

Procedures Manual for Partners Swedish Partnership Programme

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Introduction

The Swedish Partnership Programme Procedures Manual, the Swedish Partnership Programme Guide and the Application and Reporting Templates are the documents that all organizations need to read before applying to the programme. While the Programme Guide explains the Swedish Partnership Programme's principles and approach, this manual outlines the practical details your organization must know to apply, implement, and report your initiative.

Please note that **this manual is continuously updated**. You should always read the manual online on ForumCiv's website to ensure that you have the latest information. Do not download or copy the manual, neither fully nor partly to avoid missing updates. The date on the front page indicates the date of the latest update. Significant updates or changes to the programme are always communicated via email to the Swedish organization's assigned contact person for ongoing initiatives.

Info on ForumCiv's website

You will find basic information about the Swedish Partnership Programme on ForumCiv's website [Swedish Partnership Programme | ForumCiv](#). This is where you will find information on upcoming application windows and important updates and news about the programme. Significant updates or changes to the programme are always communicated via email to organizations' assigned contact persons for ongoing initiatives.

Forms and templates

You will find the latest updated agreement documents, forms and templates on ForumCiv's website [Forms and templates | ForumCiv](#). Always visit the website to ensure that you are using the latest versions of the documents. Previous versions will not be accepted by ForumCiv.

Civis – ForumCiv's grant management system

Civis is the name of ForumCiv's grant management system and the place where you manage your applications, initiatives and reports and submit all relevant documents. Civis is also where you handle your organization's profile, contact persons etc. and upload your latest organization documents. Note that you must create an account to use Civis. Users will be requested to do this before using Civis for the first time.

Contact

For any issues, you should contact your Programme Officer. If you do not have a Programme Officer, contact sokabidrag@forumciv.org. For technical support regarding Civis, contact civissupport@forumciv.org.

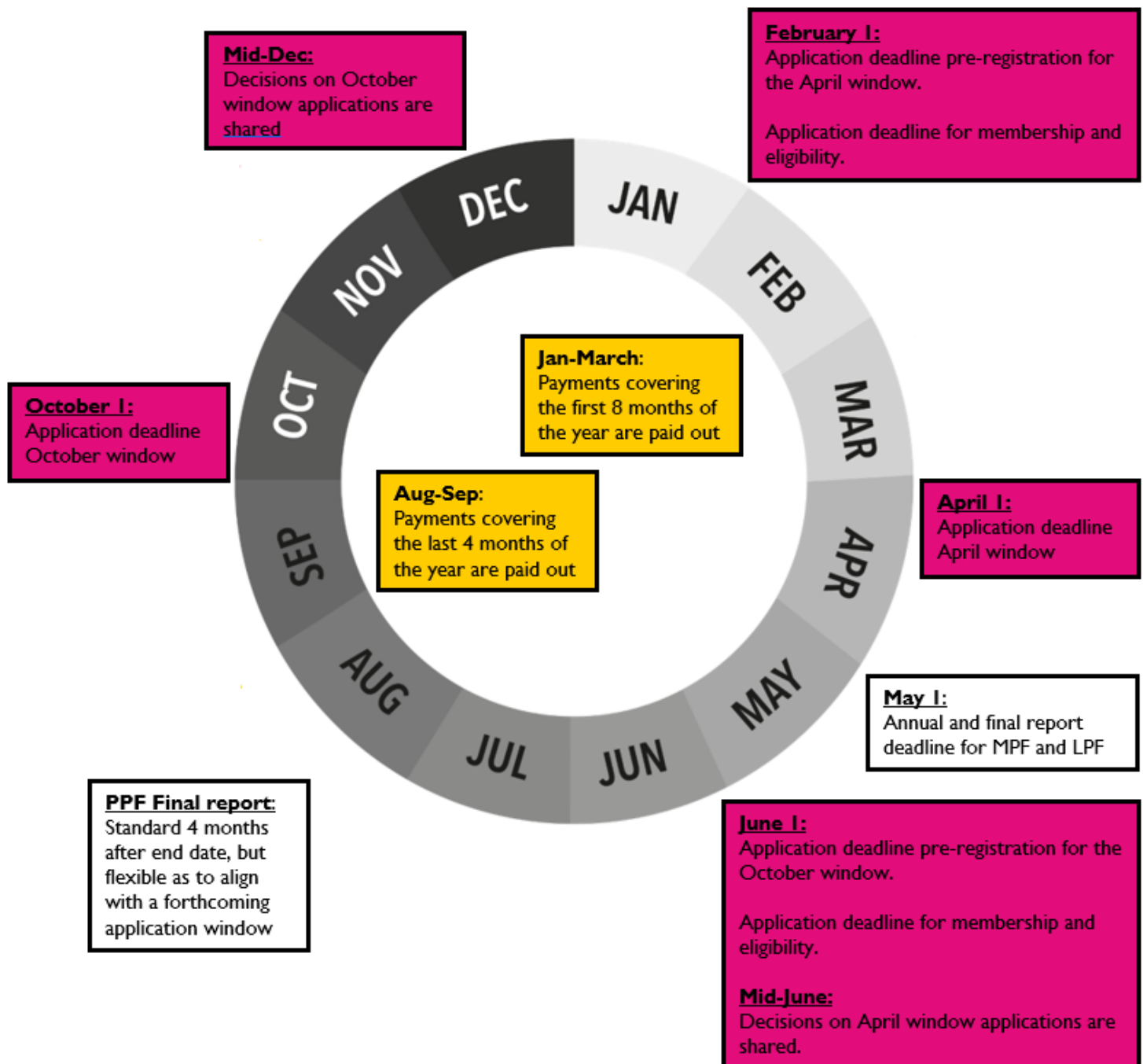
Complaints

Grant decisions cannot be appealed. An applicant organization may, however, lodge a complaint about how its application has been handled. Together with overall feedback, complaints should be directed to feedback@forumciv.org which is ForumCiv's complaint and response system.

Whistleblowing

If you encounter or suspect misconduct you are encouraged to use [ForumCiv's whistleblowing](#). If you wish to report to an external body, outside ForumCiv, you can use [Sida's Whistleblowing](#).

The Swedish Partnership Programme's Programme Cycle



Please consider the programme cycle when planning your initiative. The different boxes above show the deadlines for when to register for an application window, submit an application for an initiative and when you can expect a decision; the periods you can expect funds to be paid out to your organization from ForumCiv; and lastly when you need to submit annual and final reports. Note that submitting reports is a condition for receiving future payments and for applications to be approved.

Before applying for an initiative

Before you apply for funding to SPP, please look through the requirement areas below.

1. Are you eligible to apply for funds?

The Swedish organization must pass ForumCiv's eligibility assessment to apply for funds. This assessment has the purpose of ensuring that your organization fulfils the basic requirements to apply for funds from SPP.

An eligibility assessment is needed:

- if you are applying for initiatives for the first time.
- if more than three years has passed since your latest eligibility assessment.
- If more than three years has passed since the end date of your last implemented SPP initiative.

Eligibility requirements

The organization:

- Have existed for at least two financial years for which the annual reports have been presented and the board have been given discharge.
- Is active as an organization in Sweden with an adequate member base.
- Have a rights-based approach which is demonstrated in their partnerships, activities and outreach.
- Have an existing partnership with a local partner organization in the country where the initiative will take place.
- Have the necessary financial stability and capacity to implement and report an SPP initiative without risking the independence or sustainability of the organization.
- Does not have any significant compliance issues from previous projects.
- Is not a Sida Strategic Partner Organization.
- Is not a member of or receive grant from another Sida Strategic Partner Organization.

Applications for eligibility are sent via Civis at any time during the year, but applications will be assessed in ahead of the closest application window.

Please note that eligibility is not a guarantee for receiving funding.

Contact sokabidrag@forumciv.org for any questions about this process.

2. Are you a member of ForumCiv?

Organizations that are funded by SPP must be a member of ForumCiv. That means that organizations can submit an application before being a member. If the application is granted, the organization must be accepted as a member in ForumCiv before a grant agreement can be signed.

It is important that an organization understand whether it can fulfil the requirements for ForumCiv membership and stand behind ForumCiv's statutes and policy platform.

Membership requirements

The organization:

- Is a registered non-profit organization (ideell förening) or a foundation (stiftelse) in Sweden.
- Is based in Sweden.
- Is non-governmental.
- Is democratically governed, follow proper organizational practice and gives all members the ability to influence the organization.
- Have non-profit goals.
- Promote democratic development and human rights.
- Stand behind ForumCiv's [statutes](#) and [policy platform](#).
- Have existed for at least one financial year for which the annual reports have been presented and the board have been given discharge.
- Is not an economic association or a company.

Applications for eligibility are sent via Civis continuously during the year and are assessed accordingly. If your application is suggested for approval, a decision will be taken on the next planned board meeting. The process will take about 7-8 weeks If your application is complete.

Please note that a membership is not a guarantee for receiving funding.

Contact sokabidrag@forumciv.org for any questions about this process.

3. Is your initiative relevant for the Swedish Partnership Programme?

SPP grants funds that strengthen partnerships between Swedish and local civil society organizations abroad (in a DAC country) who organise to demand democracy, accountability, equality, and human rights for all.

For your initiative to meet SPP's formal relevance requirements it should:

- Be aligned with SPP's Theory of Change and principles (see **SPP Programme Guide**).
- Contribute to the [Swedish Government's strategy for support via Swedish civil society](#).
- Have a [Rights-Based Approach](#).
- Be planned and implemented by a partnership between a Swedish and local organization(s).
- Be implemented in an [Official Development Assistance](#) recipient country.

