

# SUPPORT MECHANISM FOR LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION INITIATIVES

## METHODOLOGY GUIDE

on the procedures for co-financing  
local CSO projects

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This guide is subject to change  
The most recent version is available on the AFD website

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# AFD AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Agence Française de Développement (AFD) finances and supports projects that improve people's living conditions, reduce inequalities, combat climate change, and preserve biodiversity. AFD is a public financial institution that implements policies defined by the French government. AFD operates in 121 countries and earmarked almost €12 billion to finance projects in developing countries and France's overseas territories in 2022.

## **The various ways in which AFD works with civil society organizations (CSOs)**

Over the past twenty years, AFD has significantly expanded the ways in which it works with CSOs, both in terms of financing projects and activities and in terms of generating knowledge or mobilizing expertise.

This collaboration now encompasses a broad spectrum of instruments tailored to the specific needs of CSOs and their added value, and may take place:

- As part of the CSO Initiatives (CSO-I) mechanism, managed by the *Civil Society Organizations Division (DPA/OSC)* within the Partnerships Department;
- As part of calls for projects proposed by the *Sustainable Development Solutions Directorate – SDD (formerly the Operations Directorate)* such as the Support Fund for Feminist Organizations in the South – FSOF;
- To finance actions in fragile environments (Calls for Crisis and Post-Crisis Projects, or APCCs) proposed by the *Geographic Directorate – GEO (formerly the Operations Directorate)*;
- As part of calls for tender to be a project operator.
- There are also calls for projects from Expertise France, which joined AFD Group in 2022.
- The French Development Innovation Facility (FID) and the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM), whose secretariats are hosted by AFD, also finance CSOs in a variety of ways.

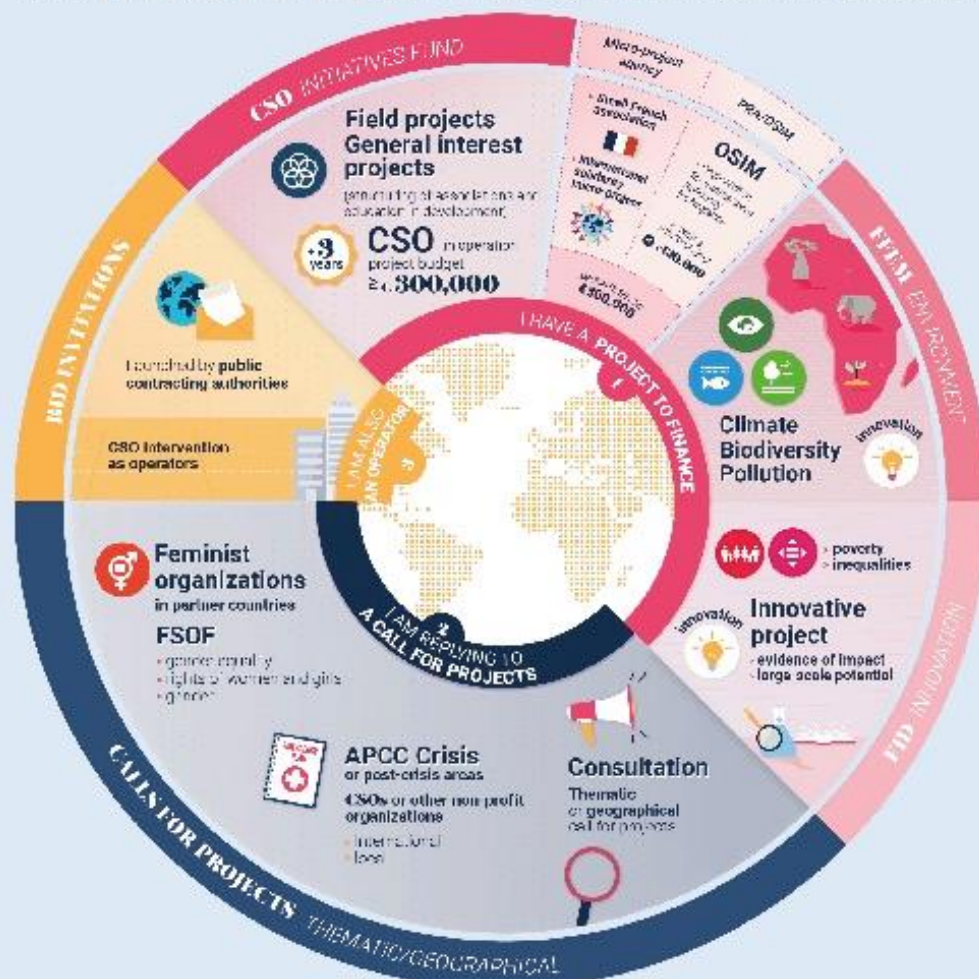
In 2022, AFD (excluding Expertise France) granted almost €439 million (a steady increase) to CSOs of all nationalities through its range of instruments.

The partnership between AFD and CSOs is built around the specific financing mechanisms detailed above, but also through mechanisms such as consultation meetings, strategic and technical dialog, project instructions and project monitoring.

AFD field and regional offices are playing an increasing role in monitoring this partnership, particularly in countries where non-governmental action is strong or in countries in crisis or post-crisis situations where AFD has chosen to work through CSOs.

## AFD, FFEM and FID financing for CSOs

I am a Civil Society Organization (CSO). Based on my profile and my project, what kind of support is available?



For further information, please see the appropriate page

1 I HAVE A PROJECT TO FINANCE	
<b>CSO</b>	CSO Initiatives fund : I'm answering a call for expressions of interest published once a year (April).
<b>FFEM</b>	I'd like to apply for support via the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM).
<b>FID</b>	I'm applying to the Fund for Innovation in Development (FID).
2 I WANT TO REPLY TO AN AFD CALL FOR PROJECTS	
<b>FSOF</b>	I'm responding to a call for projects with the Support Fund for Feminist Organizations (FSOF), or related to crises or post-crisis situations (APCC), or that are geographical or thematic in nature (consultation).
3 I WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN AFD CALLS FOR BIDS	
<b>CALLS FOR BIDS</b>	I want to consult a notice and submit to a competitive public tender.
IF MY PROJECT IS < €300,000, AFD SUPPORTS TWO INITIATIVES:	
<b>MICRO-PROJECT AGENCY</b>	I'd like to receive support from the Territorialized Platform of Micro-Project Financing and Support managed by La Guilde.
<b>PRA-OSIM</b>	I'm applying to the Support Program for organizations engaged in issues of migration and international solidarity and immigration, managed by the Forum des Organisations de Solidarité Internationale issues des Migrations.

#WorldInCommon

# CSO INITIATIVES MECHANISM

## CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS DIVISION

The **CSO-I mechanism** aims to strengthen civil societies and is in line with:

- The **Orientation and Programming Law on Development and International Solidarity** passed on 4 August 2021 by the French Parliament, which formalized the French government's commitment to strengthen partnerships with civil society organizations and work toward achieving an Official Development Assistance (ODA) level of 0.7% of gross national income by 2027.
- The **2018-2023 Strategy on Partnerships between AFD and CSOs**, which defines the relationship between AFD and civil society. **AFD plans to publish a new roadmap in early 2024.**

The mechanism respects the right of initiative accorded to CSOs, allowing them to propose projects that they have defined themselves.

Article 2 of the above-mentioned law states in its preamble that “the policy of mutually-supportive development and the fight against global inequalities is defined and implemented through multi-stakeholder partnerships.” In this respect, France “**fully recognizes the role, expertise and added value of civil society organizations, both in the North and the South, and of all non-State actors involved in the policy of mutually-supportive development and the fight against global inequalities.**”

The law stipulates that civil society organizations (CSOs) in countries eligible for official development assistance may from now on receive direct financing from AFD provided they meet various conditions. Implementing decree 2022-571, published on April 19, 2022, specifies the application of this article.

CSOs registered in countries eligible for official development assistance according to the list established by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) may now apply, under certain conditions, for direct co-financing from AFD for their projects through the CSO Initiatives (CSO-I) mechanism.

## CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS DIVISION (DPA/OSC) – PARTNERSHIPS DEPARTMENT

Since 2009, the CSO Initiatives (CSO-I) mechanism has been managed by the **Civil Society Organizations Division (DPA/OSC) within the Partnerships Department of the Mobilization, Partnerships and Communication Executive Directorate (MPC).**

DPA/OSC manages the strategic partnership between AFD and CSOs, and selects, appraises and monitors *CSO Initiatives* projects developed and implemented by French and local CSOs in developing countries and in France (for general interest projects, see below).

DPA/OSC's mission is to:

- Lead the dialog and partnership relationship with representatives of civil society (strategic dialog, shared knowledge creation, organization of meetings, etc.) and the ministries to which the AFD is accountable;

- Co-finance projects led by CSOs that aim not only to fight poverty, reduce inequalities and achieve sustainable development goals, but also to support the structuring and capacity building of civil society;
- Co-finance general interest actions of CSOs, in particular projects to strengthen the non-profit sector (SMA).

**Which CSOs are eligible?** Associations or non-governmental organizations or regional or international platforms that are non-profit and founded in accordance with the legislation in force in the country concerned and working in the field of sustainable development.

All the eligibility criteria are explained in the following section of this guide and will be specified each year in the call for expressions of project intentions.

**In which countries?** All countries eligible for official development assistance according to the list established by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC)<sup>1</sup> (with preference given to countries that are priorities for French cooperation).

**In which sectors?** All sectors in which AFD operates: agriculture, environment/biodiversity/climate, water and sanitation, education, integration and vocational training, health and social action, urban development, energy, the productive sector and microfinance, human rights, local development, citizen participation, gender equality, as well as advocacy and SMA projects.

The following sectors are not eligible: French language, university and hospital cooperation, emergency humanitarian aid, collections and shipments of materials or food.

### /// KEY POINTS

This methodology guide applies only to the financing of local CSO Initiatives projects.

**For other programs, please refer to the relevant pages on the AFD website.**

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>



## I. CATEGORIES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

### A. Single- or multi-country field projects

“Field” projects are implemented in one or more countries eligible for official development assistance and, **if possible, in partnership with other local civil society organizations**. They contribute to achieving sustainable development goals and are built on the principle of a partnership between a local CSO and one (or more) other local civil society stakeholder(s) involved in developing and implementing concrete actions in the field.

The main **priority of these projects is to contribute to strengthening civil society and local capacity-building initiatives**.

#### /// KEY POINTS FOR SINGLE- OR MULTI-COUNTRY FIELD PROJECTS

AFD co-financing is limited to 90% of the total project budget; subsidies from the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) (headquarters or French embassies) may not be added to the co-financing requested.

The maximum project duration is three years, renewable a maximum of two times.

### B. Sustainable development and global citizenship education projects

Sustainable development and global citizenship education projects (sometimes called global education or education for citizenship and international solidarity (ECIS)) are part of Agenda 2030 and SDG 4, whose Article 4.7<sup>2</sup> aims to ensure that learners “acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity [...]”.

Projects aimed at raising awareness of these issues among citizens of all ages and that encourage their commitment to a fairer, more inclusive and more sustainable world, are therefore eligible. Project activities can take place in the partner’s country or outside it (including in France and Europe).

Citizenship outreach activities may be included in field interventions and will be particularly effective.

### C. General interest projects

SMA projects must contribute to achieving the following objectives: **support or creation of platforms or collectives, support funds, or any long-term collective initiative**.

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<sup>2</sup> SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Target 4.7 states: “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”.

**Their goal is to strengthen the capacity-building initiatives of local CSOs, enhance the coordination and overall effectiveness of the actions of community organizations, and improve dialog with and participation of CSOs in major international events.**

They must have a national, regional, or international impact on at least one or more of the following three pillars:

- i) Structuring, closer alignment and convergence of CSO actions;
- ii) Professionalization and creation/dissemination of innovations in the sector and beyond;
- iii) Contribution to the collective efforts of CSOs to strengthen dialog on public action and position the public sector on national and international issues.

The proposed structure must involve a significant number of members and be representative of the non-profit sector concerned. If the number of members is limited, it must demonstrate that its actions have a scope and impact that are structural for the national non-profit sector overall. It must not compete with similar initiatives but must demonstrate real added value. The project must not focus on a field that is too narrow or that affects an audience that is too small.

## II. PROJECT CYCLE



Three stages take place before AFD decides to grant financing: shortlisting, selection and appraisal.

### A. Stage 1: Project shortlisting – the AMI

Projects are shortlisted based on a Call for Expressions of Project Intentions (AMI) launched by AFD on its website once a year for the following calendar year. The AMI is usually open for two months. The AMI is supplemented by details of the shortlisting criteria and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

The criteria defined in the AMI each year are a baseline.

The local CSO must ensure that its structure and project meet the shortlisting criteria in the AMI and state this in its response. The CSO then uses the **OSCar portal<sup>3</sup> (AMI menu)** to notify AFD of its intention to submit a project, within the timetable specified in the AMI, by providing the documents that make up the file detailed in the call. As it might take time for new comers to register on OSCAR portal, we highly recommend that CSO applying for the first time register well in advance on OSCAR in order to make sure they upload all necessary documentations before they are able to submit their intention.

**Projects that were not shortlisted under the current year's AMI may, where appropriate, be submitted under the following year's AMI after the CSO has considered the reasons for not being shortlisted.**

**CSOs and their projects must meet the shortlisting criteria attached to the AMI and detailed in the second part of this guide before their project intentions can be shortlisted.**

**The criteria defined in the AMI each year are a baseline. It is essential to refer to the AMI, published each year on the AFD website, before submitting an application for co-financing to AFD.**

After an in-depth examination, DPA/OSC will inform CSOs whether their projects have been shortlisted for appraisal. CSOs will be notified by email no later than two months after the AMI closes.

#### /// KEY POINTS

Any file submitted under the AMI that is incomplete or does not comply with it will be deemed ineligible.

Once the AMI is closed, the CSO may not submit any further projects for consideration before the following year's AMI opens.

### B. Stage 2: Project selection by DPA/OSC

Once a project has been shortlisted, the CSO must submit, **via the OSCar portal only**, the **complete application file for co-financing** to DPA/OSC before the deadline specified in the AMI. This file consists of:

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<sup>3</sup> An OSCar Portal User Guide (in French) is available on the AFD website.

- A **complete administrative file** and
- A **brief description, called the CSO Initiative Note or NIONG**. CSOs must refer to the NIONG template (template 1) available online at <https://www.afd.fr/fr/les-financements-des-projets-des-ong> (under Reference Documents for Local CSOs).

### /// KEY POINTS

The CSO must only use the OSCar portal to submit the project documents (administrative file and local CSO Initiative Note/NIONG).

No paper-based or email submissions will be accepted.

DPA/OSC will then examine this file to ensure it complies with the selection criteria detailed in this guide and the AML. Once the DPA/OSC selection committee has met (about 20 selection committees are held each year), DPA/OSC will inform the CSO by email or by regular mail whether its project has been selected and explain the reasons for not selecting it, where appropriate.

**DPA/OSC will not appraise any project not selected at the end of this stage.** If the project is not selected, the CSO may, if it wishes, submit it again under the next AML, provided that the CSO submits a stronger proposal with additional information, in line with DPA/OSC's feedback.

## C. Stage 3: Project appraisal

All selected projects undergo an in-depth appraisal by DPA/OSC before they are presented to AFD's decision-making bodies. **The average time required by DPA/OSC to appraise a project is between four and six months.** During this appraisal stage, DPA/OSC will contact the CSO as necessary to obtain additional information and help improve the project, taking into consideration the various opinions received (within AFD and the French Ministry for Europe and of Foreign Affairs).

At the same time, CSOs are strongly encouraged to contact the French Embassy and local AFD office in the relevant country or countries to present their project to them before they are submitted to DPA/OSC or, at the latest, during the project appraisal phase.

**At the end of the appraisal process, all selected projects are presented to the Specialized Committee Supporting CSO Initiatives, known as the "NGO Committee",<sup>4</sup> which will approve or reject the co-financing.**

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<sup>4</sup> The "NGO Committee" is an offshoot of AFD's Board of Directors, which has delegated to the committee the authority to grant financing to CSOs under the CSO-I mechanism. Projects appraised by DPA/OSC are presented to the committee six or seven times a year for a decision on co-financing. If the NGO Committee approves the requested grant, AFD and the CSO sign a financing agreement.

