CALL FOR CONSULTANTS:

Study on Civil Society Engagement with Climate Funds and Improved Climate Finance Access

Tunisia, Zambia, and Kenya

Introduction

SouthSouthNorth (SSN) is seeking an individual consultant or organisation to undertake a study of the civil society engagement modalities of the Green Climate Fund, Global Environmental Facility, and Adaptation Fund, hereinafter referred to as the “Climate Funds”, for the Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA) and Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) programmes working alongside the SSN team.

The VCA programme is a lobby and advocacy programme that aims to ensure that by 2025, local civil society and underrepresented groups will have a central role as creators, facilitators, and advocates of innovative and inclusive climate solutions. CDKN works to improve the well-being of the most climate-affected people in the global South, especially marginalised groups, through transformative climate-resilient action. CDKN works with public, civil society and private sectors to mobilise knowledge, leadership and capacity in the global South from local to global levels. VCA and CDKN are working to increase mobilisation and access to equitable and appropriate finance for locally-led climate action.

There is widespread recognition that locally-led adaptation (LLA) is crucial for addressing the climate crisis in a just and equitable way, with over 100 organisations endorsing the Principles for LLA. A cornerstone of realising LLA in practice and at scale is addressing the enormous financing gap for adaptation at the local level. Estimates indicate that for the period of 2003-2015, only 11 percent of climate finance, or US$1.6 billion, flowed to the local level (IIED)\(^1\). The Operating Entities of the UNFCCC Financial Mechanism, namely the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund and the Global Environment Facility (GEF); play an important role in countries accessing climate finance to address the financing gap for LLA. Given that civil society is pivotal to climate action at the local level, it is important to understand good practice and lessons learned with regard to civil society engagement in the planning, access, implementation, and accountability of climate finance.

SSN has launched this call for an organisation or individual to contribute to a study on climate finance access and civil society engagement in Tunisia, Zambia and Kenya, focusing on the GCF, Adaptation Fund, and the GEF. The study aims to elucidate good practice, case studies, lessons learned and recommendations on robust and meaningful civil society engagement in accessing climate finance. Organisations can apply to work in one or more of the countries. Preference will be given to individuals or organisations based in the countries included in the study, although an appropriate track record in the respective countries will also be strongly considered.

\(^1\) https://www.iied.org/six-steps-local-climate-finance
The deadline for submissions is 18th September 2023.

Background and context

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate finance as "local, national or transnational financing—drawn from public, private and alternative sources of financing—that seeks to support mitigation and adaptation actions that will address climate change." Climate finance flows through bilateral and multilateral channels—both within and outside the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement financial mechanisms—increasingly through bilateral, regional, and national climate change channels and funds.

The Operating Entities of the UNFCCC Financial Mechanism, namely the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), are the primary climate finance institutions established within the framework of UNFCCC as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the UNFCCC. Understanding how these funds engage civil society and identify opportunities for promoting their access to finance is critical for "local climate action".

Green Climate Fund (GCF)

The governing instrument of the GCF recognises the importance of stakeholder input and participation. Accordingly, it requests the Fund’s Board to “develop mechanisms to promote the input and participation of stakeholders, including private-sector actors, civil society organisations, vulnerable groups, women and indigenous peoples in the design, development and implementation of the strategies and activities to be financed by the Fund.”

Despite some existing challenges, civil society organisations (CSOs) have a number of opportunities to engage in the GCF at various levels (national, regional and international), enabling interactions with the Fund’s Board, its Secretariat, and other stakeholders active in the GCF.

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

The GEF has recognised the role that civil society plays in safeguarding the global environment and encourages civil society participation in its activities, including identification, execution and monitoring of GEF programs and projects, to influence its governance and decision-making process, liaising with communities and advocating with governments, civil society has become one of the GEF key partners. The GEF Council approved an Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF in 2017. This updated vision reinforces key dimensions of civil society engagement with the GEF, particularly in designing and implementing GEF projects and programs. These are addressed in more detail in the updated Policy on Stakeholder Engagement, Policy on Gender Equality, Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards and Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples.