Service delivery and Rights Based Approach

Achieving structural change requires engaging in awareness-raising, mobilisation, and advocacy. However, in some context it may also be necessary to initially provide certain services to strengthen people's collective capacity. Taking the rights-based approach into account, it is possible to receive a limited amount of funds for service delivery. Such initiative will be assessed on a case-by-case basis where the relevance of information asked for depend on the context, partnership, and initiative. If you consider applying for funding to service delivery, consider the following questions:

- Is the overall approach in the partnership and this initiative rights-based and connected to SPP's theory of change?

- Is the service delivery a means to contribute to the rights-based partnership and initiative? Is it sustainable?
- Is the service delivery addressing an immediate need? Is meeting this need necessary for collective action to be possible?
- Can the service delivery be funded by a local public entity instead?
- Is there a plan for how to systematically manage the service delivery?
- Is there a risk that the service delivery cause harm? Is there a risk that it creates or exacerbate tensions between groups taking part of the service, and those that do not?
- Is there a clear, strategic, and realistic plan for how to phase-out the service delivery?

4. Is your partnership relevant for the Swedish Partnership Programme?

Local organization

Together with Swedish partners, SPP aims to support independent and democratically governed local organizations that stand behind ForumCiv's values. For this purpose, the local organization must fulfil these basic requirements:

- The governance and management are local and independent from the Swedish organization (any organizational support from must happen outside of the governing structure).
- The organization is not created by the Swedish organization.
- The organization can manage its capacity and financing operations without support from the Swedish organization.
- The organization stands behind ForumCiv's values.
- The organization does not advocate violence in any way or form.

This also applies to umbrella organizations that you might cooperate with.

Please note that a local organization must be legal entities to be formal parties to the agreement with the Swedish organization. Whether this requires the local organization to be formally registered will differ depend on the country of operation.

Local organization receiving support from several Swedish organizations or donors

ForumCiv is restrictive in assessing applications that implies that the local organization will receive funding from several Swedish organizations or donors. In these cases, the Swedish and local organizations should contact ForumCiv before applying and motivate the need and added value of the partnership set-up and describe how the support will be coordinated and harmonised (incl. an analysis of the administrative burden for the local partner organization).

If ForumCiv assess that that the added value and/or coordination and harmonisation is not relevant or effective, a joint application may still be submitted that involve the Swedish organizations wanting to support the same local organization. Such an application requires that one of the Swedish organizations is the main responsible party.

Partnership

SPP seeks to support a diverse range of civil society organizations that vary in size, capacity, and thematic focus. However, while considering this diversity, the following criteria need to be fulfilled for your partnership:

- The development work is led by civil society actors, with a strong local ownership.
- The development work contributes to the long-term goals/strategy of the local organization.
- The development work strengthens the civil society in one or more ways.
- The development work strengthens human rights.
- The development work has long-term goals for structural change.
- The development work engages in awareness-raising, mobilisation, and advocacy.
- The development work within a partnership continuously progresses, evolves and builds on results and learnings to better achieve structural change, with consideration to the opportunities and limitations of the context.

Informal actors (social movements, networks, human rights activists etc.)

In SPP, informal actors are defined from other civil society actors based on their more loosely organised characteristics and non-legal/registered status. The latter often excludes such actors from entering into agreements, owning assets and from holding legal protection and liabilities. This distinction is important to emphasise as it stops informal actors from managing ForumCiv grants themselves.

Support to informal actors is possible in SPP. For them to be operational and leverage their status as informal, a local partner organization must take formal responsibility for managing the funds and meeting the agreement requirements. This includes both taking charge of the bookkeeping, monitoring, coordinating the reporting process, etc.

Although informal actors take responsibility of implementing activities, they are inherently not official agreement partner due to the reasons above. Still, actors and organizations should sign an MOU to clarify the roles and responsibilities in their partnership and set down potential ground rules.

Applying for an initiative

If the Swedish and local organization(s) meets the requirement areas above, you are welcome to apply to SPP. An important step to start is looking at what funding modality that is suitable for your partnership and your goals of the initiative.

Funding modalities

The SPP has three different funding modalities. The basic conditions and requirements are outlined below. You can read more about the modalities in the ***Swedish Partnership Programme Guide***.

There is no funding ladder within the programme where organizations automatically can apply for higher funding after a completed initiative. Instead, the amount recommended or granted is closely connected to the capacity of the Swedish organization and previously implemented initiatives. This implies that the recommended or granted amount can remain the same across several implemented initiatives.

Partnership Pilot Funding (PPF)

The Partnership Pilot (PPF) Funding helps set the groundwork for more strategic, effective, and equitable development work and partnerships. Partners can use the funding in a multitude of ways, depending on where they are in their partnerships and what needs a local organization(s) might have.

The main purpose of the PPF is for partners to come together to assess their organizations and how they as partners can collaborate on initiatives to contribute to the local organization's long-term goal and strategy.

Applying partners must already have an established partnership to be able to apply for PPF. The minimum requirement is that there has been a form of previous collaboration, from which the partners have gotten to know each other well and have established a relationship of trust and transparency. As with all funding modalities, applying partners have a responsibility to assess the level of risk in entering into an agreement together.

Conditions for Partnership Pilot Funding

- Max 300,000 SEK per Swedish organization.
- Implementation period is maximum 18 months and depend on application window and alignment with following window.
- The applying organizations must have an existing partnership.
- The Swedish organization's budget can exceed the 25%-limit.
- A Swedish organization can only have one ongoing agreement with ForumCiv at a time.
- Audit as per ForumCiv's instructions is required.

Medium Partnership Funding (MPF)

The Medium Partnership Funding (MPF) combines traditional funding and a more flexible type of support into one. MPF supports initiatives with goals that are designed to incrementally contribute to the long-term goal and strategy of the local organization and provides flexibility for partners in the planning, implementation, and reporting of a grant.

ForumCiv determines the level of flexibility based on the Swedish and local organizations' capacities and the application. In MPF this entails an assessment of the Swedish organization and local organization's capacities and internal routines in relation to the initiative. ForumCiv assesses each of the organizations included in an application.

MPF is recommended for organizations that have conducted a Partnership Pilot Funding, a previous SPP pre-study or initiative, or first-time applicants that have carried out development initiatives with local organizations.

Conditions for Medium Partnership Funding

- Max 3 MSEK/year per Swedish organization
- Max 3 years implementation period.
- The Swedish organization's budget cannot exceed the 25%-limit (see guidelines below).
- A Swedish organization can only have one ongoing agreement with ForumCiv at a time.
- Audit as per ForumCiv's instructions is required.
- Several local organizations can be included in one MPF.
 - Note that Swedish organizations that have not previously worked with multiple local organizations but want to include several partnerships will be assessed accordingly by ForumCiv and should be ready to demonstrate capacity in that regard.
 - New partnerships may be included in an ongoing MPF after dialogue and approval from ForumCiv. Note that this does not change the granted amount for the MPF.
- ForumCiv will assess the local organization(s) in the application.
- The flexibility should be extended to the local organization as much as possible. The premise should be that the funding is as flexible as possible, based on the nature of the local

organization's work and its organizational capacity. ForumCiv assess and determines the maximum level of flexibility.

- The amount to apply for should be based on your self-assessment of your organizations' capacities and the following criteria:
 - Swedish organizations that have completed an initiative up to 500,000 SEK total can apply for maximum 500,000 SEK/year.
 - Swedish organizations that have been granted more than 500,000 SEK total by ForumCiv should apply for the same annual amount as their current or latest granted initiative.
 - Please note that the above recommended amounts are based on SPP's assessment of the organizations' capacity, which includes the organization's financial stability. Applications for increased amounts need to be strongly motivated and should include 1) documented decision and compliance record of managing funding from other donors with comparable agreements in terms of requirements and conditions (annual audits of the granted funding must have been a requirement), and/or 2) previous experience of managing ForumCiv funding with comparable agreement(s). Applications for increased amounts could be adjusted or rejected if SPP assesses that the capacity of your organization does not correspond to the applied amount.
- Swedish organizations that have not applied to SPP previously are recommended to look through the SPP Programme Guide and the contents of this manual before applying. For questions please contact sokabidrag@forumciv.org.
- In the agreement, flexibility is determined by the level of detail in the budget and operational plan.

Large Partnership Funding (LPF)

Please note that this modality is not open for applicants during 2023-2027.

The process for granting LPF started in May 2021 where organizations were invited to submit concept notes. A selection process was made based on the organization's capacities and relevance for the SPP programme and those organizations were in turn invited to submit pre-applications.

Pre-applications were assessed according to Programme standards and prioritisations in the fall of 2021. Decisions on which organizations could submit full applications were made by the General Secretary, Deputy Secretary General and Programme Manager.

For approved LPF applicants:

Specific LPF application instruction and agreement instructions apply. Please contact your Programme Officer for questions.

The Large Partnership Funding is the most flexible modality and is aimed for Swedish organizations with multiple partnerships. This funding modality is granted to organizations that are assessed to have high capacity to conduct rights-based partnerships, development work, and communication; that share SPP's theory of change; and which have high institutional capacity in financial and administrative management, internal steering and control, democratic governance, and in managing development programmes overall.

Two important differences between MPF and LPF should be noted:

- LPF provide funds to the Swedish organization's operations, which includes their rights-based work in Sweden and their partnerships abroad. SPP therefore mainly assess the Swedish organization's capacity.
- The Swedish organizations assess the kind of support they provide for the local organizations - a premise being that funding should be as flexible possible, based on the nature of the local organization's work and its organizational capacity.

Conditions for Large Partnership Funding:

- Over 3 MSEK/year per Swedish organization.
- Max 5 years implementation period.
- The Swedish organization's budget cannot exceed the 25%-limit.
- A Swedish organization can only have one ongoing agreement with ForumCiv at a time.
- Audit as per ForumCiv's instructions is required.
- Funding can be granted to the Swedish organization's operations, which includes rights-based work in Sweden and partnerships abroad.
- The Swedish organization determines the level of flexibility and support to local organization(s). The premise is that the funding is as flexible as possible.
- The Swedish organization can include local organizations into LPF throughout implementation. ForumCiv will not assess these but needs to be informed before funds are transferred.
- In the agreement, flexibility is determined by the level of detail in the budget and operational plan.