## PROJECT CYCLE

STAGE	CSO	AFD
SHORTLISTING		Call for Expressions of Project Intentions (AMI); Usually March-April in preceding year
	Submit project intention via the OSCar portal (AMI menu)	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analyze eligibility of project intention</li> <li>- Send email informing the CSO whether its project has been shortlisted or not for the following year's planning</li> </ul> Usually by end of July latest
IF PROJECT SHORTLISTED		
SELECTION	Write an application for co-financing for the shortlisted project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit CSO Initiative Note (NIONG) via the OSCar portal (NIONG menu)</li> <li>• Submit administrative file via the OSCar portal (CSO Information menu)</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examine file to check whether it meets selection criteria</li> <li>- Present project to selection committee</li> </ul>
IF PROJECT SELECTED		
APPRAISAL		Project appraisal. <i>Average appraisal time: 4 to 6 months</i>
	Hold talks between CSO and AFD	
	Contact French Embassy and AFD field office in the relevant country/ies (can take place before NIONG submitted).	
		Present project to "NGO Committee" for decision on financing
IF PROJECT APPROVED		
FINANCING AGREEMENT AND LIFTING OF CONDITIONS PRECEDENT		Prepare and send to the CSO by email (using AFD's electronic signature process esygnature) or by regular mail (if the CSO chooses not to use esygnature) the notification letter and the finalized draft financing agreement for approval
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After agreement, submit the documents required to lift the conditions precedent to signature, either via the OSCar portal (CSO Information menu) or by regular mail (see Notification Letter)</li> <li>- If not using esygnature, send the two signed and initialed copies of the agreement to AFD by regular mail.</li> <li>- Submit the documents required to lift the conditions precedent to the first</li> </ul>	

	disbursement (phase 1), either via the OSCar portal (Disbursement Request menu) or by regular mail (see Notification Letter).	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approve administrative documents and lift of conditions precedent to signature</li> <li>- Sign agreement via esygnature (CSO then AFD) or send a copy of the agreement, signed and initialed by AFD, to the CSO by regular mail</li> <li>- Approve program of activities and lift condition precedent to paying the first disbursement (phase 1)</li> </ul>
<b>DURING THE PROJECT</b>	Carry out the planned project activities	Monitor project performance Field supervision visits Dialog with CSOs on project implementation
	<i>At mid-term</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Write the interim technical and financial implementation report for phase 1</li> <li>- Write program of activities for phase 2</li> <li>- Submit reports via the OSCar portal (Disbursement Request menu) with a disbursement request for the second disbursement (phase 2)</li> </ul>	Organize a mid-term evaluation meeting with the CSO to discuss project status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approve via a no-objection (ANO) the interim implementation report and the program of activities for phase 2</li> <li>- Second disbursement (phase 2)</li> </ul>
	Throughout implementation, option to ask DPA/OSC for project modifications: request for a no-objection (ANO), which may or may not require an amendment to be written. Conduct the interim financial audit on completion of phase 1 of the project, mandatory for all projects.	
<b>END OF PROJECT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Write final technical and financial implementation report</li> <li>- Conduct the external evaluation, mandatory at the end of each phase for multi-phase projects and encouraged for other projects</li> <li>- Conduct the final external financial audit on completion of phase 2 of the project, mandatory for all projects</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hold talks with the CSO on project completion</li> <li>- Approve final documents submitted by the CSO (performance, audit and evaluation reports)</li> <li>- Close project</li> </ul>

# ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR LOCAL CSO INITIATIVES PROJECTS

Please note that these criteria are subject to change, particularly with each annual Call for Expressions of Project Intentions (AMI): please refer to the relevant AMI and to the updated web version of this guide.

Each of the two stages detailed above has eligibility criteria associated with it:

- **Shortlisting stage: the eligibility criteria may rule out an application;** they lead to a rejection.
- **Selection stage: the eligibility criteria do not rule out an application;** they allow its admissibility to be assessed. A negative response to one or more of these criteria may result in DPA/OSC not accepting the application and not proceeding with its appraisal.

For each of the two stages, the eligibility criteria are divided into two categories:

- CSO eligibility criteria
- Project eligibility criteria

The term “project” is used generically and includes all the categories described above (single- or multi-country “field” project, SMA project). The criteria specific to each of these categories are mentioned in specific boxes. These criteria are assessed based on the information presented in the administrative files and project documents submitted by the CSO to DPA/OSC during the two stages (shortlisting and selection).

In addition to the specified shortlisting criteria, AFD reserves the right to:

- Examine the CSO's project intentions in relation to the quality of the implementation of projects already supported by DPA/OSC (through its previously financed French partner);
- Revise the grant amount requested downward;
- Shortlist projects according to the geographical guidelines agreed with the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (60% Africa and countries in crisis, 20% Mediterranean, 20% other geographical areas) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## **I. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SHORTLISTING A PROJECT**

### **A. Local CSO shortlisting criteria**

These criteria relate to the CSO's articles of association, foundation and governance, its community work, activities and financial situation.

DPA/OSC assesses the CSO's eligibility based on the documents submitted to it and the criteria in this methodology guide. DPA/OSC reserves the right to exercise its discretion in assessing the CSO's eligibility.

**Eligible CSOs include:**

- CSOs registered in countries eligible for official development assistance according to the list established by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC).
- This year, CSOs under local law (including trade unions) are now eligible as long as they have been financed at least once directly, or through a French CSO, on a completed project, by an

AFD Group entity (DPA/OSC, Operations Directorate, Expertise France) regardless of the amount received.

- Projects aimed at structuring the local CSO sector (SMA projects) and sustainable development and world citizenship education projects (sometimes called global education or education for citizenship and international solidarity (ECIS)) conducted in eligible countries are encouraged and may therefore be supported.

AFD respects the right of initiative accorded to CSOs, allowing them to propose projects that they themselves have defined.

**Local CSOs may submit a single project intention (on their own or as part of a consortium) with two possible options:**

- a. A new phase of the project already supported by AFD Group if AFD deems implementation of the two previous phases satisfactory, with a geographic and thematic scope that is stable over time.
- b. A new project, with a different geographic or thematic scope from the previously implemented phases.

## 1. Articles of association

Co-financing requested from AFD is granted to local CSOs founded under one of the following legal forms:

- **Associations or non-governmental organizations (including trade unions) founded in accordance with the legislation in force in the country concerned, that are non-profit** and work in the field of sustainable development, already supported by AFD, either directly or through a French partner.
- **Regional or international platforms founded in accordance with the legislation in force in one of the countries covered by their action, that are non-profit** and work in the field of sustainable development, already supported by AFD over two three-year phases via a French partner.

NB: Foundations are not eligible.

## 2. CSO foundation and governance

- The foundation date of the CSO must be **at least three years** prior to the date on which the AFD grant was awarded; this rule may be waived in exceptional cases where entities have changed their articles of association or name in the last three years, but have been carrying out the same missions using the same means for at least three years.
- There must be no majority control by one or more public entities (ministries, public institutions, public companies, decentralized services) or by representatives of public entities on the CSO's board.
- There must be no majority control by local authorities or local government representatives on the CSO's board.
- There must be no majority control by one or more private companies or representatives of private for-profit companies on the CSO's board. Only cooperatives and mutuals, which are part of the social economy, do not fall into this category, but they may not, alone or together, have majority control over the CSO's board.
- Qualified persons who are members of the CSO's governance bodies and who, by virtue of their mandate, represent one or more public entities, local authorities or private entities of any type, will be counted in the college of public entities, of local authorities or of private entities.



- For CSOs that operate a blended model, entities representing public institutions (excluding local authorities) and entities representing private enterprises (excluding cooperatives and mutuals) must not together have majority control over the CSO's board.
- The CSO's registered headquarters and management must be located in the country of registration. The CSO must demonstrate that its structure is truly independent (with its own governance, management, strategic direction, etc.) from the public and/or private entities that support it.

AFD will assess the CSO's eligibility based on the documents submitted to it and the criteria in this guide. Furthermore, AFD reserves the right to exercise its discretion in assessing the CSO's eligibility.

### 3. CSO operations

The applicant CSO must demonstrate that its **internal operations comply with its articles of association and the legal obligations in the country**. In particular, it must demonstrate sound governance:

- The CSO holds regular general meetings and the governance bodies provided for in its articles of association meet regularly.
- The CSO produces annual documents, including financial documents, approved by the general assembly, as provided for in its articles of association.

