social, economic, environmental) existing in a given community, that – if properly tackled by a group of diverse stakeholders joining hands and bringing their added value to the table - could lead to a systemic change;
- A **convening partner** (or a small group of co-convenors) that is directly affected by this challenge, is able to articulate the potential impact of an inclusive dialogue and identify and engage relevant stakeholders.

WHAT KIND OF PARTNERS AND IDEAS?

We're looking for civil society actors (NGOs, CBOs, CSOs, umbrella organisations and other relevant entities) across the world to get involved in this project. All ideas are welcome but we are particularly interested in:

- gender issues,
- youth concerns,
- environmental challenges,
- concerns of marginalized communities, persons with disabilities and indigenous groups,
- inter-faith dialogue,
- community-driven projects,
- community development projects, and
- innovative local governance.

Whatever the idea chosen, it should address an existing common challenge in your community and shall seek to bring together stakeholders that typically do not work together.

WHAT ARE PARTNERS EXPECTED TO DO?

Within the timeframe of this project and under the supervision of CIVICUS, the selected partners will have to:

- Follow all the steps required by the project methodology;
- Engage in local consultations and one-to-one session to properly map and involve relevant stakeholders;
- Organise at least one multi-stakeholder face-to-face gathering, paving the way for a more permanent deliberative platform;
- Conduct interviews of stakeholders throughout and at the completion of the project, to reflect on their experience and to draw lessons learnt;
- Document the process through multimedia products;
- Produce a report on the dialogue and related activities.

It is also expected that the convening partner contributes time, creative resources and, if possible, additional matching funds. Considering that generally multi-stakeholder dialogues entail a long-term process, they should be conceived in a sustainable way so that they can continue even beyond the duration of the *New Social Contract* project and funding. Potential applicants are also encouraged to use their existing networks to cross-check if similar actions could be of interest to other parties and consider pooling of financial and/or technical resources in view of increasing the impact and effectiveness of the action.

WHAT IS OUR APPROACH TO THESE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUES?

A multi-stakeholder dialogue aims to bring together relevant actors who have a 'stake' in a given issue or decision, in order to address a common challenge (social, economic, environmental, or others) that couldn't be properly tackled without the involvement of other actors. A multi-stakeholder process assumes that all the involved stakeholders are somehow affected by the challenge and have relevant experience, knowledge and information that will positively contribute to the decision-making process as well as any actions that (may) result. For the purpose of this action-based research project, the envisaged dialogues should aim at:

- Addressing a common challenge involving diverse stakeholders which has not yet been addressed through a similar method;
- Focusing on generating and implementing tangible, breakthrough results.

The following **stages shall be followed by each convening partner under the supervision of CIVICUS** (a more detailed methodological guide will be provided to the selected partners.):

1. Developing the dialogue (preparatory phase);
2. Driving the group dialogue;
3. Reflecting and Reporting.

WHAT IS THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OFFERED BY CIVICUS?

Each partner will receive a **financial contribution of 4000 USD**, which will support the costs for the dialogues' preparatory activities, organisation, facilitation and documentation, as well as the reporting and conduction of interviews with involved stakeholders. The payment will be done in two instalments – 80% upon signing of a Partnerships Agreement and 20% upon submission of the technical and financial reports due.

WHAT WILL BE THE PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS?

A Partnership Agreement will be entered between CIVICUS and the local partner, detailing the expected activities and timeline, roles of each party, payment and reporting procedures.

Throughout the partnership, CIVICUS will provide guidance and tools around participatory governance, project management and multi-stakeholder engagement. If deemed appropriate by both parties, CIVICUS may send a representative to the local dialogue.

HOW TO APPLY?

Each interested applicant shall submit a written expression of interest **by the 15th of October** by filling out the [online form](#). Before formally submitting the expression of interest, applicants are welcome to liaise with the [New Social Contract team](#) to discuss their idea and better connect it with the *New Social Contract* project methodological approach as well as other opportunities.

WHAT DOES THE SELECTION PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

Each submission will be assessed against the set of criteria below and from the wider perspective of its relevance to the overall *New Social Contract* project and to ensure an even global spread.

The **selection criteria** will revolve around the following:

- Motivations, reasons and interest in establishing a local multi-stakeholder platform;
- The organisations profile, with similar previous experience highlighted (if any) and details of capacity and available resources to implement the dialogue;
- The alignment of the dialogue to your organisations work;
- Relevance of the proposed dialogue to the overall *New Social Contract* project;
- The novelty, originality and envisaged stakeholder diversity of the proposed dialogue.

Since this project is targeting several countries around the world, projects that receive a “passing” score (60/100) will be chosen in to ensure that at least one dialogue is conducted in each of the following geographical regions: Asia; Latin America; North America; Europe; Africa; Eurasia; MENA; Australasia.

If all the above criteria are met and there are several potential candidates, priority shall always be given to CIVICUS current members.

Submissions will be reviewed by a Committee composed of three designated staff members from CIVICUS. **Around the end of October 2013**, CIVICUS will pre-select the most relevant submissions and will engage in follow-up conversations with the shortlisted applicants to jointly finalise the theme, approach, partners, stakeholders as well as the timeline, outputs and budget. All this information will be contained in a project plan attached to the Partnership Agreement that will be ideally entered between CIVICUS and each convening partner **by November 2013**. The envisaged activities shall be implemented between November 2013 and June 2014 according to what is stipulated in the Agreement.

ABOUT CIVICUS AND THE NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT PROJECT

[CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation](#) is an international alliance of members and partners which constitutes an influential network of organisations at the local, national, regional and international levels, and spans the spectrum of civil society. CIVICUS has worked for two decades to strengthen citizen action and civil society throughout the world, especially in areas where participatory democracy and citizens' freedom of association are threatened.

The *New Social Contract* project is part of the Civic Space Initiative, which aims to protect and expand civic space by fostering an enabling legal environment for civil society organisations around the world. The project is implemented in partnership with the [International Center for Not-for-Profit Law](#) (ICNL), [Article 19](#), and the [World Movement for Democracy](#), with support from the [Swedish International Development Agency](#) (Sida).

For more information visit the [dedicated webpage](#) or contact convening@civicus.org