SPP's application windows

ForumCiv has two kinds of application windows, each with its specific timeline:

April window

- For PPFs and MPFs with intended start in June-July.
- Pre-registration window open 1/1-1/2.
- Application window is open 25/3-1/4.
- Approval decisions are shared mid-June. Rejection and dismissal decisions are shared continuously, but mid-June at the latest.
- Funds disbursed mid/late-June if available, otherwise August 31 at the earliest.

October window

- For PPFs and MPFs with intended start in January the coming financial year.
- Pre-registration window open 1/5-1/6.
- Application window open 24/9-1/10.
- Approval decisions usually shared mid-December. Rejection and dismissal decisions are shared continuously, but mid-December at the latest.
- Funds are disbursed in Jan-March.

When you can expect a decision

Approval decisions are usually shared mid-June for the April window and mid-December for the October window. Rejection and dismissal decisions are shared continuously, but mid-June/December at the latest.

Please note that the number of applications received during a window can affect the timelines.

When you can expect funds

The disbursement of funds to the Swedish organization is dependent on when ForumCiv receives funds from Sida. This usually happens in January-March and August each year, but delays can occur.

For information on the exact dates of upcoming application windows and deadlines, check the programme page on ForumCiv's website [Swedish Partnership Programme | ForumCiv](#).

Organization documents

Organization documents are very important for ForumCiv and SPP as they give insight and understanding of characteristics and capacity of an organization. You are required to submit your latest organizational documents even before you apply to SPP (see the pre-registration process below). ForumCiv refers to the following as Organization documents:

- Latest approved annual meeting minutes, signed according to general practice (commonly signed by two persons and adjusted by two persons).
- Extracts from minutes that show the organization's elected authorised signatories, signed according to general practice (commonly signed by two persons and adjusted by two persons).
- Latest approved activity report, signed by the departing board.
- Latest approved annual report including income statement and balance report, signed by the departing board.
- Latest auditors' report, signed and dated by the auditor.

In turn, your application will not be assessed unless the latest organization documents required by the modality are submitted. Organization documents should be uploaded directly to the Swedish or local organization's profile in Civis. If you have signed an agreement with ForumCiv you are obligated to always provide the latest organizational documents within a month after they have been established.

Self-assessment of your organizations and partnership

ForumCiv expect all applying organizations to carry out a self-assessment of their respective organizations and of their partnership prior to applying. The assessments should include:

- Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership and your respective organizations.
- Analysis of the power relations that exist in the partnership.
- Assessment of your organizations respective systems and routines for planning, monitoring and evaluation, and financial management and internal control.

This will help you ensure that the focus of the partnership is aligned with the local organization's strategy, long-term goals and organizational needs. The assessments will also allow you to investigate what capacities your respective organizations have, and which ones need to be developed. The assessments will also help you build trust and transparency between your organizations and support you in planning the future of your partnership and how it will support the local organization strategically.

The application process

The application process constitutes of three overall steps:

- 1) Pre-registration window.
- 2) Submitting the application.

3) Application assessment.

Pre-registration window

Organizations who intend to apply in a forthcoming April or October window must submit the following documents in Civis a couple of months before the application window deadline:

- The Swedish organization's latest organizational documents.
- A statement of the local partner organization(s)'s sources of income during the past bookkeeping (usually calendar) year.

The purpose of the pre-registration is to allow for an updated assessment of the Swedish organization's size and capacity and an overview of the local partner organization(s), as well as to facilitate the planning of the application window. The assessment is based on criteria that connects to SPP's prioritisation principles (see below).

In Civis, you create a New application under the tab Initiatives in the top bar. You must then fill in all required information and select the applicable workflow type (SPP), programme (SPP), window of funding and Initiative type. After the application is created you will receive tasks with detailed descriptions on how to go forward.

Please notice that ForumCiv does not accept pre-registrations or applications via email or hard copies. All pre-registrations and applications received outside of the set application windows are dismissed.

Organizations must complete this step to be able to apply for a forthcoming window. If you are accepted to apply, you update the application by the deadline of the forthcoming window.

Swedish Partnership Programme's prioritisation principles

ForumCiv is sometimes not able to grant funds for all initiatives that are relevant for the programme. To be able to continue supporting a wide spectrum of Swedish organizations, ForumCiv assesses each application on its own, but there is also a need to prioritise among the organizations applying for funding. When that is necessary, ForumCiv prioritises on the following grounds:

Rights-based perspective in international partnerships/cooperation

To what degree does the organization propagate for a rights-based perspective in its international partnerships/cooperation?

In international cooperation the emphasis to combat structural causes of poverty is highlighted and an organization should as clearly as possible present an idea on underlying causes of poverty and the responsibility of duty bearers, usually the government/governmental agencies, to guarantee the rights of its citizens. A rights-based perspective should be visible in the organization's steering documents.

A pluralistic and diverse international civil society

How important would the support to the Swedish organization be for local civil society actors? To what extent would support to the Swedish organization mean that local civil society actors are given opportunities to act for change otherwise not given?

There has been a trend for many years that international funding is directed towards large and strong organizations with many employees, putting emphasis on compliance and thereby limiting the possibility for support to other civil society actors. ForumCiv support should ensure support to a

diverse civil society, giving priority to Swedish organizations having partnerships with civil society actors otherwise lacking international support.

Rights-based perspective in Sweden

To what degree does the organization lobby, advocate and spread information that contributes to a fair and sustainable world from a rights-based perspective in Sweden?

An organization working with a holistic rights-based approach, with both international partnerships and towards members/stakeholders/public in Sweden should be prioritised over an organization only focusing on international work.

Added outreach and engagement in Sweden

To what extent would financial support from ForumCiv contribute to adding to the outreach, engagement and understanding of causes of inequality and poverty in the organization's work in Sweden?

Support to connecting an organization's international and domestic operations is an effective way of working towards a global civil society. Special attention should be paid to issued-based organizations working towards large number of members/stakeholders/public in Sweden.

Added value of the Swedish organization

What is the added value of the Swedish organization?

The added value is defined as the increased possibility for rights-based changes to occur when funding is going to a partnership instead of directly to a local organization. It could be understood as the difference in results between funding a partnership between a Swedish organization and a local organization, and the direct funding of the local organization; if all funding theoretically would be transferred to the local organization what negative consequences would it have for achieving changes?

Submitting the application

This step is where you submit your application in by updating information, uploading the required documents and filling in the budget. Make sure to read the instructions carefully so that your application is complete and filled in correctly.

The pre-registration step may have provided you with input and a recommended amount that should be considered when submitting the application.

On ForumCiv's website you will find the specific application document you are required to upload [Forms and templates | ForumCiv](#). Together with detailed instructions for how to complete the application. Which documents you should use depend on which modality you are applying for. Always make sure you have the latest applications instructions and templates. Application done according to old instructions and templates will not be accepted.

On the website you will also find reference documents that will be of support when planning your initiative. For example **SPP's Problem Analysis Framework**, which provides support in identifying root causes to a problem, its impacts and what key actors to engage.

Note that all applications should be submitted in English. Other languages require prior approval from ForumCiv.

Your Programme Officer

Once you have submitted an application you will be assigned a Programme Officer. In addition to assessing your applications and reports, the Programme Officer is responsible for the overall communication with the Swedish organization and should always be your first and main contact for questions and support.

PLEASE REMEMBER!

Before submitting the application, take an extra look to make sure that:

- The latest instructions and templates have been used
- All the necessary information and documents are updated
- You select the correct application window and funding modality

SPECIAL ROUTINE: Confidential application and initiatives

Sensitive information can have a major negative impact on the safety of your organizations. ForumCiv classify applications and initiatives as “Confidential” when including sensitive information that require a high level of protection. These cases can cause serious harm to the safety of individuals and organizations due to risks related to the sensitivity of the information and/or context would it be exposed. For example, information causing individuals and organizations to be persecuted, threatened, targeted by violence or forced to cease their activities.

Protecting information at a high level requires time and resources for setting-up and maintaining routines and systems. If not necessary, this is highly inefficient and will become a costly and tedious task. It is therefore very important to determine whether your application, and potential future initiative, should be treated as confidential. This requires that you analyse your need for confidentiality, and that you understand the differences in ForumCiv’s procedures between regular and confidential initiatives.

Differences in procedures between regular and confidential initiatives

The table below contains the procedures for information management and the differences between regular and confidential initiatives. Note that these only concern the procedures between your organization and ForumCiv. It is the responsibility of your organization to ensure that the procedures in your partnership are designed in an adequate way. If the confidential routines are not followed at all times there is a risk that sensitive information is exposed.

Procedure	Regular	Confidential <i>Please note that ForumCiv is not able to provide accounts to the services mentioned below.</i>
Verbal communication	Open	Pre-cautionary measures so that sensitive information cannot be overheard or recorded. Consider the sensitivity of call logs.
Digital meetings	Open	Teams, Zoom
Written communication	Open	Signal, SecureMail

Information management	Open in ForumCiv's grant management system.	Name of the initiative, country of implementation, total budget amount, and name of Swedish organization are open in ForumCiv's grant management system. Securely in designated folder on ForumCiv's cloud, SecureMail
Internal information sharing	Open within ForumCiv.	Limited to key persons in ForumCiv. Shared securely in ForumCiv's system.
External information sharing	Approved initiatives are shared on Sida's CSO database	None.