### 4. CSO activities

- The CSO must have as part of its core social purpose the objective of taking action in the areas of sustainable development, the promotion of human rights, young people, gender equality, or the strengthening of civil society organizations.
- Projects aimed at structuring the local CSO sector (SMA projects) and sustainable development and world citizenship education projects conducted in eligible countries are encouraged and may therefore be supported.
- The CSO must have been financed at least once directly, or through a French CSO, on a completed project, by an AFD Group entity (DPA/OSC, Operations Directorate, Expertise France) regardless of the amount received. As part of this intention, it may choose to renew the partnership with the French CSO that has been supporting it to this point.

CSOs whose main purpose is to promote international exchanges and influence, to reflect on issues, or to produce intellectual material are not eligible.

The CSO must be able to demonstrate that it has carried out activities of significant scope and duration, involving the implementation of development projects and/or projects to organize the non-profit sector, over a period of at least three years.

### 5. Local CSO financial situation

- The CSO's accounting and financial information must be approved in accordance with the law of its country of registration, in particular the approval of its accounts by a statutory auditor or local equivalent. DPA/OSC will check this information, provided at the time the CSO submits its application, during the project shortlisting process.
- The CSO must have the financial and management capabilities to carry out the project for which it is seeking co-financing. DPA/OSC will pay particular attention to the ratio between the project's annual budget and the CSO's annual budget, and to its capacity to provide the human resources

required. DPA/OSC will ensure that the average annual cost of the project does not exceed 70% of the CSO's annual budget for the last three years, except in cases that are duly justified.

## B. Project assessment criteria

The project eligibility criteria detailed below relate to:

- i) The goals and activities of the project, including the list of ineligible activities;
- ii) The amount, duration and co-financing ceilings of the different types of projects.

### 1. Nature of field projects

- The project must contribute to the achievement of specific sustainable development goals and fall within the scope of the SDGs adopted by the United Nations in 2015. If the project is shortlisted, the project presentation note (NIONG) submitted to AFD must specify the planned actions and present human, material and financial resources in a way that is consistent with these carrying out these activities.
- The project must include measures to strengthen local stakeholders; it must involve the central and decentralized government services of the country in which the project will be implemented unless the situation in the country does not allow it.
- Particular attention must be paid to the relevance and innovative nature of the project.
- The project must consider gender and gender equality issues, regardless of its geographic and thematic scope, and offer practical solutions in this regard wherever possible. Once the project has been shortlisted, the detailed project presentation note (NIONG) may specify the challenges and specific actions envisaged.
- France encourages CSOs to implement their projects in line with the human rights-based approach set out in the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs' Human Rights and Development Strategy. The French law of August 4, 2021 on programming for solidarity development and the fight against global inequalities sets three objectives for France's international cooperation policy, including the promotion of human rights.
- **The maximum project duration is three years (renewable twice), except in cases that are duly justified.**
- Multi-stakeholder approaches (involving CSOs, local authorities, research organizations, businesses, other actors) are preferred.
- Projects may be led by a local CSO or by a formal consortium of several local CSOs, with a designated lead CSO.
- **A CSO may submit a single project intention (on its own or as part of a consortium).**

### 2. Nature of general interest projects

#### Specific criteria for projects aimed at structuring the non-profit sector (SMA projects)

An SMA project must contribute to the achievement of specific goals for structuring associations. It must have a national impact on one or more of the following three pillars: i) structuring, closer alignment and convergence of CSO actions and establishing a presence in the non-profit sector; ii) professionalization and creation/dissemination of innovations in the sector and beyond; iii) contribution to the collective

efforts of CSOs to strengthen dialog on public action and on national/international issues related to development and international solidarity.

The entity leading the project must have a significant number of members and be representative of the local community sector. If the number of members is limited, it must demonstrate that its actions have a scope and impact that are structural for the non-profit sector overall.

The project must not focus on a field that is too narrow or that affects an audience that is too small.

The project must not compete with similar initiatives and must demonstrate added value.

The issues of representativity and added value will be examined carefully for projects that aim to create a new structure or entity, whether formal or informal.

### 3. Nature of sustainable development and global citizenship education projects

#### Specific criteria for sustainable development and global citizenship education projects

Sustainable development and global citizenship education projects (sometimes called global education or education for citizenship and international solidarity (ECIS)) echo Agenda 2030, whose Article 4.7 aims to ensure that learners *"acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity [...]"*.

Projects aimed at raising awareness of these issues among citizens of all ages and that encourage their commitment to a fairer, more inclusive and more sustainable world, are therefore eligible. Project activities can take place in the partner's country or outside it (including in France and Europe).

The project may take the following forms: education and training actions and programs (in the formal and institutional framework, and in the non-profit framework), the production of educational tools and materials (animations, games, digital tools and materials, documentary files, educational kits, etc.), event-based actions (festivals, street entertainment, prizes and contests, etc.), awareness-raising campaigns for the general public or specific target groups, advocacy actions, training and support for project leaders. The actions may fall within the formal education sector, in schools, or be part of non-formal or informal education, provided by civil society to the general public.

Citizenship outreach activities may be included in field interventions and will be particularly effective.

### 4. Ineligible sectors and activities

- The project may not include activities involving religious proselytizing or political propaganda.
- Projects that are mainly or exclusively aimed at the following activities are not eligible for AFD co-financing:
  - Training projects when the project involves training alone or is built entirely around training;
  - Publications or editorial projects when the project involves this type of activity alone or is built entirely around this type of activity;
  - One-off and/or geographically limited actions may not be co-financed unless they are part of wider processes and actions;
  - Organizing conferences, symposiums and seminars when the project involves this type of activity alone or is built entirely around this type of activity.
- Projects that are mainly or exclusively aimed at the following sectors of intervention and activities are not eligible for AFD CSO Initiatives co-financing, except in special cases that only AFD can assess:
  - Sectors: academic and scientific exchanges, youth exchanges, archeology, French language;

- Evaluations only;
- Training projects (when the project involves training alone or is built entirely around training);
- Individual or group travel by members of the CSO;
- Providing logistical support (transport, containers, vehicles, etc.);
- Sending materials or supplies (medicines, books, etc.) or private collections;
- Projects financing credit or collateral facilities representing more than 25% of the total budget of the project presented;
- Projects involving the construction or rehabilitation of infrastructure exceeding 40% of the estimated budget (except in duly justified cases, discussed in advance with the CSO);
- One-off emergency operations, which are the responsibility of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

#### 4. Project cost, co-financing ceilings and project duration

- **The total project cost must be greater than or equal to €500,000.<sup>5</sup>**
- The **ratio of the annual project budget** to the CSO's annual budget: the average annual cost of the project must not exceed 70% of the CSO's annual budget for the last three years, except in cases that are duly justified.
- **Indirect costs are set at a maximum of 14% of the project's direct costs.**

#### 5. Project duration and renewal

- The maximum project duration is **three years, renewable**, except in cases that are duly justified.
- If the **renewal involves a project already co-financed** directly by AFD Group or through a French CSO, the project may be **renewed only once** if implementation has been satisfactory, provided that the geographic and thematic scope remains stable over time.
- If a **new project** is involved, the project may be **renewed twice**.
- If a new project is involved (with a different theme or in a different geographical area from the phases previously implemented with the French CSO), and if implementation has been satisfactory, the project may be renewed twice.

## II. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SELECTING A PROJECT

The eligibility criteria for the selection stage apply to the complete co-financing application file (administrative file and NIONG) that the CSO sends to DPA/OSC, via the OSCar portal, once its project has been shortlisted. Each file is examined by an internal AFD selection committee.  
<https://www.afd.fr/en/financing-ngo-projects>

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<sup>5</sup> AFD may declare projects with a total project cost of between €300,000 and €500,000 eligible only if the geographic and/or sectoral circumstances are very specific and justified or if the grant application is a follow-up to a project with a total project cost below €500,000.

### /// KEY POINTS

All eligibility criteria related to the shortlisting stage also apply to the selection stage, taking into account the more detailed information provided in the CSO's application for co-financing.

