

Frequently Asked Questions

GFF x CIVIC Voices Organizing for Inclusive Civic Engagement and Sustainability (VOICES) Call for Proposals

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This frequently asked questions (FAQ) document provides additional guidance for organizations interested in applying to the GFF x CIVIC VOICES Call for Proposals (CFP). It addresses common questions about the opportunity, including eligibility, partnership requirements, areas of focus, funding, application and selection processes, and implementation support.

This FAQ is intended to complement the official CFP and support application materials by clarifying key requirements and helping prospective applicants determine whether the opportunity is relevant to their organization or partnership.

Applicants are encouraged to read the full CFP and all accompanying documents carefully before preparing their application and/or submitting additional questions.

ABOUT GFF X CIVIC VOICES

What is the GFF x CIVIC Platform?

The GFF x CIVIC Platform is a partnership between the Global Financing Facility (GFF) and the World Bank Group's CIVIC: The Civil Society and Social Innovation Alliance to strengthen the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) and youth-led organizations (YLOs), also collectively referred to as LCYOs, in advancing health and nutrition outcomes for women, children, and adolescents. The platform will provide grant funding and technical assistance to two consortiums that will manage and implement two program pillars:

- Pillar 1: Strengthening Civil Society Engagement and Community Voice for Domestic Resource Mobilization – supporting CSOs and YLOs to influence health financing, accountability, and systems reform at country level (launched Sept 15).
- Pillar 2: Scaling Community-Led Solutions for Adolescent Health and Nutrition – enabling youth and civil society groups to engage effectively in the development and scale-up of effective programs to improve access, equity, and outcomes in adolescent health services and nutrition (launching October 6).

For more information, visit the GFF x CIVIC Platform's webpage.

What is the GFF x CIVIC VOICES Project (also known as Pillar 1 of GFF x CIVIC)?

GFF x CIVIC VOICES is a multi-country initiative being implemented by PATH, a global health CSO, in partnership with the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) and the Organisation of African Youth (OAY), working together as the VOICES consortium (Voices Organizing for Inclusive Civic Engagement and Sustainability).

VOICES seeks to strengthen civil society engagement and youth leadership to advance domestic resource mobilization for women, children, and adolescent health agenda in GFF partner countries. Through subgrants, capacity strengthening, structured policy dialogue, and accountability mechanisms, the VOICES consortium will support local civil society

organizations (CSOs) and youth-led organizations (YLOs) to influence financing decisions and shape health system priorities in their countries.

Why has GFF x CIVIC VOICES been established?

GFF x CIVIC VOICES has been designed to respond to persistent challenges including fragmented civil society advocacy, limited CSO and YLO capacity to engage in health financing and accountability processes, and limited participation of CSOs and YLOs in government-led planning, budgeting, and decision-making.

VOICES aims to strengthen the capacity, coordination, and meaningful engagement of CSOs and YLOs to drive sustainable and equitable domestic financing for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health and nutrition (RMNCAH+N) programs in GFF partner countries through inclusive participation, evidence-based advocacy, and accountability mechanisms.

What are the priority areas for the VOICES Call for Proposals (CFP)?

The CFP has two interconnected priority areas:

Priority area 1: Strengthen coordination and alignment among CSO and YLO advocacy actors working on RMNCAH+N.

Priority area 2: Advocate for increased domestic resource investment and accountability for RMNCAH+N at the national and/or subnational levels.

Activities to achieve these priorities may include:

- Establishing or strengthening CSO/YLO coordination mechanisms
- Developing joint advocacy agendas, messages, and action plans
- Strengthening youth and community participation, advocacy, and engagement in national or subnational planning, budgeting, and financing processes
- Engagement in RMNCAH+N Investment Cases, Country Partnership Framework (CPF) processes, etc.
- Participation in GFF and other multi-stakeholder platforms
- Evidence generation and dissemination for advocacy, budget analysis, and tracking
- Tracking government commitments and RMNCAH+N investments
- Strengthening civil society accountability
- Documenting advocacy lessons and outcomes.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Who is eligible to apply?

Applications must be submitted by a local civil society organization and youth-led organization (LCYO) country partnership comprising at least two and no more than three local/indigenous organizations registered and operating in the targeted country, with at least one organization being a youth-led organization (YLO).

Can an organization apply on its own?

No. The CFP requires applicants to apply as an LCYO country partnership of up to three local organizations, including at least one YLO. The intention is to encourage coordinated and complementary approaches rather than isolated, organization-specific interventions.

How many organizations can make up an LCYO partnership?

A partnership must include at least two and a maximum of three local organizations. At least one member must be a YLO. Partners are expected to bring complementary strengths, such as advocacy and policy engagement, health financing and budget analysis, civil society and youth engagement, community engagement, and/or coalition building.

Can members of a large existing coalition/platform (e.g., a 28-member national platform) participate given the 3-organization cap?

If the network is led by a singular organization, that organization could apply with one or two others and it would count as a single organization among the three allowed. If the network is not led by a single organization, the network could appoint a member organization (or up to three) to represent the network in this application process.

Can the youth-led organization be the lead organization? Does the lead organization need to be a YLO?

Yes, the lead organization may be a YLO, but it does not have to be. You just need at least one YLO among your 2 or 3 partners.

What is a youth-led organization (YLO)? Is it the same as youth-focused?

A YLO is an organization in which young people, typically those aged 15–35, hold primary leadership, decision-making authority, and responsibility for organizational governance and programming.

A youth-focused organization that does not meet this definition can certainly be part of an LCYO partnership, but would not count as the 1 required YLO. We have made this criteria intentionally and in consultation with youth leaders, including OAY, in order to address past short-comings of youth-focused efforts that did not fully engage YLOs.

Can international organizations apply? What about international organizations that have offices in eligible countries/a national subsidiary of an international organization?

No, international organizations may not apply. The CFP is designed for local organizations that are legally registered and operational in the country of implementation. All members of the LCYO country partnership must meet this requirement.

For the purposes of this Call for Proposals, a local organization is an organization that:

- Is legally registered in the country where VOICES activities will be implemented.
- Is locally established and operational, with a substantive presence and experience in-country.
- Has local leadership, with strategic decision-making, governance and accountability resting with local leadership including the board of directors.
- Is independent of any international organizations, meaning it must not be a subsidiary, branch, or locally registered affiliate controlled by an international organization.

- Meets all other CFP requirements, including organizational experience, capacity and safeguarding requirements.

Can an international partner be a subgrantee of a local partner for this opportunity?

No. The intent is for this funding to benefit only local organizations. The work must be led and implemented by local organizations.

Will PATH/AFIDEP/OAY implement locally?

No. The three consortium partners are explicitly excluded from implementing in-country. Our role will be fiduciary of the subgrants (PATH), and technical assistance and coordination (PATH, AFIDEP, and OAY).

Are faith-based/patient/parent/disability organizations eligible?

Yes. As long as they are locally registered and meet other eligibility criteria, all types of local civil society, youth-led, and/or community-based organizations are eligible and encouraged to apply.

How will VOICES ensure engaged stakeholders are representative of the communities they serve? How will you elevate youth and marginalized populations (e.g. adolescent girls)?

That is the exact premise of this opportunity and the reason local organizations are solely eligible. Partnerships are also encouraged to explain in their submissions how they will engage and support youth and marginalized populations.

Are government entities, UN agencies, or universities eligible?

Governments themselves are not eligible, as this opportunity is aimed at enhancing CSO and YLO engagement with governments. UN agencies are not eligible as they are not local organizations.

For the purposes of this call, we are classifying universities and other non-for-profit research and educational institutions as academia and therefore including them within the definition of CSOs, provided they meet the other legal requirements set out in the CFP. University applicants should be mindful that the focus of their proposal is elevating community priorities for advocacy, not solely disseminating research.

Is a for-profit social enterprise eligible?

No. This opportunity is meant to benefit non-for-profit organizations only.

Which GFF partner countries are eligible for funding and why are some GFF partner countries not on the list?

These GFF partner countries are eligible for funding: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

GFF x CIVIC VOICES has prioritized 22 GFF partner countries on Sub-Saharan Africa for this CFP, given the high burden of RMNCAH+N health issues and need for increased domestic resource mobilization. The country selection was also based on the consortia reach

and the available resource envelope. At this stage, no other countries are being considered for subgrants. However, CSOs and YLOs from other GFF partner countries are invited to participate in learning sessions, which will begin in 2027.

Why is only one partnership from each country? Isn't that limiting?