Please note that if there are specific aspects of an initiative that you consider confidential, **the initiative can be managed according to the regular procedure as long as sensitive information is never shared with ForumCiv.** This requires that ForumCiv will be able to assess and manage the overall initiative without sensitive information.

Before you apply

If you believe that your application, and potential future initiative, need to be treated as confidential, you send an email to ForumCiv via sokabidrag@forumciv.org **minimum five weeks** before the deadline to submit applications. Without disclosing any sensitive information you should provide an analysis of your need for confidentiality that answers the following questions:

- What makes it necessary to treat the initiative as confidential?
- How did you establish this? (Did you do a risk-assessment?)
- What are you and the local organization doing to keep information about the initiative confidential?

ForumCiv will then contact you for a discussion of your analysis; the differences in procedures between regular and confidential initiatives; and how information is handled by ForumCiv.

At this point, you may decide that the application, and potential future initiative, does not need to be treated as confidential. If so, the application can be submitted as usual.

If it is assessed as necessary after the discussion, you will be asked to provide a thorough risk assessment and any other complementary information needed. Note that if the risk assessment and complementary information is sent to ForumCiv through open communication (i.e. not through Signal or SecureMail) it cannot include any sensitive information.

If ForumCiv determines that your application, and potential future initiative, should be treated as confidential, your organizations must start to follow the procedures for confidential initiatives. This means that you must submit the application via Signal or SecureMail directly to the Programme Officer provided by ForumCiv. Please note that ForumCiv does not provide accounts to Signal or SecureMail.

Classification of ongoing initiatives

Contact your Programme Officer if you have an ongoing initiative and consider that its classification needs to be changed from open to confidential or from confidential to open.

Remember that continuous action and attention are required, everyone must keep classification in mind when developing and/or saving documents. Personal responsibility is key for maintaining an appropriate procedure over time. Remember that it is the owner of the information who is responsible for ensuring that the information is classified. The initial owner is usually the one who created the information, decided about it, or assumed responsibility of it.

Application assessment

The application assessment consists of three phases:

1. Your application is assessed by a Programme Officer. The assessment consists of an analysis of your application and the applying organizations, primarily the Swedish organization.
2. When the Programme Officer has completed the assessment, it is discussed within a Grants Committee, comprising of key staff from ForumCiv. The composition of the Committee ensures programmatic and contextual knowledge as well as knowledge about internal and external compliance requirements established by ForumCiv and Sida.
3. The final decision is taken by the Head of the Grants Committee and is shared with the Swedish organization together with the assessment. If the decision is to approve, an agreement is signed with ForumCiv before the funds are disbursed. If the decision is to reject, you are offered a meeting to discuss the decision.

In cases where an application is assessed as not fulfilling formal requirements for receiving grants or not possible to support based on SPP's framework, a decision for dismissal may be taken by the Head of the Grants Committee. The organization will then be informed and offered a meeting to discuss the decision.

The Swedish Partnership Programme's Assessment Criteria

ForumCiv approves applications through an objective and competitive process. All applications are assessed using pre-determined criteria based on the Programme's principles and Theory of Change.

SPP's assessment criteria are closely tied to one another. The criteria therefore focus on key aspects of an initiative while assessing its potential as a whole. An application may therefore be rejected or approved though certain criteria are assessed as sufficient or in need of improvement.

Relevance

The extent to which the objectives of an initiative are consistent with target groups' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies.

Organization assessment

The extent to which an organization(s) has the programmatic, administrative, and financial capacity to manage funds in a transparent way.

Implementation strategy

(a) **Effectiveness:** the extent to which the set objectives of an initiative are likely to be achieved; and whether the implementation strategy is an appropriate way of achieving the objectives under the prevailing circumstances;

(b) **Feasibility:** the sum of several factors, such as economic, technical, time, human resources etc. that is needed to plan, implement, and monitor the project in a satisfactory way.

Effective partnership

The extent to which partners demonstrate adequate capacity to maintain an effective, transparent, and equitable partnership.

The assessment process also includes reviewing the applying organization based on its organizational documents and history within ForumCiv (e.g. applications, initiatives, reports, organizational assessments, evaluations, past conditions, recommendations and communication etc.). Second, applications are reviewed in two steps during the assessment process, first based on the criteria and second in comparison to other applications on the basis of SPP's prioritisation principles. This is to ensure that the programme supports a diversity and representation of partnerships and does so in the most qualitative and efficient way possible.

A note on costs for salaries, reimbursements and remunerations

The costs in the budget must of course be reasonable and motivated in relation to the described initiative. ForumCiv specifically assess the costs related to salaries, reimbursements, remunerations etc. in Sweden. Important then is that the costs can be specified in terms of job position, percentage of a full employment and number of months of employment. The costs must also include mandatory taxes and social fees according to applicable legislation.

ForumCiv expects the Swedish organization to have done a similar assessment of its partner(s) in subsequent step.

Completions during the assessment

Please note that after you have submitted the application, your Programme Officer may request completions during the assessment process. This is quite common and done to help understand aspects of the application that may be unclear due to missing or vague information.

Requests will be sent as a task in Civis together with a deadline. The responsible contact person for the initiative will be notified via email so make sure that check email frequently as not miss any completions and deadlines.

When your initiative is granted

Once ForumCiv has approved your initiative you will receive the decision memo with the assessment on which the approval is based. It is important that you read through the decision memo carefully as this document will form a part of the agreement with ForumCiv and may contain feedback to your organizations and points for follow-up during implementation. ForumCiv expects that the decision memo is shared amongst all partner organizations involved in the granted initiative.

When receiving an approval, the Swedish organization will be asked to share the names and email-addresses of two authorised signatories that will sign the agreement. It must be possible to verify these persons with your latest organization documents. As the agreement is sent digitally, they should also have a Swedish Bank-ID. ForumCiv will not be able to prepare and send the agreement until this information has been shared with your Programme Officer.

Signing the agreement

The agreement will be sent for digital signing via Bank-ID to two authorised signatories.

The agreement consists of the following documents:

- The agreement template.
- The decision-memo.
- The approved operational plan.
- The approved budget.
- SPP's General conditions for Sida grants.
- ForumCiv's audit instructions for SPP.
- ForumCiv's principles for purchase and procurement.

The agreement is sent together with an accompanying letter and appendices that must be filled in before you can receive the first disbursement (see below).

It is critical that you read through and understand all the information before signing. Once you have signed the agreement your organization has accepted the responsibilities and conditions for fulfilling the agreement as well as in the case it is not fulfilled. Contact your Programme Officer before signing the agreement in case you have any questions or concerns.

Please note that the grant is defaulted if ForumCiv has not received a signed agreement within six (6) months of sending the decision memo.

Failure to comply with the agreement may result in repayment of the grant.

The agreement documents

Below follow a brief description of the documents making up the agreement together with some important points to consider in each. These can be found on [Forms and templates | ForumCiv](#).

On the website you will also find the [Q&A SPP Agreement](#) that contain detailed questions and answers on the agreement documents for support and clarifications. The Q&A is continuously updated based on feed-back and questions.

Cooperation agreement

The Cooperation agreement include the basic conditions for grants in the Swedish Partnership Programme and for the implementation of the initiative. Note that the full agreement contains this document and all annexes. All references to the "Agreement" thus include more than just this document. ForumCiv would like to emphasise the following points in the Cooperation agreement:

- Transferring funds to partner in subsequent step – It is the responsibility of the Swedish organization to ensure that partners in subsequent step comply with the agreement. This means that all annexes apply in all subsequent steps. Project description and Budget must be annexed to the agreement between a Swedish organization and a partner in subsequent step. A signed copy of the agreement is to be sent to ForumCiv within one month after it is signed.
- Administration fee – All grants exceeding 1.000.000 SEK per year must pay an administration fee that will be used as a risk buffer by ForumCiv, e.g. in case Sida makes a repayment claim. The conditions for the administration fee, what amount you potentially must pay and when is

stated in paragraph 2.6 and 2.7. For more information on the use of the administration fee, see Frequently Asked Questions.

- Changes and deviations – Under paragraph 13 you will find what deviations and changes that require prior written approval from ForumCiv. Always contact your responsible officer if you are unsure of what you can and cannot change in the initiative.
- Disbursements – Under paragraph 3 you will find the conditions that apply for disbursements as well as a preliminary disbursement plan, i.e. when you can expect funding from ForumCiv. As of the second disbursement, you must provide a simplified financial report according to the agreement. On ForumCiv's website you will find a template that you can use. It is important to know that you must request granted funds during the current year, otherwise you risk losing these funds. Also important to know is that ForumCiv has the right to withhold funds in cases where the agreement conditions are not fulfilled.
- Special provisions – If ForumCiv have approved exceptions or amendments to your agreement, these are stated under paragraph 12.
- References to other annexes – The Cooperation agreement does not contain all conditions that apply but makes references to other annexes in some cases. Contact your responsible officer if you are unsure of what annexes apply during.

Project description (Decision-memo and Operational plan, if applicable)

The Decision-memo includes ForumCiv's assessment of your application and the motivation for why it is approved within the Swedish Partnership Programme. The Decision-memo also includes any conditions and limitations to the decision.

The Operational plan is the plan submitted together with the application, approved after potential updates and completions. The document contains information about what ForumCiv have approved in terms of the initiative's structure, specifically the goals, how these will be achieved, how the implementation will be followed-up and evaluated, participants/target groups etc. The level of detail in the operational plan decides the level of flexibility that you have when it comes to making changes in the initiative's structure.

Budget

The budget clarifies the sums for the grant approved by ForumCiv and the own contribution that must be included. The budget also contains the budget posts and the costs that have been approved. The details of the budget, in the form of number of budget posts and their respective sums, decides the level of flexibility that you have when it comes to making changes to the budget.