Adaptation Fund (AF)

Civil society actors are key partners of the Adaptation Fund (AF) at all levels of the Fund’s decision-making and operations. The participation of civil society representatives as observers in Board meetings enhances the transparency and accountability of the Board’s decision-making. They contribute to the development of Fund-level policies and strategies. Their contributions to stakeholder engagement in the AF project lifecycle, from planning and
implementation to evaluation and learning, enhance the effectiveness and inclusiveness of projects and help ensure their focus on the most vulnerable. The board of the AF has decided, at its 37th meeting, to develop a comprehensive policy or guidelines on civil society engagement in the work of the Fund.

**Rationale**

Climate funds, including GEF, GCF and AF, have national, regional, and global civil society guidelines and engagement mechanisms. In theory, civil society is expected to make use of the engagement mechanism to engage and influence the "Funds" effectively by bringing the voice and priorities of climate-affected communities to the "the design, development and implementation of the strategies and activities to be financed by the Funds" and enhancing accountability.

In practice, however, the CSO engagement with the "Climate Funds" has been less than optimal, less effective and not as meaningful as they could potentially be. For instance, in the case of GCF, some reports indicate that the local voices never reach the board table in the true sense, and engagement has not been meaningful. However, there is an opportunity to identify gaps and good practices in the engagement mechanisms in various contexts and engage with affiliated civil society networks to enhance civil society engagement.

The VCA alliance and CDKN seek to strengthen the “Climate Funds” civil society engagement mechanisms by identifying good practices on effective engagement practices that meaningfully lead to influence decisions taken at the national, regional and international levels.

**Objective**

The country-specific case studies aim to assess the application of the Civil society engagement guidelines and mechanisms at a country level and identify gaps and good practices, including opportunities for optimal engagement that could contribute to improved access to climate finance for local climate action.

The project’s target audience will be the civil society groups, the Climate Funds, and associated entities. It is expected to inform the Civil society network engagement strategies and capacity-strengthening opportunities. The research could also inform the Climate Funds and other interested groups of the good practices in applying the civil society engagement guidelines and mechanisms.

**Approach**

The consultant is required to submit a proposal detailing their research approach. This proposal should encompass the research and interview questions concerning key stakeholder groups.

For instance, inquiries concerning CSO institutions will focus on their capacity to engage with the funds and the existence of channels and opportunities for engagement. Similarly, questions aimed at designated fund authorities will explore whether they establish platforms for CSO involvement in project planning and implementation. Lastly, questions related to the funds themselves will investigate the extent to which civil society participation, engagement,
and perspectives are integrated into decision-making processes, particularly at the Board level.

**Scope of Work**

SSN seeks an organisation or individual consultant to work alongside the VCA and CDKN programme teams to conduct country case studies on civil society engagement in accessing climate finance, including the civil society engagement mechanisms of the respective major climate funds (GCF, AF and the GEF). The consultant is expected to work with the respective country teams throughout the process. Organisations can apply to work in one of the countries or more than one.

The roles and responsibilities include the following:

- Conduct country case studies for Tunisia, Kenya and Zambia (or one individual country case study) on the practical application of civil society engagement guidelines and mechanisms of “climate funds.”
- Assess the state of the Civil Society Engagement by the respective funds through their designated representative institutions and designate
- Work with the programme team in adapting the research methodology to the country’s context.
- Map civil society actors and institutions working on aspects relating to climate change action and collect primary data with the identified CSOs through focus group discussions and primary interviews.
- Formulate interview questions for the relevant stakeholder groupings (CSOs, NDAs, Accredited entities, Executing Entities)
- Collect primary data through key informant interviews with GCF, GEF and Adaptation Fund officials and the mandated focal point government officials.
- Focus group discussion with civil society actors engaged in finance/ climate finance.
- Data analysis and report write-up
- Contribute to the synthesis report and respective country validation workshops.