## A. CSO selection criteria

The CSO is required to meet the following criteria related to its governance, financial situation and capacity to implement projects in a satisfactory manner:

### 1. Governance

The CSO must demonstrate that it meets the criteria detailed below in a letter attesting to its capabilities (see [Appendix 6](#) to download a template for this document).

The CSO complies with the following rules of professional conduct (where applicable):

- i) Holds a quality label and/or accreditation/charter where applicable;
- ii) Has a documented ethics charter or code of professional conduct internal to the CSO;
- iii) Complies with International Labor Organization (ILO) regulations;
- iv) Publishes a social balance sheet where this is required by labor law.

The CSO has good governance practices and its decision-making processes are transparent: It operates in accordance with its articles of association (involvement of decision-making bodies (general assembly, board, executive committee), publication of decisions, frequency of meetings), formalized relations between headquarters and delegations, existence of a remuneration policy, a volunteer charter, transparency and publication of information.

The CSO has internal control and reporting rules: Existence and dissemination of the CSO's activity reports, the president's moral reports, project reports and evaluation reports (or their summaries) available on the website; existence of a finance committee, a donor committee, an independent internal control department, an internal evaluation unit; existence of procedures for disseminating the conclusions/results of these controls.

The CSO has rules for external controls: Audits and/or evaluations carried out by external stakeholders (government, statutory auditor, EU audit or other competent organizations); existence of procedures for disseminating the conclusions/results of these controls.

The CSO has and enforces purchasing and procurement procedures that observe the principles of transparency and competitive bidding in accordance with national regulations.

The CSO has a financial information transparency policy tailored to the various audiences it addresses, for example: certification and publication of annual accounts, communication of summary documents (income statements/balance sheets), creation of an account for the use of resources collected from the public and any other relevant financial information on its activity.

**The CSO undertakes to comply with anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing (AML/CFT) rules in accordance with the enhanced screening procedures (end of 2021); it must comply with the requirements of the related worksheet ([Worksheet 7](#)). See paragraph below.**

## 2. CSO compliance with counter-terrorist financing due diligence

AFD pays particular attention to corruption and fraud issues in the projects it finances and has adopted a policy to fight fraud and corruption ([AFD Group's Policy to Prevent and Combat Prohibited Practices \(2020\)](#) | AFD – Agence Française de Développement).

AFD, as an institution that is a holder of a banking license, also has an AML/CFT system.

**It therefore requests that CSOs it finances comply with measures such as freezing of assets and banning the direct or indirect provision of funds or economic resources, adopted by the United Nations, the European Union or France**, which are applicable without delay by all national or foreign natural persons on French soil and by any legal entity operating in France or established in France, pursuant to the provisions of Article L. 562-4 of the French Monetary and Financial Code (CMF).<sup>6</sup>

To do this, a new mechanism has been created for CSOs to refer to. Worksheet 11 provides details of this mechanism. A new fiduciary questionnaire is available as an appendix to the NIONG template, and a new audit (interim and final) terms of reference template will shortly be available online.

**AFD also recommends that CSOs become familiar with the guide published by the French Treasury entitled “Guide to humanitarian aid exemptions under EU sanctions”.**

These sanctions regimes are intended to achieve different objectives, such as the fight against terrorism, but also the fight against nuclear proliferation, coercion in response to serious human rights violations, deterrence and defense against cyberattacks targeting non-EU countries or international organizations, and any act that threatens peace. Their purpose is therefore broader than countering terrorist financing.

## 3. AML/CFT due diligence carried out by AFD

AFD conducts anti-money laundering, fraud and corruption due diligence on the counterparties/partners it finances and must, as soon as the project appraisal is completed, collect information from its counterparties/partners, particularly in the case of financial transfers (of any kind).

This due diligence is updated throughout the project implementation phase, especially when there is a new reallocation beneficiary. In such cases, DPA/OSC must issue a no-objection (ANO).

If the AFD Compliance Department issues an unfavorable opinion on a project, the appraisal may be interrupted and/or the granting of co-financing refused.

CSOs with shortlisted projects must complete a **specific AML/CFT questionnaire** and attach it to their application for financing (Appendix 7 of the NIONG for field projects and Appendix 6 of the NIONG for General Interest projects).

## 4. OSC financial situation

The CSO must submit its estimated budget for the current year via the OSCar portal. If the application is submitted in the second half of the year, the CSO must also provide its estimated budget for the following year.

The CSO's financial situation must be sound. If the CSO's balance sheet showed a net loss or a negative level of equity over the past three years, AFD expects the CSO to explain this and to provide details of the planned recovery strategy. In this case, these details must be attached to the application file in the form of a written note signed by the CSO's management team or legal representative, and submitted via the OSCar portal.

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<sup>6</sup> Since the ordinance of November 6, 2020 was issued, the provisions of Article L. 562-4 of the CMF apply to all “persons whose registered headquarters is located on French territory for their activities carried out abroad, including in branch offices or any other form of freedom of establishment and under the freedom to provide services.” The ban does not therefore only apply to financial institutions.

## 5. Management capability and quality of project implementation by the CSO

The CSO must justify its management and implementation capabilities with regard not only to the project submitted, but also to other projects it currently has underway. To do this, DPA/OSC will analyze the ratio of project budget to the CSO's annual budget (an annual project budget higher than 70% of the CSO's annual budget is a warning threshold, except in cases that are duly justified).

### B. Project selection criteria

The selection stage involves a qualitative assessment of the project based on the information provided in the NIONG. This analysis is based on the project eligibility criteria set out in the AMI to which the CSO responded (which remain valid for the selection phase) and the assessment criteria detailed below.

#### 1. Project quality assessment criteria

The project will be assessed on the following points:

**Experience and expertise of the local CSO:** The CSO's expertise and the added value it brings will be examined in relation to the project theme and/or proposed geography. The NIONG must clearly demonstrate the added value provided by the CSO and its partners in implementing the project (know-how, expertise, experience).

The project's consistency with the CSO's rationale for intervention will also be analyzed. The CSO must specify whether the project is in an initial phase, a consolidation phase (phase 3 of a project already supported through its French partner) or a sustainability phase (phase 4).

**Consistency and relevance:** DPA/OSC pays particular attention to the relevance of the project in relation to the context and the needs identified, which the CSO must clearly explain (the presentation of a summary diagnosis will be appreciated). DPA/OSC also examines how consistent the project is with local sectoral public policies, where they exist in the sector concerned. Where appropriate, the project must make reference to the country's policy documents and any reforms underway. If the project makes no reference to these items, the application must explain the reasons why.

**If there are no public policies in the sector concerned, the CSO must make reference to international good practices.**

**Partnerships:** The quality of any partnerships forged between the CSO leading the project and other local civil society stakeholders is a project selection criterion. The project must primarily target the strengthening of local civil society stakeholders (lead CSO and its civil society partners); the project may not target only the central and decentralized government services of the country in which the project is being implemented. These services must, however, be associated with the project (unless the situation in the country does not permit this).

**If a partnership is forged between the local CSO and other local organizations involved, this partnership is assessed in terms of the following factors (these factors are detailed in the NIONG template):**

- The NIONG must include all useful information on all potential partners: references, levels of expertise, means, management capabilities, and on how they will work with the local CSO leading the project.
- It must explain how the partners will be involved in the project and to what extent. To help ensure the sustainability of the project, DPA/OSC will take into consideration the ways in which the partners are involved in identifying, designing, implementing and evaluating the project.
- The relationships established between the CSO and its partners must be described in terms of how they came about and how they have developed.



- The NIONG must also explain the capacity building strategy for its partners, the goals set, the ways in which it will be implemented, and the indicators that will be used to measure its success. The CSO must also explain how it will position itself and how it will contribute specifically to the process. If the CSO carried out an institutional assessment of the partner in a shared manner prior to the project being developed (which is recommended), summary points from this may be included in the NIONG to help provide an understanding of which aspects the capacity building actions will focus on.
- The quality of the empowerment strategy envisaged for the stakeholders involved must be described in detail: the project must contribute significantly to the institutional, technical and financial empowerment of the local partners and the various stakeholders involved in the project. The NIONG must, if necessary, detail how the project will be handed over (project management, governance, infrastructure, equipment, supplies, property titles, contracts, agreements, etc.).
- In the case of a multi-phase project, DPA/OSC will also assess the expected changes in terms of partnership (roles of the various stakeholders and level of autonomy that local partners have during the project). The NIONG must clearly distinguish between partners and service providers.