ForumCiv's General conditions for Sida grants

The General conditions can be understood as a complementary part when it comes to the basic conditions within most that concern implementation and reporting. These conditions are based on Sida's general conditions and are essential to ensure compliance in the management of Sida funds. ForumCiv would like to emphasize the following points in the General conditions.

- Eligible and non-eligible costs – Article 7 includes a detailed overview of what kind of costs are eligible or not. Although the information is rather detailed, it is not necessarily all-

encompassing. Therefore, do not hesitate to contact your responsible officer if you are unsure of what is considered an eligible cost.

- Transferring funds to partner in subsequent step – Article 8 clarifies a bit more in detail of what furthering the conditions of the agreement in all subsequent steps entails.
- Application of restrictive measures – Article 14 outlines the requirements and measures that agreement partners are obligated to fulfil for preventing the grant to be made available or benefit parties on the EU Sanctions List. For this purpose, ForumCiv has specified the following instructions:

Instructions to organizations on how to adhere to the agreement paragraphs regarding the EU Sanction List

According to the agreements, all organizations need to check that they adhere to the paragraphs on the EU Sanctions List. This can be done according to the following:

- Before signing an agreement, make sure the organization is not on the EU Sanctions list.
- Before signing an agreement, make sure none of the two authorised signatories is on the EU Sanctions List.
- Make sure that no suppliers funded by the grant are on the EU Sanctions List.
- If any money or goods are made available to, or given for the benefit of, an organization, individual, group, or entity, make sure the organization/individual/group/entity is not on the EU Sanctions List.

- Breach of the agreement – What is considered a breach of the agreement, what happens and what responsibility you and ForumCiv have in such cases are stated in Article 15. Important to know is that the agreement applies as long as the Swedish organization has not fulfilled its responsibilities when it comes to reporting, auditing and repayment obligations, which applies both when the initiative is reported according to plan or, for some reason, is terminated or cancelled.
- Amendments to the agreement – Article 20 clarifies what applies when it comes to making changes in the agreement, including ForumCiv's obligations if changes are required because of external factors, such as Sida making changes, new legislation or similar.

ForumCiv's audit instructions for SPP

These instructions apply for all funds in all steps without exceptions. It is very important that you understand the audit instructions to be able to determine whether a correct and complete audit has been done. Although an authorised auditor is hired for the assignment, it is the Swedish organization that has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the whole grant has gone through a complete audit according to the instructions.

ForumCiv's principles for purchase and procurement

These principles specify the conditions for procurement and purchase and applies to all partners and actors that take part of the grant. Important to know is that a written price comparison of at least three suppliers must be done for procurement of all goods and services that exceed a value of 50,000 SEK exclusive of VAT.

Outside of Sweden, the threshold amounts shall be adopted to the context and relevant currency, though not in ways that increases the threshold amounts, i.e. lowering the requirements.

Agreement with your partner organization

The terms and conditions of the agreement applies to all ForumCiv funds transferred in subsequent steps. As mentioned, the agreement consists of the following documents:

- The agreement template.
- The decision-memo.
- The approved operational plan.
- The approved budget.
- SPP's General Conditions.
- ForumCiv's Audit Instructions.
- ForumCiv's Procurement Principles.

After signing the agreement with ForumCiv, the Swedish organization is required to sign an agreement with the local organization. **On ForumCiv's website you will find an agreement template that you can use.** Note that all annexes must always be annexed to the agreement with the partner organization.

The annex Project description that you attach to the agreement with your partner must specify what has been agreed on in terms of the initiative's structure, specifically the goals, how these will be achieved, how the implementation will be followed-up and evaluated, participants/target groups etc. The budget that is attached to the agreement with your partner must show both the agreement currency (SEK) and the local currency, as well as the exchange rate used for converting the local sums into SEK.

The agreement between the Swedish and local organization **must be signed by both parties before the first transfer of funds. A copy of the signed agreement should be sent to your Programme Officer within one (1) month after signing**, and at the latest six months after entering into agreement with ForumCiv. For LPF, copies should be provided upon ForumCiv's request instead.

For the agreement to be signed correctly it must fulfil the following:

- Digital and non-digital signatures cannot be mixed for signing the same agreement. Use only one format.
- For digital signing without Swedish Bank-ID, copies of identification cards of signatories should be attached to the agreement. Digital signing services usually have a "request attachment"-function that can be used.
- For non-digital signing, the signatories must sign the agreement, and in addition each page of the agreement (including all the agreement documents) must also be signed with the initials of the signatories. Digital signing services usually replace this with a verification stamp or similar on each page.

Responsibility of the Swedish organization

It is important to underline that it is the Swedish organization's responsibility to ensure that the agreement (which includes all the attached documents mentioned above) is upheld and complied with by all parties in subsequent steps in all stages of the initiative.

The agreement specifies the minimum requirements that must be included in initiatives funded by SPP. You can add terms and make amendments to the agreement based on your specific needs if it does not lower or alter the requirements of the agreement, omit and/or delete original sections in the agreement, or violate the agreement; you can always make the agreement stricter if it does not contradict and leave out parts of the agreement with ForumCiv. Additional terms and annexes can be added under paragraph 12 in SPP's agreement template.

Contracting auditors

Some organizations consider contracting auditors and reviewing audit reports as difficult due to, for example, expensive audit costs, difficulties in finding an audit firm, audit firms not completely understanding the assignment, or audits not being conducted as per instructions.

To support organizations and protect them from audit firms that have not complied with the instructions, **organizations must inform their Programme Officer of which audit firm they intend to contract when submitting the first requisition.** ForumCiv will then check whether the suggested audit firm has been noted for not performing assignments in a satisfactory or concerns about its independence or professional competence. If so, ForumCiv will recommend using another audit firm. **Please note that according to the agreement (Paragraph 8.3 in the Samarbetsavtalsmall), ForumCiv has the mandate to approve the audit firm of the Swedish organization.**

ForumCiv strongly recommends that you contact an audit firm as soon as your intervention is approved. Communicating with the auditor early on during the implementation can give important support and ensure that the audit process will be effective.

Requisition your funds

The following documents are required to be signed and submitted to ForumCiv before funds can be requisitioned:

- Requisition form
- Simplified financial report
- Composition of the board form
- Plusgiro/Bankgiro form

The requisition documents can be found on [Forms and templates | ForumCiv](#).

Filling in the Simplified financial report

With every requisition (except the very first) you are required to submit a Simplified financial report. When preparing the report, you should check your bookkeeping, reconcile your accounts and make a realistic prognosis of future payments. The report requires you to fill in the following:

- The total sums for operational costs (including own contribution) and Administration in Sweden, according to the latest approved budget.
- The Swedish organization's income for the ongoing year, in terms of funds received from ForumCiv for the year and any approved carry-overs from the previous year.
- Payments made by the Swedish organization (this includes actual payments and costs as well as disbursements made to local partner organizations up to the latest reconciled month).
- How much of the payments made were financed by own contribution and how much by the ForumCiv grant.

- The Swedish organization's balances + explanation for them.
- Payments planned until next requisition.
- How much of the payments planned are to be financed by own contribution and how much by the ForumCiv grant.
- The local organization's balances + explanation for them.

By filling in these amounts, the Simplified financial report template will automatically calculate your funding need until the next requisition and the amount to be requested. The amount to be requested is calculated based on the sum of Payments made and planned as financed by the grant minus the amount of ForumCiv funds received.

The template also indicates whether a budget update is required. If there is a difference in a positive sum between the latest approved budget and the payments made and planned by the second requisition each year, a budget update request should be submitted separately.

Please note that for the local organization, the requirement for a Plusgiro or Bankgiro account is substituted by the condition that the bank account must be held in the name of the organization and that written evidence of this must be presented.

You need to request the funds within the timeframe and amount stipulated in the agreement by using SPP's requisition form. ForumCiv's principles is to make two payments per year, the first at the beginning of the year, and the second by August 31 at the earliest, as long as all conditions are fulfilled. Note that only one payment is made for PPFs. A preliminary disbursement plan is included in the Cooperation agreement.

General disbursement plan:

- First requisition year 1:
 - 2/3 of the sum according to budget for the year (PPF – the whole budget sum).
 - Paid out at the beginning of the year.
- Second requisition year 1:
 - Remaining sum of the budget for the year, or approved sum according to funding needs.
 - Paid out by August 31 at the earliest.
- First requisition remaining years:
 - 2/3 of the sum according to budget for the year, or approved sum according to funding needs.
 - Paid out at the beginning of the year.
- Second requisition remaining years:
 - Remaining sum of the budget for the year, or approved sum according to funding needs.
 - Paid out by August 31 at the earliest.

Note that **funds must be requested before December 1st** during the financial year they are granted otherwise they will be defaulted.

ForumCiv will not make payments to the Swedish organization if there are unresolved compliance issues in any previous or on-going initiatives. This includes delayed or incomplete reporting.

Two authorised persons for the account

ForumCiv requires that the account where the funds will be held must be signed in unison by two authorised persons from the Swedish organization.

This is stipulated in the agreement and in the Plusgiro/Bankgiro form. **Before signing, this requirement must be part of the Swedish organization's internal payment routines and set-up by the bank** (physically and digitally) for the account. Allowing only one person to make and authorise payments significantly increases the risk of mistakes and misuse of your funds.

Implementing your initiative

Dates in the SPP Programme cycle

- **Jan-March** – The first requisition each year is paid out.
- **May 1** - Budget for the current year is updated after the annual closing of the previous year, accounting for any actual carry overs. Note that the previous year's budget should not be updated.
- **May 1** – Deadline for Final reports and Annual monitoring reports for MPF and LPF.
- **Aug-Sep** – The second requisition each year is paid out. Budget is updated if the funding need is lower than budgeted.
- **Nov 15-Dec 15** – Window for submitting carry over requests.

Budget updates and carry-overs

Budget updates

A budget update is an agreement amendment and thus must be approved in writing beforehand. This applies to the agreement with ForumCiv and in all agreements in subsequent steps.

Budget updates are required to be sent to ForumCiv at different times during the implementation of an initiative. Budget updates are submitted by using the Budget update request template which you can find on [Forms and templates | ForumCiv](#). Once the budget update is decided upon by ForumCiv it becomes the latest approved budget in the agreement. This means that it must be referred or related to in all future budget updates, reporting, requisition plans and other agreement conditions.

To consider in terms of budget updates:

- **8% Administration in Sweden** – this can differ across years but must be maximum 8% on an overall budget level. If the granted support is lowered during a budget update, the administration needs to be lowered as well.
- **% Self-financing** – the required percentage differ across the years: 5% for 2023, 7.5% for 2024, and 10% for 2025. Additional self-financing of more than the required percentage can be added in practice but ForumCiv avoids including this in budget updates as this contractually binds the Swedish organization to more self-financing than required. Additional self-financing should instead be included in the financial reporting. Note that any additional self-financing included in the financial reporting must follow the agreement conditions. The total outcome of the own contribution cannot be less than the required percentage of the total outcome of the operational expenses. This means that if you underspend your budget, you can lower your own contribution and if you overspend your budget, you must increase your own contribution. If you put in more than the required own contribution for one year, you are allowed to reduce

it a following year within the same initiative. As long as the total own contribution meets the requirement for the initiative as a whole.

- The 75-25% division – to keep track of this division, ForumCiv recommend keeping to the approved amounts instead of the % per year. Since ForumCiv is very restrictive in approving reallocations from local organizations to the Swedish organization, the main thing that could impact this is if the partner organizations' budget posts are constantly lowered in comparison to the Swedish organization. Partners should actively work in countering such budget updates.

Details on different budget updates submitted to ForumCiv:

Budget update after the closing of a financial year

- The update is submitted by May 1st at the latest together with the annual report.
- The update should only change the ongoing year's budget and include any carry-overs from the closed year. The closed year's budget is not changed.

Budget update as a result of lowered funding need

- The update is submitted together with the second requisition each year if the funding need is lower than the granted support for the ongoing year. A lowered funding need will be indicated by the Simplified financial report which is sent in together with the requisition.
- The update should reflect the lowered funding need for the ongoing year by amounting to the same total sum as that requested in the first and second requisitions of the year plus the own contribution.
- If applicable, the update can also reflect change in funding need in the next year's budget.

Other budget updates (including but not limited to paragraph 13 in the agreement)

- The update is submitted throughout the year when needed, except for:
 - Changes to the total budget sums per year, which are submitted with the second requisition (see above).
 - Requests for carry-overs, which are submitted between 15/11-15/12 each year by using the Carry-over request template (see below).
- Please note that paragraph 13.1 b) does not mean reallocations that do not change one or more budget posts more than 10% from the latest approved budget can be made without ForumCiv's prior approval. This does not mean that the budget in the agreement with ForumCiv can be updated under the same circumstances. All updated to the agreement always require ForumCiv's prior approval. This 10% is to allow for flexibility to adjust for deviations in expected costs. Important to remember is that the financial reporting is always done against the latest approved budget, which will also be checked in the audit.

Carry-overs

Carry-overs are funds that you have received from ForumCiv but wish to carry-over to the following year. Note that this is different from budget updates that change the total sums per year. As mentioned, budget updates are contractually binding and are usually done before all granted funds for a year are paid out.

Carry-overs require ForumCiv's prior approval, meaning before the year has ended and the funds are carried over. Because of this, the amounts are based on your prognosis. If approved, the actual carry-overs are included in the budget update submitted after the closing of the financial year and followed-up by ForumCiv.

Requests are submitted by using the Carry-over request template which you can find on [Forms and templates | ForumCiv](#). In the template you state the budget and your prognosis for the current year, which will demonstrate the carry over, and explain the variance and describe how you plan to use the funds the following year.

Carry over requests can only be submitted between 15th November and 15th December each year and after the second requisition, if applicable, has been paid out. Requesting carry overs should only be done once per initiative each year.

Carry-overs which are not approved should be repaid to ForumCiv. Reasons for not approving carry-overs can be if the request is submitted after deadline on 15th December, or if the actual carry-overs to be included in the budget update after annual closing significantly differ from what has been previously approved.

Note that LPFs only need to inform about carry-overs that mean a deviation of 10% or less in one more budget post(s) of the latest approved budget.

To consider in terms of carry-over requests:

- Carry-over requests must only show the prognosis for each budget line. It should not include updates to the budget.
- The self-financing can be over 5% in the prognosis but it should not include additional self-financing compared to the latest approved budget.
- LPFs require ForumCiv's approval if their prognosis in the carry-over request shows that at least one budget post has an amount of unused funds that differs by 10% or more compared to the latest approved budget. The carry-over request must clearly show the total amount of carry-overs, not only the amount exceeding 10%.

Supporting organizations with relatively small sums

Supporting partner organizations with relatively small sums is best done with the Swedish organization's own funds or via an existing local partner organization because of the need for an audit and the agreement and budget requirements that apply.

In the case of going via an existing local partner, this organization takes formal responsibility for managing the funds and meeting the agreement requirements, including taking charge of the bookkeeping, monitoring, coordinating the reporting process, etc.

Would supporting an organization with relatively small sums be the only option, there are some important points to consider in order to guarantee local ownership while considering the relevant agreement conditions:

- The overall purpose of SPP's grants is to strengthen the local partner(s). Funds should to the greatest extent possible be sub-granted to maintain local ownership.
- Swedish organizations that pay the local partner's costs directly or reimburse based on supporting material is not in line with the purpose of SPP's grants. This negatively alter the power relation in favor of the Swedish organization while reducing the independence of the local partner. If occurring occasionally, such costs are booked as part of the Swedish organization's 25%.
- Funds must be sub-granted to the local partner(s) and audited according to the agreement for costs to be reported as operational costs for the local partner, i.e. as part of the 75%.
 - Any exceptions require ForumCiv's prior approval. Requests are assessed restrictively, and the motivation must demonstrate why extraordinary conditions apply to the context and local partner.

- There are no exceptions to the 25-75% division in the budget.
- There are no exceptions to conducting external audits in subsequent steps.

Changes to the initiative

During implementation of your initiative things may arise that you had not expected. If your initiative cannot be implemented as intended and/or require changes to be made that deviate from the agreement you need to inform your Programme Officer as soon as possible. This includes for example:

- Significant changes to planned activities that affect the objectives and results of the Project.
- New or modified objectives/sub-objectives/expected results.
- Changes affecting your ability to implement the initiative according to agreement, and/or in other ways affecting your organizational capacity and capability.
- Confidential management of initiatives.
- Alternative payment method.

Request for changes require ForumCiv's prior approval and are sent as a task in Civis to your Programme Officer. Depending on what the change implies, there are different routines that apply, which might require more information from your side. Your Programme Officer will know what steps to take. You will however always be required to explain in detail the change you want to make, why it is needed and how it impacts the goal fulfilment. For ForumCiv to be able to consider a change request it must be motivated in a relevant way and cannot change the overall purpose of the initiative.

Remember to save ForumCiv's approval of the change as it may be required in audits and reports.

Changes to dates

Please note that ForumCiv **does not approve changes to the agreed dates of the initiative and the deadlines of the programme cycle**. The existing standard dates for reporting and the SPP programme cycle are adapted to minimise gaps between ongoing initiatives and potential future ones, and to maintain the best conditions for meeting the agreement requirements.

Alternative payment method

The main rule for ForumCiv is that grants should be transferred through the international banking system to the Cooperation Partner and in all subsequent steps, and that funds are held in a bank account registered in the name of the organization in the country of registration.

However, some circumstances may cause the international banking system to be unavailable or non-functioning, In such situations, an alternative payment method may be required, and a request needs to be sent to ForumCiv by using the [Alternative payment method request template](#). The request is uploaded in Civis and submitted via a specific task. Contact your Programme Officer for support.

The request is assessed based on standardized assessment criteria in ForumCiv's guidelines for alternative payment method. The assessment emphasizes your organizations' management plan and its consideration of relates risks.

If the request is approved, the agreement is amended and include details on the specific alternative payment method that have been approved, the maximum number of transfers, the maximum amount per transfer, monitoring procedure and risk management. The approved request and ForumCiv's decision-memo is attached to the agreement amendment and as such become formal agreement documents.

Deviations

The Swedish organization has the responsibility to follow up and verify that all organizations in subsequent steps follow the terms and conditions in the agreement with ForumCiv. Any indications of non-compliance with the agreement, corruption or other irregularities shall immediately be reported to your Programme Officer. ForumCiv reports all deviations related to corruption and irregularities to Sida. Other agreement non-compliance deviations are assessed case by case. If anonymity is required, please use [ForumCiv's whistleblowing](#). If you wish to report to an external body, outside ForumCiv, you can use [Sida's Whistleblowing](#).

Keep your organization information updated

It is necessary that you keep the information on the Swedish organization up to date. You can do this directly in Civiis and inform your Programme Officer whenever you have made an update. The information is required due to agreement compliance and to give ForumCiv a clear overview of the organization. Both aspects are highly important in the assessment of applications and reports and may support your transition to increased flexibility within SPP.

This is the information SPP requires of the Swedish organization, including how and when it requires update:

- Organizational documents – Uploaded in Civiis one month after they are established.
 - Latest approved annual meeting minutes, signed according to general practice (commonly signed by two persons and adjusted by two persons).
 - Extracts from minutes that show the organization's elected authorised signatories, signed according to general practice (commonly signed by two persons and adjusted by two persons).
 - Latest approved activity report, signed by the departing board.
 - Latest approved annual report including income statement and balance report, signed by the departing board.
 - Latest auditors' report, signed and dated by the auditor.
- Organization profile and contact persons – Updated continuously in Civiis.
- Plusgiro/Bankgiro account and the authorised persons for the account – Updated continuously by submitting the signed form to your Programme Officer.
- Updates to your organization's board and the authorised signatories - Updated continuously by submitting the signed form to your Programme Officer.

The Administration fee - using funds from the Administrative buffer

Background

During the programme period 2023 - 2027, an administration fee of 0.8% of contractual contributions exceeding 1 mSEK per year will be charged to ForumCiv's members for the Swedish Partnership Programme. The buffer is primarily to ensure that ForumCiv has the means to be able to make repayments in cases where Sida so requires, and when the member organization no longer exists, or is unable to repay the amount to ForumCiv. In the latter case, ForumCiv normally has to turn to the enforcement agency to recover contributions. In this way, the buffer is primarily a collective insurance so that ForumCiv will have the opportunity to repay funds to Sida, thereby guaranteeing the continuation of the programme.

According to a decision by ForumCiv's board, a member organization also has the option of requesting that ForumCiv use the buffer to repay funds reclaimed by Sida. The board's decision as of 13 December 2021:

"In the event that Sida reclaims contributions, the member organization concerned can appropriate the payments made to the buffer. However, any refunds to members of paid fees are not relevant"

Concretization of the decision

The decision should not be seen as a general sharing of risk, but the possibility of using the buffer is dependent partly on funds being available, partly on conditions as set out below being met. A member organization can never use more funds from the buffer than what was paid up to and including the end of the year in which the deviation was reported to ForumCiv. A member organization that receives a deviation with a subsequent repayment claim due to Sida placing a repayment claim on ForumCiv can, subject to the following being fulfilled, request that funds from the administrative buffer be used:

1. The refund can be made for contributions paid during the programme period 2023 – 2027;
2. Reimbursement assumes that the Swedish organization has followed the agreement with ForumCiv and the organization's own, documented routines for handling funds;
3. Reimbursement can take place with a maximum of the amount that the Swedish organization has paid into the buffer or will pay up to and including the year in which the deviation is reported;
4. If the request for reimbursement applies in whole or in part to funds intended for a local partner organization, reimbursement claims must first have been made on the partner organization in the same way that ForumCiv makes reimbursement claims on its member organization;
5. If there is reason to suspect improper handling of funds by the Swedish or local organization, a police report must have been made, except if there are security risks linked to a report;
6. If the police report leads to legal measures, the outcome of these must be awaited.

Decisions on refunds are made on an ongoing basis by Head of SPPU, and repayments to Sida take place continuously during the year. Decisions on the total amount of the buffer to be used for repayments to the organizations that paid funds into the buffer and requested that these be used for repayments to Sida are made by the board at the end of each business year. The buffer must primarily be used for repayments in cases where the member organization no longer exists or when the organization has not been able to repay following a demand from the enforcement agency.

Use of buffer at the end of the contract period

ForumCiv has an agreement with Sida for the period 2023 – 2027. The board has decided that the system with an administrative buffer must be evaluated at the end of the agreement period. Decisions on how any balance is to be used are made by ForumCiv's board after all deviation cases concerning funds paid out in 2023 – 2027 and which may mean that the buffer is to be used have been closed. In the event that an organization has not been able to receive a full refund from the buffer during the program period because funds were not available at the time of decision, the organization can receive additional reimbursement after the end of the program period, after all deviation cases have been closed by Sida.

Reporting your initiative

Before you start the reporting process, check ForumCiv's website [Forms and templates | ForumCiv](#) to make sure you have the latest reporting instructions and templates. Reporting done according to old instructions and templates will not be accepted. Be sure to read through the agreement to ensure complete reporting requirements.

SPP recommends that you give the reporting process plenty of time as it requires analysis, compiling results, completing the financial report, coordinating with auditors, getting signatures etc.

Note that after the report is submitted, any potential updates to the financial report requires new signatures from two authorised signatories and the auditor.

PLEASE REMEMBER!

Before submitting the report, take an extra look to make sure that:

- The latest instructions and templates have been used.
- All the necessary information and documents are included.
- Applicable agreement conditions have been considered.
- All documents have been signed correctly.

Annual monitoring

If your initiative period is 18 months or longer (i.e. not applicable for PPFs), you are required to do an annual monitoring. The annual monitoring consists of a dialogue meeting with your Programme Officer where you discuss progress and learnings/adaptions during the past year. You are also required to submit a few things in writing:

- A brief narrative results summary.
- A narrative financial report in writing.
- An external audit.
- The latest organizational documents of the Swedish organization.

The annual monitoring deadline is May 1st for submitting the written parts of the annual monitoring report. The monitoring meeting is held in close connection to the deadline.

After the monitoring meeting has been carried out and the financial reporting has been approved, your Programme Officer may make a new assessment to support agreement changes for greater flexibility.

Final report

In the final report you should analyse the progress of the initiative, fulfilment of the intended goals, reflect on challenges and lessons learned and how these will be of use in the future. You should also submit a financial report that demonstrates the funds used over the last year, as well as an external audit to verify this.

Please note that the narrative part of the final report should always cover the whole initiative period. If no annual report has been submitted, the financial reporting and audit must cover the whole implementation period. If an annual report has been submitted, the financial reporting and audit should

cover the last implementation year or the implementation period that was not covered in the latest annual report.

Final reports are submitted May 1st for MPF and LPF (PPFs final report date is set 4 months after end date as standard but flexible as to align with a forthcoming application window).

The report assessment process

Your Programme Officer can start to make the assessment once a complete report has been submitted. The time the assessments need can vary a lot depending on the initiative, whether it is an annual or final report, the quality of the report and when in it is submitted.

The report assessment process consists of three phases:

1. Your report is assessed by a Programme Officer. The assessment looks at your report and if relevant, applications and previous reports.
2. When the Programme Officer has completed the assessment, the report and the assessment is reviewed by a Quality and Compliance Officer controller and a Financial Controller. This to ensure independent assessment and quality control.
3. Lastly, a decision is taken by the Head of the SPP and the assessment is shared with the Swedish organization.

You can expect a decision on your annual report within a shorter time than your final report. Decisions on annual reports are sent as a task in Civi. For final reports you will receive a decision memo from your Programme Officer. It is important that you read through the decision memo carefully as it may include important feedback and conditions for your next step in SPP.

Approval of applications are always conditioned on an organization's management of already approved initiatives, of which reporting is an important part. The reporting of an ongoing or recently ended initiative might also be of relevance for a new application in terms evaluation, results, adjustments etc. Delays and incomplete reports can therefore impact the follow-up and sustainability of both your ongoing and, potential, future initiative. As long as it does not obstruct internal control, ForumCiv may be able to give an informal decision on your report in case further delay negatively impacts a pending application.

If your report is delayed your Programme Officer will send a formal reminder with a deadline.

If your report is incomplete your Programme Officer will send a description of what needs to be completed and a deadline for when this needs to be submitted.

Failure to comply with deadlines can affect your future possibilities for funding at ForumCiv.

Follow-up on audit findings

ForumCiv have the responsibility to follow-up on audit findings in the report submitted by partners. The Swedish organization in turn has the same responsibility toward its Partners in subsequent step (see Paragraph 8 in the Agreement and Paragraph 8d in ForumCiv's audit instructions).

The follow-up of audit findings is done to manage risks as well as to learn more about partners and the support they may need. The follow-up should have a constructive approach that considers the relationship amongst partners while fulfilling the responsibilities according to the agreement.

How ForumCiv follow-up and audit finding is dependent on the finding itself. It may be in the form of an email, a brief call or a meeting including or not including request for verification or supporting material.

The monitoring or final report memo shared after the report assessment will state the number of audit findings that will be followed-up by ForumCiv and when.

Repayment

At the end of an initiative, all unused funds and interest and non-approved exchange rate gains must be repaid to ForumCiv. Repayments of this kind is not needed if the total amount is less than 500 SEK.

Repayments are made to ForumCiv's bankgiro 5359-2218.

In the message line, state the intervention number and the applicable amounts concerning repayment of funds, exchange rate gains and interest.

Failure to comply with the agreement can lead to repayment of the grant, in part or in full. In such cases, ForumCiv issues a formal repayment claim to the Swedish organization's contact person and the board of the organization with the amount to repay and when. If you have other approved and/or ongoing interventions, no disbursements will be made to these until ForumCiv has received the repayment.

If the repayment is not received by the stated deadline, the Swedish organization will be blocked by ForumCiv and the matter will be handed over to the Swedish Enforcement Authority (Kronofogdemyndigheten) or district court.

Non-compliance of repayment claims will also affect your possibilities for future funding in ForumCiv.

Frequently Asked Questions

This section aims to provide general guidance on frequent questions or issues that come up.

How can the Swedish organization's 25% for operational costs be used?

The operational costs are costs that are directly related to the initiative, such as activity costs, staff costs, monitoring and evaluation. Operational costs for the Swedish organization must be covered by the 25%.

Costs for capacity development of the Swedish organization must be covered by the administration grant.

Activities planned and hosted by the Swedish organization should be covered by the 25%.

The Swedish organization's costs for participating in activities planned and hosted by the local partner(s) (e.g. travel, accommodation, etc) should be covered by the 25%.

Costs for the local partner(s) can be covered by the 25% if an agreement exists. Consider that the overall purpose of SPP's grants is to strengthen the local partner(s), and funds should to the greatest extent possible be sub-granted to maintain local ownership.

Swedish organization's operational costs that directly benefit the local partner

Costs that are booked as part of the Swedish organization's operational costs, but which are considered to directly benefit the local partner are reported in a key figure during the application and reporting. This allows for demonstrating how much of the 25% directly benefits the local partner.

Operational costs that directly benefit the local partner(s) are costs that increase their capacity or benefit their operations. It could be costs for staff discussing how to address observations in an audit report, staff arranging/participating in workshops for local partners and their target groups, staff involved in discussing how local advocacy can be done, staff involved in facilitating networking for local partners. It could be costs for travels doing activities as above. It could be costs improving the security for local partners or members/staff/target groups.

Do staff costs have to be reported separately?

Yes, regardless of how they are booked (included in activities etc), organizations must be able to present the total staff costs separately.

Can a partner organization register in a non-DAC country for the purpose of opening a bank account for the project?

In general, this should not be a problem as long as the activities and costs occur in the partner's country of operation, which must be a DAC-country. Regardless, contact your Programme Officer for these cases.

What about language requirements for audits?

It is the responsibility of the Swedish organization to follow-up and document the findings of the local audit and how to address them. The auditor in Sweden checks the what the Swedish organization has documented about the local audit report according to the audit instructions.

When can we make exceptions from the audit instructions?

It is not possible to make exceptions from the audit instructions in the current programme 2023-2027.

Is it possible to have different own contribution each budget year as long as the total is 5%?

This will complicate ForumCiv's reporting to Sida. If you find it necessary, please contact your Programme Officer first.

Can we book the grant retroactively when we have received funds?

Yes, as long as it follows the agreement. See paragraph:

"If any activity and/or cost is carried out before this Agreement has been signed, the costs may be approved retroactively by the Cooperation Partner, if they are within the approved Project Description and Budget (Annex II) and within the Project Period, as specified by this Agreement."

How can we plan for short-term and/or immediate support to actors when we are tied to a five-year agreement?

The recommendation is to find a balance between five-year agreements with more strategic long-term partners and those with short-term support, next to a part of unspecified funding if necessary. Note that unspecified funding must be used for partner support and a plan for this must exist, although the exact partner may not be specified by the time of the application.

What is the expectation of flexibility in long-term agreements, are there minimum requirements?

ForumCiv does not have any minimum requirements. The expectation is that flexibility is extended to local partners to greatest extent possible and Swedish organizations should be prepared to explain why this has not happened when reasonable. Partners should not take on unmanageable risks to achieve this purpose.

Is 3 MSEK per year for MPFs the absolute maximum for the budget?

3 MSEK per year is the maximum for grant from ForumCiv, and do not include the own financing.

Local organizations with funding from several Swedish partners or donors

Please note that in line with the principles of aid effectiveness, SPP is restrictive with approving initiatives in which the local organization receives funding from other Swedish partners or donors. The need and added value for an additional Swedish partner should be motivated in the application, and the applying organization is invited to have a dialogue with ForumCiv before submitting an application. In such cases, the applying organizations will be encouraged to coordinate and harmonise their support to make it as efficient as possible.

If there is no significant added value of an additional partnership a joint proposal can still be submitted by the Swedish organizations wanting to support the same local organization; in such submission one of the Swedish organizations should be the main responsible applicant.

Use of ForumCiv's logo

Partners must state in printed and published material and in connection to activities that it is produced/implemented with funds from ForumCiv via Sida, but that ForumCiv and Sida are not responsible for the content. This applies within reasonable limits when it comes to publishing on social media platforms and/or channels that are not specifically designated to the initiative.

The ForumCiv logo may only be used if ForumCiv's role in the initiative is as a donor.

Digital Signatures

Between ForumCiv and Swedish organizations

ForumCiv approves digital signatures under the following conditions:

- Signatures are done using Bank-ID (www.bankid.com).
- ForumCiv can verify authenticity of the certificate and signatures*.

- Usual routines and requirements are followed, e.g. two authorised signatures must sign.

This applies for use of digital signatures on all documents sent to ForumCiv that require your signatures. If signed digitally, your organizational documents are excepted from the above, besides the documentation that confirms the organization's elected authorised signatories.

* Since there are several certificates for digital signatures, there must be mechanism from the authorised provider of the specific service used that allows third parties to verify the authenticity of the certificate and signatures. This mechanism can be link for verification of the signed document, a proofing document generated together with the signature or other. The important part is that the function of the certificate is described in sufficient detail and provide the descriptions necessary for ForumCiv to verify the authenticity of the signatures.

Between Swedish and local organizations

Digital signatures between Swedish and local organizations need to:

- Fulfill the legal requirements in the country where the local organization is based.
- The form of digital signature is agreed upon with the respective organizations' auditor.

Please keep in mind that documents cannot be signed using different methods; either all parties involved sign digitally or all parties sign paper copies.

Between Swedish and local organizations

Digital signatures between Swedish and local organizations need to:

- Fulfill the legal requirements in the country where the local organization is based.
- The form of digital signature is agreed upon with the respective organizations' auditor.

Please keep in mind that documents cannot be signed using different methods; either all parties involved sign digitally or all parties sign paper copies.

Extra allowances

Extra allowances for participating in meetings and workshops for participants that are already receiving salary is a prohibited cost. The reason for this is to avoid double financing and provide financial incentives for participation in activities.

Covering costs for travel, food and accommodation for participants is still possible, either in the form of reimbursements based on receipts and other valid documentation, or as a formal allowance according to national regulations (if this is not already received by the person in question). In general, one should be very cautious in providing honorariums to government representatives, persons in position of power or influence etc.

Booking and reservation of costs

For concerns about reservation of costs that are paid after the end of the agreement period ForumCiv refers to the agreement and accounting standards. Note that ForumCiv cannot make decisions in individual cases.

According to the agreement with ForumCiv, the funding can only be used during the project period stated in the agreement.

According to accounting standards, incomes and costs should be booked during the period they appear. For costs the following applies - the period when the resource is used, (for staff and consultants - the period when the work is executed, irrespective of the payment being paid in advance or afterwards).

However, it is common to make reservations of costs for audits so that they are booked during the period that is subject to the audit, even if the audit is conducted during the next period. For other reservations, consult your auditor.

Why does the pre-study funding no longer exist?

The purpose of the pre-study modality that existed in ForumCiv's previous Civsam-funded programme had the main purpose of funding the establishment of partnerships. ForumCiv's experiences and evaluation of the modality demonstrated, amongst other things, that it in many cases did not lead to further projects by the intended partnership, and that the partnerships needed more time for establishing a stable ground before applying for more grants.

The conclusion was that there need to be some form of existing partnership where the partners trust and know each other to a significant degree before ForumCiv can grant funding. This is also part of the explanation of why an existing partnership is a requirement to apply for the Partnership Pilot Funding modality, which is the entry-level modality in the ongoing programme 2023-2027.

What is the definition of the PPF requirement “existing partnership”?

The minimum requirement for an established partnership is that there has been previous collaboration and an intention to collaborate. By the time an application is submitted, the applying partners should have established a relationship of trust that is based on transparency and a basic mutual understanding of each other's organizations.

Examples of previous collaboration can be projects, planning processes, visits, events, networking, research, and other forms of exchanges. As with all funding modalities, partners have a responsibility to assess the level of risk in entering into an agreement together.

Independent governance: Board member from the Swedish organization on the board of the local organization

ForumCiv aims to support independent local organizations. Thus, a board member of the Swedish organization should not be a board member of the local organization. Any organizational support given to the local organization should happen outside of its governing structure.

If the Swedish organization wishes to support the local organization in its capacities, how this will happen should be clearly motivated in the application.

ForumCiv supports large international organizations or federations, for example Action Aid, Islamic Relief, Hand in Hand. Some of these organizations have internal governing structures that allow for board members of the country branches to sit on boards of other country branches. In these cases, it is necessary to look at their governance structure and ensure that there is equality. For example, it is good to ensure that board members irrelevant of what country they represent can sit on another board from another country so that the setup is not only top-down.

Equality in governance should also be ensured for umbrella platforms/movements. If a Swedish organization creates an umbrella platform, it is necessary to look at the governance of it to ensure equity.

The Swedish organization creating the local organization

As a principle, a Swedish organization should not be creating a local organization to the support. In practice assessing this may be a bit challenging and done on a case-by-cases basis, and it is therefore useful to look at several components.

In assessing this one of the key areas to look at is how independent the organization is, not only in their formal documents but also in practice. Relevant areas to look at are:

- If the governance structure (the board) is local and independent from the Swedish organization
- That the board of the local organization is democratically elected
- The management of the local organization is local as well
- Division of roles and responsibilities between the organizations
- Delegation principles between board and staff
- Assess if/how dependent the local organization is on the Swedish organization in terms of capacity and financing, and if the local organization has other strategic partners and/or funding
- If the local organization sets its own strategy/priorities – for ex. By looking at a description of the organization and/or read their strategy or annual plan of operations if there is one
- The local organization’s connection to the local community and target group

One local organization cooperating with different Swedish organizations/Funders

There can be cases where one local organization receives support from another Swedish partner (one of ForumCiv’s Swedish organizations or Swedish organizations from another Sida SPOs), or from other Swedish donors (such as embassies). There is nothing that explicitly prohibits this from happening. Sida’s guideline states that “Several strategic partner organizations should not fund the same local organization, unless the need and added value of this can be clearly motivated.”

We should as much as possible try to apply the principle that multiple Swedish organizations or Swedish donors do not support the same local organization unless the need and added value for this is clearly motivated. The reason for this is to ensure as much as possible that we support a wide range of organizations and contribute to a pluralistic civil society. Additionally, we want to avoid that only a few actors receive large parts of funding from ForumCiv.

In such cases we should strive for aid effectiveness and have a dialogue with the applying organization to see how it would be possible to coordinate the reporting to reduce the burden on the local organization and Swedish organizations. One option may be, for example, to open up to a different kind of reporting in these cases, such as using the reporting system the partners already have set up. Reach out to the Deputy Head of the SPP Unit or Programme Manager for support around this.