**Time allocation**

The estimated time allocation is at most twenty (20) days per country, and the associated deadlines are outlined in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection, contracting, and due diligence</td>
<td>SSN</td>
<td>13 October 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brief inception report (3 days), including</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>30 October 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Agreed timelines,</td>
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Initial stakeholder mapping and identification of priority interviewees
- Adapted methodology and approach
- High-level national climate finance landscape mapping
- High-level mapping of previous work on civil society engagement on access to climate finance

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Inception report review</td>
<td>SSN</td>
<td>10 November 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scheduling and coordination with interviewees, in-country stakeholder engagement and interviews (5 days)</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>20 December 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Analysis (3 days)</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft report (5 days)</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
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<td>SSN/CDKN review draft 1</td>
<td>SSN</td>
<td>22 January 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Validation workshop (0.5 days)</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revised report (2 days)</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>12 February 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSN/CDKN review draft 2</td>
<td>SSN</td>
<td>29 February 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final report</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>11 March 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synthesis workshop (0.5 day)</td>
<td>SSN to lead, consultant to take part</td>
<td>21 March 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synthesis report</td>
<td>SSN</td>
<td>15 April 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribute to the synthesis report (1 day)</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>30 April 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Produce CSO position papers and other outputs when necessary - including review [optional addition - 5 days]</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Optional</td>
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**Expected Deliverables**

The consultant will deliver on the following:
1. Country-specific case studies outlining the challenges, gaps and opportunities in relation to CSO engagement with each of the Climate funds, including
   ● In-depth narratives of civil society engagement, showcasing successes, challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities in each unique national setting;
   ● Stakeholder mapping for each country identifying key civil society institutions and stakeholders working on climate change and climate action;
   ● Briefs detailing the institutional/governance arrangements and potential engagement opportunities.

2. Contribute to a country synthesis report by summarising key challenges, approaches and entry points for enhanced engagement of civil society in accessing climate finance, exploring innovative approaches and lessons for effective engagement;

3. A fund-facing report outlining how funds can improve/enhance their approach for more meaningful engagement of CSOs.

These deliverables aim to comprehensively understand civil society engagement with climate funds across various countries, facilitating knowledge sharing, capacity building, and advancing effective engagement strategies.

**Application submissions**

SSN encourages applications from NGOs, CSOs, nonprofit organisations or consultants with relevant expertise, experience, network and relationships with a proven track record of working with alliances and coalitions and with the relevant content. The organisation or individual will be contracted directly through SSN.

To apply, kindly complete the below requirements and send all relevant documents to infovca@southsouthnorth.org with the following email title: VCA Climate Finance Access consultancy application - country (Tunisia, Zambia, Kenya or all three) - organisation/individual name

For further information, questions or clarifications, please contact yared@southsouthnorth.org.

**Contract duration:** October 2023 - May 2024

**Briefing session:** A briefing session will be held on **Monday, 11 September, 14h00-15h00 CAT/ SAST** to provide information on the scope of work and answer any specific questions that may arise. **Zoom link (here)**

**Submission deadline:** 18 September 2023, 17h00 CAT

**Application requirements:**

1. **Cover letter:**
   ● A brief description of your organisation/individual and why you are well-suited to carry out the proposed role
- A detailed description of the experience of your organisation/individual related to the key roles and thematic areas
- A list of networks and current partnerships that the organisation/individual holds
- A list of possible activity ideas that you could implement in this role and a list of possible interviewees

2. Proposal
   - A brief proposal (5 pages) detailing the appreciation of the terms of reference and methodology, the scope of work and timelines

3. CV:
   - Provide the names and CVs of the person(s) who would take on this role within the organisation.

4. Budget:
   - The indicative budget for the six months and daily rate. This would only include staff time and not include travel expenses, as all interviews are anticipated to be conducted online.