**Overall quality of the project:** The NIONG's clarity and consistency are critical. CSOs are therefore encouraged to pay attention to the quality of the NIONG, which should be reflected in the logical framework of the project:

- The overall consistency of the project and how well the goals, activities and resources are aligned;
- The result and impact indicators are specific and consistent with the goals and expected results;
- Lessons learned from previous actions and evaluations are taken into account;
- The project's estimated budget is consistent with the planned actions, and the unit costs are justified;
- The human resources and technical resources mobilized are consistent with the project's goals.

**Project size:** Projects of significant importance and impact are preferred.

**Gender analysis:** Gender mainstreaming is a quality criterion for the project. It shall be based on a gender analysis of the project, the results of which, presented in the assessment/issues section, feed into the project design, at the very least as part of a "do no harm" approach so that the project does not increase gender inequalities, and in all other cases to improve the project's goals, outcomes, activities and indicators.

Methodology considerations are provided in [Worksheet 2](#), and CSOs are encouraged to include in their budgets all the resources required for gender mainstreaming in the project.

**Consideration of cross-cutting objectives related to biodiversity, climate, and the environment in the project:** This is strongly encouraged because these themes are part of the priorities of French development aid policy and provide assurances that the project will effectively contribute to sustainable development issues. Having them as a central part of the project will give it an advantage in the selection process. Whenever the CSO states that its project addresses one or more of these themes, they must appear in the logical framework and be reflected by indicators. Methodology considerations are provided in [Worksheet 3](#).

**Consideration of young people as project stakeholders:** AFD considers that young people play a vital role in ensuring the "full integration" of the economy and the workplace, society and citizenship, the environment and the climate, all of which are essential to achieving the SDGs. CSOs must endeavor to include measures that promote the quest for generational equity in their projects, particularly by making it easier for young people to get involved.

Methodology considerations are provided in [Worksheet 4](#) and in [Worksheet 4A](#) (Volunteering).

**Consideration of protection from sexual exploitation and abuse:** As an aid organization and employer, AFD is aware of its responsibility to combat sexual exploitation and abuse, protect its



employees, partners and beneficiaries of its actions, and to promote the highest possible standards of behavior. CSOs are now being urged to give greater consideration to this aspect in their projects. Project budgets submitted to the CSO Initiatives mechanism may now include expenditure relating to developing, strengthening, deploying, sustaining and adapting policies, procedures and tools to combat sexual exploitation and abuse. This expenditure must be justified and appropriate to the needs and specific characteristics of the CSO, its partners and its project. This may include expenditure related to:

- Training, information and awareness-raising activities for CSO teams and partners (at headquarters and in the field), as well as for beneficiary populations and communities;
- Discussion, co-construction and risk analysis workshops on policies and tools for protecting against sexual exploitation and abuse;
- Translation needs;
- External, technical, ad hoc support needed by CSOs at whatever stage they are in the project to help with policies and tools for protecting against sexual exploitation and abuse.

Methodology considerations are provided in [Worksheet 9](#).

**Innovation:** AFD will assess how innovative a project is. More innovative projects may benefit from an advantage during the selection process. The CSO must give a detailed explanation of a project's innovativeness.

**Target groups:** The NIONG must detail the project's beneficiary population, quantifying it as precisely as possible: number and status of beneficiaries, the type of structure they adopt (for example, village committees, professional associations, neighborhood associations, etc.) and clearly distinguishing between direct and indirect beneficiaries.

It must also explain the target population's level of commitment and how the beneficiaries will take ownership of the planned actions. Young people are expected to be fully involved in the project, not just beneficiaries.

**Human resources:** The CSO must use the HR tab in the project budget (Excel) to explain the human resources mobilized, precisely indicating the status of the personnel (salaried, volunteers, ad hoc volunteer experts, expatriates from other countries), the duration of their mission and their profile. Time spent by the human resources on the project must be tracked (using time sheets or a time tracking tool or software, which the auditor must review).

**The involvement of volunteers** is encouraged, including under some kind of reciprocal agreement (see [Worksheet 4A](#)). This is a further way of actively involving young people in the project. In some countries, there are national volunteer schemes that CSOs may draw on for the project.

The CSO must explain how the human and technical resources mobilized for the implementation of the project relate to the goals, activities and duration of the project. The CSO must ensure that the techniques or technologies it plans to use for the project are viable and sustainable over the long term, and that they are suitable for the local context and for the management and/or maintenance capabilities of its partner(s).

**Monitoring and evaluation method and system:** AFD will examine the quality of the mechanism and methods used to evaluate and/or monitor and evaluate and/or study the effects/impacts.

AFD strongly encourages **external evaluation** for all projects, regardless of their nature. External evaluation is required at the end of each phase for "field" projects involving several phases. The cost of the evaluation or effects/impact study may be included in the project's estimated budget and must not be underestimated; the evaluator must be chosen through a call for tenders. Methodology considerations are provided in [Worksheet 6](#).

**Project capitalization:** DPA/OSC encourages capitalization exercises carried out as part of projects and their wider dissemination, beyond the CSO itself. Capitalization materials can vary widely (brochures, reports, educational materials, conferences, videos, films, photographs, etc.).

**Long-term success and sustainability:** The NIONG must explain the prospects for the sustainability of the actions and achievements after the end of the project.

DPA/OSC pays particular attention to the conditions of social ownership, economic and financial viability and institutional sustainability of the action, in particular how the partner(s), stakeholders and/or beneficiary communities will take ownership of it.

DPA/OSC also pays attention to the strategy of financial empowerment of potential partner(s) and to how recurring costs incurred by the project will be covered over the long term. These aspects must be explained in the application, in the form, for example, of an estimated post-project budget highlighting the costs and the source of the expected resources or, if appropriate, a business plan.

**Financial resources mobilized for the project:** The CSO must ensure that its budgets are consistent (expenditure = resources) and that its financing plan is viable. The plan must indicate whether the expected resources are already available, have been applied for, or are still to be applied for.

**Message content:** The CSO must ensure that the content of messages conveyed by the project (publications, events, websites, etc.) does not contain racist, discriminatory or proselytizing language. France encourages CSOs to implement their projects in line with the human rights-based approach set out in the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs' Human Rights and Development Strategy.

## **2. Thresholds and ceilings for the various funding sources (Note: always refer to the relevant AMI)**

The funding ceiling for projects is identical to that in the shortlisting stage:

- **The maximum AFD co-financing rate is set at 90% of the total project budget.**

# **HOW TO APPLY FOR FINANCING ONCE THE PROJECT HAS BEEN SHORTLISTED**

## **I. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR FINANCING VIA THE OSCar PORTAL**

Once the project has been shortlisted, the CSO submits the application for co-financing via the OSCar portal.

The application for co-financing must include the following documents:

- An **administrative file** from the CSO. It is important to check that all the administrative documents are up to date and have been uploaded correctly to the dedicated area on the OSCar portal (CSO Information menu). If there are any changes to the administrative documents (relating to the board, executive committee, articles of association or management team), the CSO must upload updated versions to the dedicated area on the OSCar portal. Please provide a translation in French or English of all administrative documents, especially the articles of association.
- A **technical and financial file for the project, called the CSO Initiative Note (NIONG)**, in Word and Excel formats (for the financial tables), uploaded to the dedicated area on the OSCar portal (Projects menu).

### /// KEY POINTS

Any incomplete or non-compliant file will be declared ineligible.  
Files prepared according to the standard format used by other donors (the EU, for example) will not be accepted. The CSO must send the entire technical and financial file in the AFD format described in this guide.

## II. FORMAT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE FILE UPLOADED TO THE OSCAR PORTAL (CSO INFORMATION MENU)

The CSO must upload the administrative file only once (at the time of submitting the initial application).

When a CSO submits a new application for financing:

- It does not need to resend the administrative file;
- However, it must upload the documents that have been changed or updated (composition of the board, executive committee, management team, activity reports, moral reports, the CSO's accounts, the involvement of any new private co-funders contributing more than 15% of the CSO's and/or the project's last validated annual budget and the composition of their respective boards of directors, etc.) since the last administrative file was uploaded.

The documents that make up the administrative file are mentioned in template 1 (NIONG field project) and in template 2 (NIONG general interest project).

## III. FORMAT OF THE TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL FILE UPLOADED TO THE OSCAR PORTAL (PROJECTS MENU)

The technical and financial file comprises:

- The **CSO Initiative Note (NIONG)**. The CSO must use the template provided (see below);
- **The detailed estimated budget**, presented in Excel tables in the format provided (see below): Expenditure/Resources/Valuations/HR Breakdown/Country Breakdown (for projects taking place in several countries). The CSO prepares these project documents and submits them to DPA/OSC for each application for financing.

### A. CSO Initiative Note (NIONG)

There is one template for single- and multi-country projects and SMA projects – [online reference documents](#).

### /// KEY POINTS

The file must be prepared using Excel and Word files (Times New Roman font, size 11, single-spaced), the maximum number of pages specified must be strictly adhered to. **No PDF files.**

**The file may be prepared in French (preferred).** For English-speaking CSOs or CSOs more familiar with the English language, the NIONG may be submitted in English.

**The NIONG must not exceed 25 pages (excluding appendices)**

There are four parts to the NIONG:

1. Transparency statement;
2. Project description;
3. Appendices;
4. Detailed estimated budget with the Expenditure/Resources/Valuations/HR Breakdown/Country Breakdown (for projects taking place in several countries) tables, signed, dated and stating the name and position of the authorized person.  
(See Template 3 – single budget table for download, Excel document with five tabs).

## 1. Project transparency statement

This is the document used to meet the transparency standards of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).

The CSO provides this at the same time it submits the NIONG; it is a summary of the project (goals, outcomes, target groups, etc.) prepared following a predefined format presented in the NIONG template.

The CSO agrees that the transparency statement may be distributed externally and approves its content upon signing the financing agreement. AFD then publishes this document on its website and on the French government's website ([www.transparence-aide.gouv.fr](http://www.transparence-aide.gouv.fr)), in accordance with France's commitments on transparency for financed projects.

## 2. Project description and indicators

This is the main part of the NIONG. The project leaders must use the format provided (see NIONG template). It must detail the various characteristics of the project. It must explain how the project came about, the project's context, diagnostic studies carried out beforehand, partnership structure, project steering, goals, expected outcomes and main activities planned, and lastly the conditions for its long-term sustainability, along with the evaluation, audit, communication and capitalization arrangements put in place.

The project's approach to gender must also be explicit and ambitious (see [Worksheet 2](#)), as must its inclusion of young people, especially since these two areas are linked in several ways.

The CSO must also provide, via the OSCar portal (NIONG form), information on aggregated indicators that fall into two categories:

**Specific aggregated indicators** that apply to CSO Initiatives projects. The CSO is required to fill in these indicators.

For "field" projects, the CSO must specify in the NIONG and in the form on the OSCar portal, the number of local CSO partners involved in implementing the project and, of these, the number of CSO partners who are beneficiaries of reallocation.

For "general interest" projects, the CSO must provide information in the NIONG and in the form on the OSCar portal:

For SMA projects:

- The number of CSOs (whether or not they are members of the CSO carrying the project) directly impacted by the project;
- The number of natural persons (who are members of the CSO) directly impacted by the project;
- The overall number of natural persons impacted by the project.

**Aggregated sector-specific indicators for French bilateral aid**, which apply to AFD and have been approved by the French Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID). It is recommended that CSOs fill in these indicators for "field" projects only (if appropriate to the nature of the project).

### 3. Appendices

The NIONG has several appendices that require special attention from CSOs.

**Logical framework – NIONG Appendix 1:** Activities, expected outcomes and key indicators must be summarized in the logical framework, which is used as a reference document throughout the project's implementation (including for reporting on implementation). Methodology considerations are provided in Worksheet 1.

**The list of reallocation beneficiaries, if any,** regardless of the amount received, accompanied by the partner information sheets (Appendices 2 and 6 of the NIONG).

Reallocation is the process by which the CSO passes on a share of the project funds to designated partners, regardless of where the funds came from (AFD and other funding bodies).

The beneficiary of reallocation is always a legal entity and not a physical person. The reallocation must be formalized in an agreement between the CSO and its partners who are the beneficiaries of the reallocation. DPA/OSC does not issue a no-objection (ANO) on this reallocation agreement, and the agreement does not have to be sent to DPA/OSC. However, the agreement may be reviewed during an audit.

Reallocation may involve a:

**Financial reallocation:** A transfer of funds to the partner(s) for the implementation of the project (the partner(s) then become(s) responsible for the funds passed on), even though the CSO is still legally responsible to AFD for the proper use of these funds. This reallocation may take place at any time during the project;

**Material reallocation:** The transfer to the partner(s) of equipment acquired for the implementation of the project (vehicles, for example). Reallocation may take place at any time during the project.

Reallocation may be:

**First tier:** From the CSO to its main partner;

**Second tier:** From the CSO's main partner to one or more other local partners. This second-tier reallocation is subject to the same conditions as first-tier reallocation. The local CSO is responsible for monitoring these conditions.

NB: Financial reallocation is not mandatory. There is no minimum or maximum reallocation amount.

**In accordance with the provisions for anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT), AFD must carry out AML/CFT due diligence on the beneficiary(ies) of financial reallocation** paid in one or more disbursements and regardless of where the funds came from (AFD or another donor).

When the reallocation beneficiary(ies) is/are identified at the time the project is developed, the local CSO must, in the NIONG, complete the list of partners and stakeholders receiving reallocation (Appendix 6 of the NIONG) and the partner information sheet (Appendix 2 of the NIONG).

If the reallocation beneficiary(ies) is/are identified during project implementation, the CSO must inform DPA/OSC and provide the list of these partners via the OSCar portal in order to obtain a no-objection (ANO).

- The CSO must provide identification details for the reallocation beneficiary(ies) (company name, registered office, identity of the responsible partners) using the list of partners and stakeholders receiving reallocation (Appendix 6 of the NIONG) and the partner information sheet (Appendix 2 of the NIONG).
- After completing the necessary AML/CFT due diligence, DPA/OSC will notify the CSO of its response (objection or no-objection) within one month. The CSO may only pass on funds to the partner(s) after receiving AFD's no-objection.

**Summary partner information sheet – NIONG Appendix 2:** This summary sheet describes the main characteristics of the CSO's main partner(s) (regardless of whether reallocation is planned or not). The CSO may send this sheet after the application for co-financing has been submitted if the CSO identifies the new partner during project implementation. However, if reallocation is involved, the CSO must obtain a no-objection from AFD when a partner is added or changed.

**The new Compliance Questionnaire: Analysis of the CSO/Foundation Counterparty System – NIONG Appendix 7.** Please also refer to [Worksheet 10](#) for further information.

In many intervention areas, AFD has to deal with the risk of funds destined for CSOs being misappropriated, in particular to finance terrorism. Despite the many, and increasing, efforts undertaken by CSOs to promote and strengthen their operations, some CSOs may still be vulnerable to this risk.

CSOs may be exposed to the risk of their funds being misappropriated to finance terrorism not only because of their location and/or involvement in sensitive areas, but also because of their involvement in areas with little or no access to banking services, which results in the increased use of cash, or because of the type of activities they engage in.

Furthermore, French financial institutions must comply with various regulatory obligations aimed specifically at combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism. As a result, AFD is strictly prohibited from making funds available, directly or indirectly, to any listed persons or entities.

The CSO partner fills out this questionnaire so that AFD can assess how it manages fiduciary risk and the risk of money laundering and terrorist financing.

**Fiduciary risk** should be understood as everything involved in good financial governance within each counterparty. This includes corruption risk and internal governance aspects (such as the organizational measures, rules, procedures and processes used to understand how the counterparty is managed, administered and controlled). AFD pays particular attention to the risk arising from the counterparty's failure to comply with the conditions of use or time for the funds transferred to it. This requires the counterparty to behave responsibly, transparently and with respect for the resources assigned to it by AFD.

Note: The new questionnaire will have two parts: one relating to the CSO itself (to be submitted as early as possible via OSCar), and the other focusing on the project submitted for financing (to be appended to the NIONG – Appendix 7).

**The “country component” sheet – NIONG Appendix 4:** For multi-country projects only, the CSO must fill out a summary sheet for each country where the project will be implemented. This sheet provides a summary of the project in each country (local context, goals, activities and project outcomes). There must therefore be as many “country component” sheets as there are countries covered by the project. These sheets must be updated with information on project implementation when submitting the interim and final implementation reports.

## B. Detailed estimated budget

**Estimated budget:** The CSO must provide details of the estimated budget (download template 3). It must specify the duration of each phase (number of months).

**Key points:** To complete the estimated budget, the CSO must refer to the instructions for use in [Appendix 3](#) of this methodology guide.

The budget must be submitted in Excel format, signed, dated and stating the name and position of the authorized person, at the same time as submitting the application for co-financing.

The CSO must fill out the “projected” columns in each of the six tabs:

- Expenditure/Resources/Valuations

- HR Breakdown
- Country breakdown (for multi-country projects)

The allocation of expenditure is estimated. It may be updated during project implementation, provided that any request to do so is duly justified and has received a no-objection from the DPA/OSC project manager, in cases where a prior no-objection from AFD is required.

In the "Resources" tab, the CSO must ensure that the column indicating the status of resources (already available, applied for, still to be applied for) appears in the budget included in the NIONG.

In all cases, the total projected expenditure must be equal (to the nearest euro) to the total projected resources for each of the phases and in total.

**Applicable exchange rate:** Unless otherwise agreed between the CSO and AFD (DPA/OSC) in the NIONG, costs incurred in currencies other than those used in the CSO's accounts for the project shall be converted to euros (€) using an exchange rate in line with the CSO's usual accounting practices, provided these practices meet the following conditions:

- The accounting rule is documented and is standard practice for the CSO;
- This rule is applied consistently throughout the project;
- This rule is applied to all types of transactions and all sources of financing throughout the life of the project;
- Evidence of the accounting rule used shall be provided by the CSO upon request by DPA/OSC;
- Exchange rates shall be readily available for any audit and made available to DPA/OSC upon request.

**Rules governing the effective date for a project in phase 3 or 4 (already co-financed through a French partner):** Expenditure is not eligible if incurred prior to the date on which the AFD grant was awarded (date of the NGO Committee). However, expenditure incurred prior to the project effective date may be accepted if there is a delay between the end date of financing for the previous phase (via the French partner) and the date of granting financing for the next phase; AFD may retrospectively finance the expenditure that the CSO had to incur to ensure continuity between the two phases. This retrospective expenditure may only be incurred in the 12 months preceding the date on which the AFD grant for the new phase was approved; the CSO must provide evidence that this expenditure was essential.

**Any request for retrospective reimbursement of expenditure must be clearly justified and discussed in advance with DPA/OSC.** The CSO must explain the reasons for requesting retrospective treatment in the NIONG sent to DPA/OSC. The CSO must include the expenditure eligible for retrospective treatment in the estimated project budget attached to the NIONG submitted for AFD financing. The CSO must be able to justify expenditure that was incurred prior to submitting the application to DPA/OSC, if necessary.

# CONTRACT AGREEMENT AND DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS ONCE FINANCING HAS BEEN APPROVED

## I. CONTRACT AGREEMENT

### A. Signing of the financing agreement

#### 1. Notification of granting of AFD financing

AFD financing is granted on the condition that no significant change occurs in the project or its working environment compared with the situation described at the time of project appraisal.

If a crisis and/or a natural disaster and/or a coup d'état occurs in the country(ies) where the project is being implemented, DPA/OSC is prepared to take the consequences of these events into account in terms of the timetable, program of activities and the current project budget (value at a constant euro rate). These aspects would need to be adjusted following the temporary or permanent suspension of project activities, in connection with a change in needs related to reconstruction/rehabilitation or recovery. DPA/OSC will analyze the feasibility of the requested adjustments, and will make the necessary amendment(s). DPA/OSC will inform the CSOs concerned of this flexibility available to them as soon as such an event occurs in the country(ies) where the project is being implemented.

Once the grant has been approved by the NGO Committee, DPA/OSC sends the beneficiary CSO a notification letter by email, along with the finalized draft agreement in PDF format, before triggering the electronic signature process (via esygnature).

The financing agreement comprises the contractual agreement with, as appendices, the project description and its financing plan, which have contractual value.

#### /// KEY POINTS

Before finalizing the financing agreement, the CSO must ensure that:

It updates the **project description and financing plan** attached to the agreement if necessary, ensuring that these do not change significantly from those in the documents presented to the NGO Committee (in particular the list of countries concerned, duration, project start and end dates, components, stakeholders and operating procedures).

If more substantial modifications are required for the project, related to changes in the project environment, the CSO will inform DPA/OSC as soon as possible. DPA/OSC will examine the content and accept or reject these modifications **before finalizing the agreement**.

It updates the **transparency statement**, provided by the CSO in the NIONG at the time of project appraisal, if required for its publication on the AFD and French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs websites in accordance with IATI standards. The CSO's signature on the agreement will indicate its written consent to the publication of the transparency statement and project data.



## 2. Lifting of conditions precedent to the signature of the financing agreement and the first disbursement

The CSO and AFD must sign the agreement via esygnature, a secure electronic signature workflow.

**Lifting of conditions precedent to signature:** Only once the Agreement has been signed electronically, which must take place no later than two months after the date on which the Notification Letter is sent, will AFD commit to financing the project.

DPA/OSC will send the operating procedure for the electronic signature process to the CSO by email for its approval, prior to sending the notification letter and the finalized draft agreement. The electronic signature process for the agreement will only be triggered once the CSO has agreed the finalized draft agreement by email and all the expected documents, as set out in the notification letter, have either been uploaded to the OSCar portal or sent by regular mail and have been checked by DPA/OSC.

**The CSO must have previously checked that all the administrative documents are up to date and have been uploaded correctly to the dedicated area on the OSCar portal (CSO Information menu):**

- Accounts from the last three financial years;
- Activity reports from the last three financial years;
- Composition of its board of directors;
- A copy of the minutes of the appointment of the president made by the beneficiary's decision-making body, dated, signed and certified as "true to the original" by a representative of the beneficiary authorized for this purpose and whose authorization is in force on the date of signing the agreement;
- A copy of the articles of association dated, signed and certified as "true to the original" by a representative of the beneficiary authorized for this purpose if this is the first upload to the OSCar portal, or a certificate signed by a representative of the beneficiary authorized for this purpose and whose authorization is in force on the date of signing the agreement and stating that the articles of association uploaded to the OSCar portal are the most up-to-date articles of association;
- A copy of the beneficiary's license or registration certificate from the relevant authorities;
- A copy of the identity documents of each person authorized to sign on behalf of the beneficiary the agreement, any disbursement request and any documents authorized by or required from the beneficiary under the agreement.
- A beneficiary's bank account details for the account into which the grant funds are to be paid.

The CSO must also send **by regular mail**:

- An original of the certificate of delegation of signatures designating the persons authorized to sign on behalf of the beneficiary the agreement, any disbursement request and any documents authorized by or required from the beneficiary under the agreement. The original specimen signatures of each of the authorized persons must be sent with the certificate.

At the same time, the CSO must also upload to the OSCar portal (Projects menu – Associated Documents/Communication Document section):

- **Communication materials:**
  - **For all projects, the communication sheet** (Word format, see the template provided in Appendix 11). AFD may use this form in various ways to raise awareness of CSO projects within AFD and among external audiences (website, distribution to AFD's network of field offices, preparation of press kits for public trips, conferences, etc.). The CSO is free to use it, in paper or digital format, to publicize its project. Uploading it to the OSCar platform will be considered as consent for its publication;
  - **For all projects, one to two photos illustrating the project or its context** (see the Visibility Guide available in the Communication Kit in Appendix 11).

**Lifting of conditions precedent to the first disbursement:** The CSO must upload to the OSCar portal (Projects menu – Disbursement Request section):

- The program of activities (see [Appendix 8](#) to download a template for this document) and the overall estimated budget defined in Appendix 3 (Financing Plan) (in Word and Excel formats);
- A PDF copy of the letter requesting the lifting of the conditions precedent (see Appendix 4 of the Agreement) and the first disbursement (phase 1) and specifying the details of the bank account to which this payment must be made, dated and signed by a representative of the beneficiary authorized for this purpose and whose authorization is in force on the date of signing the agreement (not an electronic signature but an original scanned signature). The amount of the expected payment must be specified in figures and in words.

## **B. