



GZ: RL/4-ZGI/2021

Strategic Partnerships

with Austrian Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Funding Guideline

 Austrian
Development
Agency

die Agentur der Österreichischen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit
Zelinkagasse 2, 1010 Wien, Telefon: +43 (0)1 90399-0, office@ada.gv.at, www.entwicklung.at

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Please note that the present document is **not an official translation**. In case of any discrepancies the German version shall prevail.

1. Background and Aims

Within the framework of the bilateral programme and project support of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC), projects are promoted which sustainably improve the living conditions and development perspectives of the population in developing countries and contribute to poverty reduction. The principles and objectives of international targets such as the Agenda 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation) are taken into account and all ADA projects shall contribute to their achievement.

The funding instrument “Strategic Partnerships with Austrian Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)” applies to **programmes in developing countries in the South or the East** (in accordance with the definition of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) which are carried out by Austrian organisations together with local partner organisations in developing countries and which are based on a **multi-annual development policy strategy**.

2. Legal bases and other bases

- Development Cooperation Act, BGBl. I No. 49/2002 in the current version (DCA)
- Additionally, the Regulation of the Ministry of Finance regarding General Guidelines for the granting of subsidies from federal funds 2014 in the current version (ARR) applies.¹
- Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy in the current version
- General Terms and Conditions of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) for Development Cooperation Funding in the current version (AVB)
- Environmental, Gender and Social Impact Management Manual in the current version (Download: <https://www.entwicklung.at/en/media-centre/publications/manuals>)
- Guidelines for the Visibility of the Austrian Development Cooperation in the current version

3. Eligibility

Eligible applicants are **development organisations** in accordance with § 3 (2) of the Development Cooperation Act **with a registered office in Austria**.

4. Principles and objectives

A Strategic Partnership consists of a **strategic programme in an ADC priority region or priority country in accordance with the Three-Year Programme of Austrian Development Policy** and is based on a **5-year (minimum) programme strategy** of the applicant organisation.

The Strategic Partnership is incorporated in the national and local strategies of the respective partner countries and is co-ordinated with the local/regional development plans as well as with the relevant local and international actors. The planning and development of the Strategic Partnership is done in cooperation with the ADA.

¹ Regarding contradictions of the two legal bases the Development Cooperation Act prevails.

Strategic Partnerships in Africa can only be co-funded if Gender Equality is defined as main objective. Consequently, they must fulfil the criteria for the **Gender Equality Policy Marker 2** according to the OECD-DAC definition.²

The duration of the Strategic Partnership is **5 years at the most**. If the implementation is successful, an extension of the Strategic Partnership is generally possible.

A Strategic Partnership is **results-oriented**, achieves **structure-forming, sustainable, quantifiable effects** and **contributes substantially** to poverty reduction and to an improvement of the living conditions, as well as conservation/enhancement of the natural resources and ecosystem services in the programme region. A content-related focus should lie on **advocacy**, national and international **networking** with relevant stakeholders and actors as well as on **systematic management of knowledge**.

5. Funding criteria

5.1 Capacity of the applicant

- At least **six years of experience in development cooperation**
- At least **six years of experience with framework programmes**
- **Personnel and financial capacities** for the implementation of the Strategic Partnership
- Content-related **priorities** and professional **expertise** of the organisation
- **Networking and anchoring** in Austria, at an international level as well as in the partner countries

5.2 Quality of the programme

- A Strategic Partnership makes a **significant contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- A Strategic Partnership has **one thematic focus** that is reflected in the strategy and is based on the expertise of the partner organisation.
- The programme is based on a sound, data-based **problem and needs analysis**.
- The programme gives priority to **advocacy**.
- The programme pursues a **multi-stakeholder approach** and includes relevant national and local actors (networking including addressing of “new” actors, e.g. private sector).
- The programme is expected to have a high **broad impact**.
- The programme includes **innovative aspects**.
- The programme pursues **systematic management of knowledge** (capacity development of the involved actors, exchange of experience, joint learning...)
- The programme ensures an **active risk management**, including adequate **risk assessment, risk management measures (if required) and monitoring**.
- The programme is oriented towards the **development plans of the partner countries**.
- The programme is oriented towards the **principles and the quality criteria of the ADC**.
- **Synergies** with other ADA programmes with the same sectoral and geographic orientation are provided for.
- Ensuring **environmental, gender and social standards**.

There is the possibility to conduct an **“inception phase”** (e.g. for the development and realisation of baseline-studies, needs assessments, (market) analyses / including staff and travel expenses for Austrian/international experts) to the extent of **six months at the most**.

² <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/dac-gender-equality-marker.htm>

5.3 Geographic criteria

The programme has to be implemented in defined ADC priority countries³ / regions. Developing countries directly bordering a priority country can be included in the programme, however, the programme focus has to be in an ADC priority country / in ADC priority countries.

5.4 Budget, funds, funding rate, own funds, third-party funds

The **minimum volume of the total budget** amounts to **EUR 2,500,000** for the five-year term.

The **amount of the funding** and the funding rate are determined with the criteria above (5.1 to 5.3). ADC funding is granted exclusively in the form of non-reimbursable subsidies.

The **Indirect Project Costs (PBE)** account for **10 percent of the programme costs at the most**. These costs are based on the PBE arrangement in the current version and may exceed EUR 160,000. For the implementation of an "inception phase" no PBE can be awarded.

The **maximum funding rate is 80 percent of the total budget**.

The applicant has to bring in, disclose in a transparent way and prove **own funds** to the extent of **at least 10 percent** of the project costs. These can be either financial own funds, in-kind or work contributions of the applicant or contributions of third parties. Contributions of third parties are primarily the financial participation of a project partner, donations, sponsorship payments etc. Funding of third parties (through other donors) are, in any case, not considered as contributions of third parties and, therefore, not as own funds.

6. Process

6.1 Submission

The eligible development organisation notifies its **interest** in a Strategic Partnership to the ADA and submits **a programme concept** regarding the strategic, thematic and geographic orientation ("**Concept Note**") by an agreed deadline via e-mail. ADA will then examine the concept note and ascertain eligibility, proper registration, seemly conduct of business and suitability of the applicant.

Upon positive assessment of the concept note by the ADA the organisation submits the complete **application for funding at least four months before the beginning** of the Strategic Partnership.

The **application for funding consists of:**

1. Strategic Partnership – Programme Document (Application for funding) including Theory of Change (or comparable concept presentation)
2. Logical Framework Matrix
3. Time schedule
4. Programme budget
5. Documentation for „Inception Phase“ (if applicable)
6. copy of the statutes of the organisation
7. extract from the register of associations, the company register or equivalent
8. the ADA Financial Health Form completed and signed by an external/internal auditor or tax consultant, including the documentation required therein

³ <http://www.entwicklung.at/en/funding/funding-civil-society/ngo-cooperation-international/>

9. proof of creditworthiness / financial soundness according to a recognized rating system (e.g. by Creditreform, Kreditschutzverband 1870, Bisnode, Crif, Dun & Bradstreet, Schufa, Moody's, Fitch, DBRS)

The application for funding must be submitted electronically to the ADA (zivildgesellschaft-international@ada.gv.at) and has to include an authorised signature. The documents may be submitted in German, English or French. Permission by the Unit Civil Society International and Humanitarian Aid has to be obtained before submission regarding documentation in other languages. A brief and explicit description of the programme regarding problem analysis, objectives, results, target groups and activities has to be drafted in German in the application for funding (even for submissions in other languages).

The templates (e.g. concept note, application for funding, further documentation) can be downloaded from the ADA website <https://www.entwicklung.at/en/media-centre/downloads#c2078>.

6.2 Assessment

The assessment of the documentation (Concept Note and Application for funding) is done by a **commission by means of the criteria listed under point 5**. The members of the commission are to be convened by the Unit Civil Society International and Humanitarian Aid (ZGI). Regarding the composition of the commission it has to be paid attention that the members are from at least two divisions/organisational units and that there is no direct hierarchic relationship between them.

The members of the commission sign a declaration of impartiality before the assessment; they have to assess independently of instructions, it is not possible to give any instructions to the members of the commission regarding their assessment activities. The commission should consist of three members. Balance and professional competence are the main criteria regarding the composition of the commission. Upon positive assessment the ADA is issuing a funding offer (preparation of the funding agreement).

6.3. Strategic appraisal (environmental, gender and social standards)

At the beginning of a strategic partnership a strategic appraisal of the organisation is conducted to assess the consideration of environmental, gender and social standards by the organisation as well as the respective risk management. To this end, the institutional set-up and processes, the technical expertise, capacities and resources, including the organisation's knowledge management are evaluated. The respective documentation must ideally be submitted together with the Concept Note.

In general, the strategic appraisal is valid for 5 years, whereby – if necessary – an interim evaluation can be foreseen. Any recommendation given in the framework of the strategic appraisal must be duly considered by the organisation in the course of implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

7. Programme implementation

7.1 Monitoring, progress control and evaluations

The development organisation has to ensure continuous **monitoring** and **risk assessment**. Progress controls are conducted annually by the development organisation in cooperation with the local partner organisations to verify the achievement of the objectives. The results are to be reported to the ADA. The costs for the progress controls are covered by the indirect project costs (PBE) (**exception**: inception phase).

Reports on the **progress of the programme** are to be made annually in German, English, or French using the templates. Regarding reports in other languages or formats permission by the ADA has to be obtained before submission.

An annual “**reflection meeting**” is taking place between the development organisation and the ADA (inter-unit / inter-divisional). If the programme is implemented in an ADC priority country, the development organisation also maintains regular contact with the respective ADA coordination office.

In coordination with the development organisation, ADA may carry out “**field visits**” for the purpose of content-related and budgetary progress controls.

The **ADA Guidelines for Programme and Project Evaluations** must be applied for the planning and implementation of evaluations (see <https://www.entwicklung.at/ada/evaluierung>).

7.2 Reallocations and extensions of programme duration

Budget reallocations as well as extensions of the programme duration are subject to the **ADA Guidelines for Project Modifications – Budget Reallocations and Extensions of Project Durations** (see <https://www.entwicklung.at/en/media-centre/downloads>).

7.3 Visibility of the ADC

The contracting party and the local partner organisations have to place the ADC logo and a reference that the funds come from the ADC on all publications as well as on funded equipment and facilities according to the Guidelines for the Visibility of the Austrian Development Cooperation in the current version.

8. Legal claim

The decision to grant funding is made by the ADA exclusively on the basis of the funding guidelines at hand and the available budget resources. There is no legal entitlement to be granted funding.

9. Final provisions

Entry into force: 01.04.2016

Amended: 11.03.2019 with GZ: RL/2-ZGI/2019, 24.01.2020 with GZ: RL/11-ZGI/2019, 20.11.2020 with GZ: RL/13-ZGI/2020, 16.02.2021 with GZ: RL/4-ZGI/2021.

The ADA Unit Civil Society International and Humanitarian Aid is responsible for the further development of the guidelines.

Dr. Martin Siegfried Ledolter, LL.M.
Managing Director