



SOFIA is launching its second call for Expressions of Interest for 2024

Launched by The Initiative in 2023, the SOFIA (Structuring Civil Society Organizations: Financial support, Impact and Accompaniment) is a dedicated support fund for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), implemented by Expertise France.

Objectives

Specifically, the SOFIA support fund aims to support local CSOs to actively engage in fighting pandemics such as HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria, as well as strengthening health systems, including at the community level. Additionally, it seeks to promote gender equality and defend human rights.

The specific objectives are as follows:

1. Enable supported CSOs to access larger funding from national, regional, or international partners;
2. Assist CSOs in conducting relevant activities and/or projects to fight the three diseases and strengthen health systems by integrating a gender approach;
3. Strengthen CSOs in their advocacy capacity and aim for substantial advancements in their field of public health activity, including gender and human rights.

A Multifaceted Support System

The SOFIA support fund provides both financial support and personalized technical assistance.

Financial Support:

- A grant ranging from €50,000 to €75,000 over a period of 15 months renewable 3 times maximum (that is, up to 5 years of support in total);
- This grant covers operational expenses, human resources, and routine activities aimed at supporting the organization's daily functioning and/or strengthening its operational capacities.

Personalized Assistance:

- Organizations will initially benefit from an initial diagnosis from organizational, operational, and technical perspectives (public health, infectious diseases, gender, etc.). This diagnosis will lead to the design of a capacity-building plan for the organization;
- Capacity building will then be implemented (based on the provided plan) through technical assistance, which can take various forms (residential expertise, occasional or one-time support, training, etc.);
- Selected organizations will receive close support from The Initiative team:
 - – For the implementation of the grant (especially for reporting and financial monitoring with a learning perspective);
 - – For monitoring technical assistance.

Eligible Countries and Targeted Organizations

For this second call for Expressions of Interest for the SOFIA support fund, The Initiative accepts applications from registered and operational CSOs in four eligible countries: Gabon, Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, and Chad, the last had also been eligible under the grant in 2023.

In addition to this geographical requirement, organizations must meet the following criteria to be eligible for the SOFIA support fund:

- – Status: Be a CSO, meaning an organization independent of the government and non-profit;
- – Registration: Be a legal entity with its board of directors/steering committee and registered headquarters in one of the four eligible countries mentioned above;
- – Legal existence duration: The organization must have been legally established for at least 2 years;
- – Human resources: The organization must consist of at least three people (employees and/or volunteers);
- – Financial: The organization must have an annual budget between €30,000 and €310,000 (total expenses for 2022 as indicated in the organization's 2022 overall financial report).

Key Stages of the SOFIA Support Fund

1. Call for Expressions of Interest and pre-selection of organizations;
2. Initial diagnosis of pre-selected organizations with the development of a capacity-building plan and recommendation on the relevance of support;

3. Final selection of organizations;
4. Contracting and disbursement of the grant;
5. Implementation of technical assistance and support for the implementation of the grant;
6. Financial audit of the grant.

The call for Expressions of Interest is open from February 14, 2024, to March 27, 2024, and will be accessible on The Initiative's website: <https://www.initiative5pour100.fr/fonds-dappui-aux-osc-dispositif-sofia>. All questions regarding this call for Expressions of Interest should be sent to the email address sofia.linitiative@expertisefrance.fr by email only.

About The Initiative

Established in 2011 and implemented by Expertise France, The Initiative is a think tank and technical facility of French international cooperation policy in the fight against pandemics. As an indirect contribution modality of France to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria ecosystem, it supports medium-term programs with a catalytic aim to evolve health practices and policies. Furthermore, it supports local and national actors in the design, implementation, and monitoring-evaluation of pandemic control programs. The implementation of The Initiative is based on three intervention modalities: technical assistance, financing of structuring projects, and support for neglected challenges.

For more information: <https://www.initiative5pour100.fr/>

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