In an effort to ensure as many countries as possible benefit from this opportunity, we have prioritized breadth of countries versus depth of partnerships (e.g. 1 partnership in 22 countries vs. 5 partnerships in 12 countries). By requiring organizations to form partnerships of 2-3 partners, we feel this balances the resources being made available while facilitating organizations to advocate in coalition—for greater impact.

Further, while resources will be allocated across the participating organizations based on their agreed roles and activities, the LCYO partnership in each country is expected to work beyond its own members by engaging relevant networks, coalitions and other actors to strengthen coordination, avoid duplication, and extend the reach of VOICES activities.

Are you creating new consortiums in-country? Isn't that duplicative?

We are not asking applicants to establish formal coalitions, nor encouraging that. In fact, we expect many if not all of the applicants will be involved in their existing country advocacy consortia, networks, working groups, multi-stakeholder platforms, etc. This funding is intended to help resource their efforts with those existing platforms. That is why we have not prescribed activities but have left it open to applicants to propose what they feel the ecosystem needs in terms of coordination, alongside which advocacy activities they feel will be more effective to increase domestic resources.

Can organizations from different countries form one partnership?

No. The CFP is structured around country-level partnerships, with the idea that they are best placed to hold their own governments accountable. The members of each LCYO partnership must be local organizations registered and operating in the same country where the proposed activities will be implemented.

Can an organization that has previously received funding from another donor apply?

Yes.

For Nigeria and Kenya, are applicants expected to work at both federal and state/sub-national levels, or can a proposal focus on selected states?

Yes, the applicants need to focus on both levels for those two countries.

LEAD ORGANIZATION AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

What is the role of the lead organization for each proposal?

Each LCYO country partnership must designate one lead organization for its grant proposal. The lead organization will hold legal, financial, and programmatic responsibility for implementation and grant management. The lead organization will receive the grant and will be responsible for managing funds and sub-granting to its LCYO partner organizations.

What complementary skills should LCYO partners bring?

Each LCYO country partnership proposal should demonstrate complementary strengths among the partner organizations across areas such as:

- Advocacy and policy engagement
- Health financing and budget analysis/tracking
- Youth engagement
- Community engagement
- Coalition and network building
- RMNCAH+N programming
- Accountability and evidence use
- Financial and grant management capacity

Experience working in CSO and YLO coalitions or networks is strongly preferred.

Can an organization be part of more than one LCYO Advocacy Partnership application?

No. An organization can only apply under one LCYO country partnership. Failure to meet this requirement will result in the automatic disqualification of the consortium's application.

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Can a recently established organization with limited financial history/capacity participate in an LCYO partnership?

The partnership model for this call for proposals is designed precisely so organizations that are newer or have less capacity can pair with stronger or better-established partners. While the lead organization needs to have five years of experience and strong financial management systems, other partners can have just three years of experience and less robust (but still reasonable) financial management capacity.

Must the full five years of experience be demonstrated exclusively through the organization's own prior institutional projects, or may relevant experience of the organization's senior leadership/key personnel, combined with the organization's established RMNCAH+N advocacy and accountability work, also be considered in assessing this requirement?

The five-year experience requirement is intended to demonstrate the lead organization's institutional experience and track record, rather than the cumulative individual experience of its staff or leadership. Therefore, while the relevant experience and expertise of senior leadership and key personnel shall be considered as part of the overall assessment of the organization's capacity to deliver the proposed work, it cannot substitute for the organization's own demonstrated experience in health financing advocacy and accountability for RMNCAH+N, including supporting CSO/YLO coordination and engagement in domestic resource mobilization for RMNCAH+N.

Experience in domestic health financing: The eligibility criteria require the lead organization to demonstrate at least five years of experience in mobilizing health financing and/or accountability for RMNCAH+N. Could you please clarify how this requirement will be assessed, particularly whether experience in health budget

advocacy, domestic resource mobilization, public financing and accountability is considered within this requirement?

Relevant organizational experience may include sustained RMNCAH+N advocacy with public decision-makers; domestic resource mobilization and public financing advocacy; social accountability; budget advocacy and expenditure monitoring; and influencing public commitments, policies or investments in RMNCAH+N. The experience should demonstrate meaningful organizational contribution to health financing mobilization and/or accountability.

Where a consortium includes an experienced CSO and a Youth-Led Organization (YLO), can the specific technical expertise in health financing/budget advocacy be demonstrated collectively across consortium members, or must the lead organization itself demonstrate the full five-year experience?

The lead organization must itself demonstrate at least five years of relevant organizational experience in health financing mobilization and/or accountability for RMNCAH+N. This should include considerable experience in areas such as domestic resource mobilization, public financing advocacy, accountability, budget advocacy, and/or expenditure tracking. Complementary technical expertise from consortium partners, including YLOs, will strengthen the overall application, but it does not substitute for the lead organization's required experience.

Does the applicant need an MOU with PATH?

No.

Do the LCYO partnerships need to have MOUs between themselves? Do they need to be an existing partnership?

The organizations do not need to be part of an existing partnership. Once selected, the lead organization will enter into a sub-agreement with PATH. That organization will then be expected to subgrant to its partner(s). Any other arrangements, such as an MOU, are up to the lead organizations' discretion.

FOCUS OF PROPOSALS

Does a proposal need to address both VOICES CFP priority areas?

Yes. The CFP specifically invites proposals that address both strengthening coordination and alignment, and advocating to increase domestic resource investment and accountability for RMNCAH+N.

Does the proposed work need to focus only on national-level advocacy?

No. The CFP allows for advocacy at the national and/or subnational levels, depending on the country's governance structure, decision-making processes, and relevant advocacy opportunities. For countries with devolved settings (Nigeria and Kenya), applicants are encouraged to focus on advocacy at both national and subnational levels, and funding ceilings are higher for those two countries for that reason. In countries other than Kenya and Nigeria, organizations may propose subnational engagement, including evidence generation or accountability activities, provided these are clearly linked to influencing increased

domestic investment in health. Such activities should be complementary to the core work and should not account for more than approximately 20% of the total project.

For proposals from Kenya and Nigeria, is there a certain number of subnational geographies that we should do work in?

No. The number of subnational geographies is not prescribed. We encourage you to select a number where you can make meaningful change without spreading yourselves too thin. The choice should be justified in the submission narrative.

Does PATH award preferential scoring to proposals that explicitly bridge subnational grassroots tracking data (e.g., citizen forums and community-based monitors) directly into national health financing frameworks and Ministry of Health technical working groups?

Subnational advocacy is not a requirement (except for proposals from Kenya and Nigeria who are requesting the full \$175,000) and therefore not a preference. However, if this is what you feel will be effective for your domestic resource mobilization advocacy, you can make the case for it in your proposal.

Can proposals engage with World Bank Group-supported processes?

Yes. The CFP specifically identifies and encourages applicants to consider opportunities to engage in WBG and GFF-supported RMNCAH+N Investment Cases, Country Partnership Frameworks, Health and Nutrition Projects, and Multi-Stakeholder Platforms, as potential advocacy and engagement spaces.

Is engagement with country-level GFF coordinating mechanisms an allowable activity under these proposals?

Yes, this is allowable and encouraged.

Does GFF x CIVIC VOICES fund service delivery?

GFF x CIVIC VOICES is primarily designed as an advocacy, civic engagement, health financing, and accountability program. The CFP is focused on coordinated advocacy and civic engagement interventions rather than on direct service delivery. Applicants should demonstrate how proposed activities contribute to influencing policy, financing, planning, or accountability with the aim to improve RMNCAH+N outcomes.

Can our proposal include advocacy for specific health areas with RMNCAH+N (e.g., family planning, elimination of vertical transmission, etc.)?

Part of the application includes making the case for the biggest issues your country is facing and how your advocacy can overcome those issues. If you can build an evidence-based case for focusing in on a specific health area(s) within the RMNCAH+N continuum, that will be acceptable. However, proposals that address broader RMNCAH+N funding challenges and opportunities are preferred, given the shifts away from siloed funding in the current fiscal environments in most partner countries.

Can advocacy for noncommunicable diseases, neglected tropical diseases, HIV or climate change be part of this proposal?

If you connect these issues back to RMNCAH+N domestic resource mobilization and make a strong case, then yes, these adjacent issues can be addressed.

Do the target populations of the work need to be women/children/adolescents specifically? (Could a men's health-focused organization be eligible?)

The activities proposed must align with the scopes outlined in the call for proposals, which are focused on the ultimate goal of increasing domestic resources for RMNCAH+N.

FUNDING

Why do the funding ceilings differ among countries?

The CFP proposes a higher ceiling for Kenya and Nigeria than for other countries to allow for subnational advocacy in those countries, due to the devolved nature of their health systems and budgets. While subnational advocacy may also be valuable in other countries, in a devolved system it is essential to achieving meaningful change. Applicants in Kenya and Nigeria may propose a maximum budget of USD\$175,000. For all other countries the maximum budget is USD\$150,000.

We do understand that other countries are in varying stages of decentralizing, but based on GFF's engagement in these 22 countries, we have determined these are the two where subnational engagement is essential.

Can an organization receive funding under both Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 of the GFF × CIVIC funding opportunity?

No. To ensure broad and equitable access to the available funding, CSOs and YLOs that are selected to receive a grant under Pillar 1 will NOT be eligible to receive funding under Pillar 2 of the GFF × CIVIC funding opportunity.

There are 8 countries eligible for both Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 (Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe). Pillar 2 will focus on promoting and scaling innovative practices for adolescent health, whereas Pillar 1 focuses on advocacy for domestic resource mobilization. We recognize that some organizations may work in both areas, but no one organization can receive funding from both pillars, either as a lead organization or in consortium. Organizations are encouraged to apply for only one pillar; however, if any organizations do apply for both, they will not be eligible to receive funding from both.

IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPPORT

Will successful organizations receive technical support?

Yes. Successful LCYO country partnerships will receive training and technical assistance to strengthen their advocacy plans and implementation. The anticipated support includes capacity strengthening, mentorship, guidance on evidence analysis and use, and learning and knowledge exchange. Partnerships will need to include in their budgets the estimated cost of travel for two representatives (covering visa, transport, lodging, and out-of-pocket costs) to participate in training session in Nairobi, Kenya, for Anglophone and Lusophone countries, and Dakar, Senegal, for Francophone countries.

Is GFF x CIVIC VOICES only providing funding?

No. GFF x CIVIC VOICES combines financial support with capacity strengthening, technical assistance, mentorship, coordination, and learning. The intention is to strengthen sustainable advocacy capacity rather than fund isolated activities.

Will technical assistance/mentorship happen during proposal development, or only after selection?

Technical assistance will be provided after selection. The VOICES Consortium will support selected subgrantees to complete due diligence exercises and develop their advocacy strategies and workplans.

Will GFF x CIVIC VOICES connect funded organizations with other relevant CSOs, YLOs, and stakeholders working on the GFF?

Yes. Strengthening coordination among CSOs, YLOs, coalitions, and networks is a core objective of the CFP. Country partnerships are expected to contribute to a broader ecosystem of collaboration, learning, and advocacy that will be supported at the regional level through virtual means, except the aforementioned in-person capacity strengthening sessions.

How will GFF x CIVIC VOICES align with existing GFF structures, specifically the GFF Civil Society Coordinating Group (CSCG) and its Steering Committee?

The Global Civil Society Coordinating Group (CSCG) is the established network coordinating civil society and youth engagement across the GFF — a global network of 400+ local, national, regional, and global CSOs and YLOs. It has representatives who sit on the GFF Investors' Group as the voice of the civil society and youth constituencies. VOICES is designed to complement and reinforce this existing structure, not duplicate or compete with it.

The CSCG has helped inform the design of GFF x CIVIC and is aware of the VOICES Call for Proposals. CSCG's Steering Committee will be consulted as VOICES' learning and cross-country peer exchange activities are developed, given the direct overlap in focus.

At the country level, applicants are strongly encouraged to demonstrate in their proposals how their advocacy connects to existing CSCG country-level coordination, national CSO/YLO networks, and any GFF multi-stakeholder platforms already active in their country — this kind of alignment strengthens a proposal. That said, CSCG membership or engagement is not an eligibility requirement: organizations that are not currently part of the CSCG network are still eligible to apply and will not be excluded on that basis.

How will the funded projects interact with World Bank Group and GFF processes at country level? Will GFF country coordinators be engaged?

GFF country coordinators will not be involved in the selection process, but once selections are made, they will provide important guidance on country context as subgrantees are co-creating their advocacy strategies (after selection). GFF country coordinators will liaise with other World Bank Group staff to facilitate engagement of CSO/YLO grantees in relevant WBG-GFF supported policy dialogue and operations.

How will GFF x CIVIC VOICES engage regional bodies like the African Union?

Connecting and coordinating national advocacy to efforts at the regional (and global) levels is a deliberate part of VOICES' design. In particular, VOICES' third component focuses on learning, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing. Under that component, VOICES will amplify what's happening at the country level up to the regional level, creating space for regional bodies — such as the African Union and regional economic communities — to engage with and draw on the advocacy work being generated by subgrantees across the 22 countries.

Country partnerships aren't expected to independently manage this regional engagement themselves; it's something VOICES facilitates as part of its cross-country learning and coordination function, connecting what's happening nationally to the broader regional conversation.

What role will youth play in GFF x CIVIC VOICES?

Youth engagement is central to the project. Each funded country partnership must include at least one YLO, and proposed partnerships should demonstrate meaningful youth engagement and inclusion. Alongside dedicated capacity strengthening for youth organizations, the initiative will also strengthen the Global Youth Platform (GYP), which selected subgrantees will be invited to join. (All YLO applicants are also encouraged to join the GYP.)

What does VOICES consider meaningful youth engagement beyond simply having a YLO as a partner?

Meaningful youth participation means moving beyond youth representation or consultation to ensuring young people have a genuine role in shaping priorities, decisions and advocacy outcomes related to domestic financing for RMNCAH+N.

- Youth leadership: YLOs have defined leadership and decision-making roles.
- Influence: Youth perspectives shape advocacy priorities, strategies and positions—not simply validate decisions already made.
- Resources: Youth organizations have access to resources and capacity strengthening to participate effectively.
- Diversity and inclusion: Engagement includes diverse young people, particularly those often excluded from decision-making.
- Accountability: Youth can track commitments, provide feedback, and hold decision-makers accountable.
- Sustained engagement: Youth participation is continuous throughout design, implementation, monitoring and learning—not limited to events or consultations.

Elections: Where access to government stakeholders, technical working groups, decision-making processes, or multi-stakeholder coalitions may be constrained during an election cycle, is there anticipated flexibility in implementation schedules and milestones?

Implementation timelines will remain as set out in the CFP, but applicants in countries that will have elections during that time period are encouraged to assess their country context, align their advocacy approach, to the extent possible, with relevant policy and decision-making processes, and identify potential risks including election-related constraints with appropriate mitigation measures.

APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

How does my organization submit an application?

Please refer to the Call for Proposals and template provided. All submissions must be sent by the deadline to voices@path.org. Please be mindful of the size of attachments and ensure the email is no larger than 150MB total. If necessary, you may send attachments in separate emails.

What is the deadline for submissions?

The deadline is Wednesday, 7 October 2026 at 23:59 East Africa Time. To ensure fairness, no submissions will be accepted after the deadline.

What should be the title for the submission email?

The email title should be: Country: Lead Partner Name. Example: Nigeria: Organisation XYZ

Why is the deadline so short when the consortiums have had 9 months to prepare?

After being selected competitively, the VOICES consortium underwent a significant due diligence and co-creation process with GFF x CIVIC. This process was delayed due to factors out of the control of GFF, CIVIC, or the VOICES consortium partners. Now that the grant agreement has been finalized, we are moving as quickly as possible to get much-needed resources out for CSO and YLO engagement and to allow for approximately 18 months of sub-grant implementation, which cannot be extended. We understand and appreciate the challenge of pulling together proposals on short notice. We have taken steps to make the submission process as simple as possible, and will respond in a timely manner to any questions you send to voices@path.org.

Is AI use in proposal writing permitted?

Yes. LCYO partnerships may use AI tools to support tasks like editing, proofreading, and translation. However, the substance of the proposal — the problem analysis, proposed activities, and strategic thinking — should reflect the partnership's own ideas and understanding of their local context. Proposals that appear to be substantially AI-generated, rather than AI-assisted, may raise concerns during review, since the evaluation is assessing the partnership's own capacity, judgment, and contextual knowledge.

REVIEW, SCORING AND SELECTION

Who will review and select applications? What will the process be?

Applications will go through a two-phased review and selection process. First, applications will undergo an initial assessment to determine eligibility and assess the extent to which they meet the requirements and selection criteria outlined in the Call for Proposals.

Applicants who pass the first phase will go to a second, technical evaluation phase, handled by a Technical Evaluation Committee. This committee comprises representatives from the VOICES consortium, including PATH, AFIDEP, and OAY. The review process will consistently apply the published eligibility and assessment criteria across all applications, while taking country context into account.

Will the World Bank Group, GFF, or CIVIC teams have a say in which proposals are selected?

The review and selection process is led and managed by the VOICES consortium members comprised of PATH, AFIDEP, and OAY. The GFF x CIVIC team supporting this work will provide a no-objection approval to officialize the final selection before the successful proposals are announced.

Will governments or ministries of health have a say in which organizations are selected?

No. To ensure impartiality, given the selected LCYO country partnerships will be advocating with the government, ministries of health and other government officials will not be involved in the selection process. They will be notified of the successful proposals and will be engaged as funded projects kick off in each country and scopes are refined, to facilitate alignment with government priorities.

When will we hear if we were selected, or are a finalist?

The VOICES consortium aims to notify applicants if their application was successful no later than October 27, 2026. The anticipated external announcement of selected subgrantees will be November 30, 2026. The period between notification and the external announcement will allow the VOICES consortium to complete the necessary due diligence and finalize preparations for signing subgrant agreements with selected organizations. Selection notifications will be considered conditional until these processes are completed. Any changes to this timeline will be shared with all applicants as soon as possible.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Must the funding be split evenly across the 2–3 partner organizations? Out of the maximum country allocation, are there specific percentage limits or caps enforced by PATH regarding how much of the direct implementation budget can be allocated to co-applicants versus the lead organization?

While equitable split of the funding amongst the partners is highly encouraged, the allocation should be based on the activities, roles, and level of effort of each organization, as agreed through the partnership and their own teaming arrangement. At the same time, the partnerships are encouraged to aim for equity and meaningful participation of CSOs and the YLO including co-creation, shared decision-making, complementary strengths, and shared accountability across the partnership.

What currency should the budget be in?

US Dollars (US\$), per the note at the bottom of the template. If your organization's costs are typically tracked in local currency, convert to USD using a reasonable, consistent exchange rate and note the rate and date used in the Budget Narrative. Please use OANDA Currency Converter.

What's the difference between “Administrative Costs” and “Other Direct Costs”?

Administrative Costs (1.2.1) covers facilities, utilities, governance, compliance, and general office running costs — the recurring costs of operating your organization. Other Direct Costs

(category 5) is for reasonable project costs that don't fit any of the other budget categories (1–4). If a cost clearly belongs to a named category, it shouldn't be placed in Other Direct Costs.

The Travel Costs note mentions including travel for “one training workshop.” What does that refer to?

Successful partnerships are expected to send two representatives to an in-person regional training — in Nairobi, Kenya (for Anglophone and Lusophone countries) or Dakar, Senegal (for Francophone countries). Your Travel Costs line should include the estimated cost for two representatives to attend this training: visa, transport, lodging, per diem, and related out-of-pocket costs for 3 days.

Is hiring a consultant required? What if we don't need one?

No. Consulting Services (category 2) is only for partnerships that plan to procure services from a consultant under a consultancy agreement. If you don't anticipate this, leave the category at zero.

Is there a line for overhead or indirect costs?

No. The project's preference is to have the applicants direct-charge ALL the eligible costs proposed for this work, including operational/administrative costs. Thus, there isn't a dedicated overhead/indirect cost line in the budget template. However, if your organization applies a standard overhead/indirect cost rate and you elect to use this in place of direct-charging your operational/administrative costs, then please include it under Administrative Costs (capped at 15% of total direct costs for this project) and explain the rate and basis in the Budget Narrative (NB: if selected, you will be required to provide audited financial statements for the last three years and your organization's Indirect Cost Rate policy, to facilitate review and approval of your proposed rate).

On the budget template, do we enter amounts directly into the category rows (e.g., “1. Operating Costs” and “1.2 Operating Expenses”), or only into their sub-line items (1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.2)?

Enter amounts only in the numbered sub-line items — Staff Salaries & Benefits (1.1), Administrative Costs (1.2.1), and Travel Costs (1.2.2). The “Operating Costs” and “Operating Expenses” rows are category headers, not separate cost lines.

On the budget template, should we fill in all three columns (Lead Partner, Partner 2, Partner 3), or just my organization's column?

The Lead Partner is responsible for filling in this template for the partnership, working with each partner organization's detailed budget. If your partnership has only two organizations, leave the Partner 3 column blank — the totals will calculate correctly either way.

How much detail is expected in the Budget Narrative column?

Provide a brief explanation of what makes up the amount in each cost category or sub-category — enough for a reviewer to understand what's included and why the amount is reasonable for the proposed activities. There's no fixed word limit, but narratives should be concise rather than exhaustive; a few sentences per category is typically sufficient.

Do we need a separate narrative for each partner organization, or one combined narrative per category?

One narrative per cost category is sufficient, covering all partner organizations' costs within that category. If costs vary significantly between partners, briefly note the breakdown within the narrative.

How does this budget relate to the financial management, internal controls, and grant readiness questions in the technical proposal?

Those questions ask the lead organization to describe its systems and processes at an organizational level (e.g., how expenditures are authorized and recorded); the budget template is where those same systems are put into practice for this specific proposal. Reviewers will expect the two to be consistent — for example, if your proposal describes strong segregation of duties, your budget and narrative should reflect a plausible, well-organized cost structure rather than a single lump sum with no breakdown.

If we've never undergone an external audit, or don't have certain policies in place, will we be disqualified?

Not necessarily. That's why the submission template provides for the applicant giving information on a donor driven alternative review/verification done in lieu of an external audit, as well as an explanation on how risk is managed for areas not covered by the available policies.

Can the lead organization subgrant to other organizations beyond the two LCYO partnership members?

No. The lead organization cannot subgrant beyond the LCYO partnership. However, subcontracting under a normal procurement contract and/or engaging a consultant under a consultancy agreement is allowed, and this should be detailed in the budget proposal and explained in the narrative.

External audit requirement: Could you please clarify whether documented donor financial assessments, pre-award assessments, or other donor-led verification of financial systems and internal controls may satisfy this requirement where a recent independent external audit is not available?

Donor-led review/verification of the applicant's financial reports, systems and internal controls may satisfy this requirement where a recent independent external audit is not available. However, this exception is not available for those electing to use indirect cost rate (please refer to the overhead/indirect cost rate FAQ above).

Is this open to co-financing (bringing matched funds)?

The VOICES grant is not designed for co-financing or matched funding. Applicants are not required to bring or match additional funds as a condition of the award.

What percentage of the project costs is the lead organization expected to pre-finance before reimbursement? If possible, what are the project pre-financing elements?

This will not be fixed as a percentage, but rather based on expenditure forecasts tied to the reporting cycles. This will be explained further during the due diligence process once subgrantees are selected.

What is the expected reimbursement period — the duration between the organization incurring the eligible expenses and receiving the funds?

This will be monthly/tied to the reporting cycle.

Under the Financial and Administrative requirements, the CFP stated “capacity to pre-finance start-up activities”. What does this imply? Is this grant a reimbursable grant?

Capacity to prefinance activities means that the organization will incur eligible project expenditures on its account, report these expenditures and which will then be reviewed and accepted before being reimbursed.

Yes, it's a reimbursable grant. However, based on the subgrant negotiations and the post selection financial risk assessment, an initial advance mechanism may also be considered on a case-by-case basis.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Why are the subgrants/country-level projects only 18 months? This is a short time to demonstrate advocacy impact.

We recognize that 18 months is a short time period. While the GFF x CIVIC VOICES is a two-year project, that includes start-up and closeout activities. The maximum time PATH (as the fiduciary) can accommodate for the subgrants is 18 months, in order to ensure we fulfill our fiduciary responsibilities (due diligence, reporting, etc.). We will work with successful applicants to design reasonable goals with this timeline in mind.

OTHER QUESTIONS

Do CSOs/YLOs need to have participated in the mapping exercise PATH conducted in order to apply for this call for proposals?

No. Participation in the mapping exercise is not a prerequisite for applying to the VOICES Call for Proposals. Organizations that were not included in the mapping are equally eligible to apply, provided they meet all other eligibility requirements outlined in the CFP. The mapping was conducted as an opportunity to better understand and connect organizations working across the RMNCAH+N ecosystem, as part of broader efforts to strengthen coordination, collaboration and alignment among partners at country and regional levels.

What is the timing of Pillar 2's call for proposals?

Pillar 2's call for proposal will launch on approximately October 6. As noted above, CSOs and YLOs are encouraged to choose only one pillar to apply for, as no one organization can receive funding from both opportunities (either as a lead or a partner organization).