**RWANDA**

***Joint Program ‘Strengthening Civil Society Organizations for Responsive and Accountable Governance in Rwanda***

**Overall context:**

Rwanda has made remarkable progress in peace consolidation and stability after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, in terms of socio-economic development, governance, peace and security. As the country embarked on this path of reconstruction and development, so did civil society organizations.

Local civil society organizations in Rwanda have limited capacities. The representation and advocacy capacities of the national civil society is limited, very few CSOs secured financial sustainability and they operate in a very fragmented way. The CSO legal framework is relatively recent and most CSOs complied with it.

As the One UN-Rwanda fully recognizes civil society as a paramount actor to further entrench accountable governance in Rwanda, f a dedicated program in support to CSOs developed The Joint Program on strengthening Civil Society Organizations for Responsive and Accountable Governance is a partnership between the Government of Rwanda and the ONE UN Rwanda (2014-2018). It is aligned to the Second Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 2) as well as the United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP 2013 -2018). The program is being implemented by UNDP and the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB). This program is closely related to two other One UN programs, one on Access to Justice, Human Rights and Peace Consolidation and another one on Deepening Democracy and Accountable Governance.

**Current state of play:**

The implementation of the Joint Program ‘Strengthening Civil Society Organizations for Responsive and Accountable Governance in Rwanda started in May 2014 and the program will run until June 2018.

The Joint Program also focuses on strengthening the capacity of civil society through dedicated capacity building activities (through combination of training and on-going mentoring) and providing project support through grants. The concrete project support is provided following an evaluation by an independent grant selection committee. At present, 26 grantees are supported in the field of human rights and gender equality (3), media (1), civic education (3), social protection (4), citizen engagement on budgeting and development planning (5); cultural promotion/youth & women/elf-employment in rural areas (6). Dedicated trainings are conducted on quarterly basis, complemented by on-going mentoring by project management staff.

The Joint Program also focuses on creating a more enabling environment. The policy dialogue and technical support around the CSOs environment in Rwanda is informed by flagship research products include a comprehensive mapping of the current civil society landscape, a feasibility study on establishing an electronic registration procedure as well as a self-perception survey called the Civil Society Development Barometer. A policy dialogue involving civil society, government and development partners will take place before end 2015.

The Joint Program also focuses on enhancing the role of CSOs in local governance processes. Open days are organized at decentralized level bringing civil society closer to the population and local authorities. Support is also provided to Joint Action Development Fora, which is forum in which government, private sector, international and national CSOs agree on common development priorities at local level.

**Special features of the program:**

* Is a ‘**One UN’ Program** implemented in context of Delivering Results Together: Steering Committee is co-chaired by UN Resident Coordinator; UNDP is the lead agency but other agencies/programs participate (OHCHR, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, and UNV).
* Applies a **human rights based approach** and ensures **gender mainstreaming**
* Implemented in **partnership with the government**: co-Chaired by the Rwanda Governance Board but other institutions are represented (including Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Justice, DG Immigration and Emigration,)
* The program steering committee includes **development partners** (Sweden, Germany and the EU) but also representatives of faith based organizations and Civil Society Platform.
* Big **potential to scale up** the interventions
* Initial **groundwork has been done** and **concrete implementation is proceeding well.**

**Program Budgetary context (2014 -2018):**

* Total estimated budget: USD 8 619 120
* UNDP: USD 3 000 000
* One UN: USD 2 000 000
* Government: USD 1 500 000
* Unfunded: USD 2 119 120
* Foreseen expenditure from May 2014 till December 2015: USD 1 324 435

**PROPOSED AREAS OF SUPPORT FOR 2015-2016**

**Areas to be supported:**

Based on the progress made so far made in the implementation of the program, the 2015 UPR review and the ongoing media reform, this proposal focuses on the following three areas:

* Support the implementation of three projects in the area of democratic governance and human rights.
* Capacity building of media organizations
* Capacity building of CSOs to play an active role in the UPR process

1. **3 grants in the field of democratic governance and human rights**

The fact that the Government of Rwanda ratified most core international human rights treaties offer a good framework for CSOs interventions. A good number of CSOs are operating in different governance and human rights areas but they face financial constraints hindering the implementation of the innovative and result-oriented projects. The inability to meaningfully tackle the challenges their membership faces also limits the confidence in them. Therefore, support through 3 grants would be provided for an amount of USD 30 000 per CSO for a period of one year to the selected proposals.

1. **Capacity building of media organizations**

Rwanda has embarked on a media reform process since 2012 with the aim of empowering journalist and media houses to play a crucial role on good governance and accountability. The reform and especially the “Access to information law” promote the right to information and consequently to the crucial role to be played by journalists. As this process has only started in recent years, more support is needed to build up the professional capacity of media organizations and journalists. Civil society organizations have also not yet fully exploited the potential offered by the Access to Information Law. In line with the above, support will be provided to media organizations to build up the capacities of their members on professional and investigative journalism.

1. **Follow up on the UPR process**

On 4 November 2015, the Government of Rwanda participated in the second round of the Universal Periodic Review. Several recommendations pointed to the need to support national civil society. A coalition of more than 25 CSOs, funded by UNDP, submitted a parallel report in advance of the interactive dialogue. The support will focus on empowering civil society to play a key role in the dissemination and implementation of the recommendations, including at decentralized levels. This could include not only targeted trainings, workshops, dissemination at national and local levels, policy dialogues but also ensure a clear roadmap for the monitoring of implementation of UPR recommendations.

* **Requested amount: USD 200 000**
	+ - 3 grants of 30 000 USD: USD 90 000
		- Capacity building on human rights and media: USD 42 500
		- Follow up on UPR process: USD 42 500
		- Project management: USD 25 000
			* Communication, monitoring, field visit: USD 9 000
			* General Management Service (8%)[[1]](#footnote-1): USD 16 000

**Contact details:** Mr. Stephen Rodriques, UNDP Country Director (stephen.rodriques@undp.org)

Approved and submitted by Stephen Rodriques, UNDP Country Director

1. This a standard percentage applicable to every funding received by UNDP. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)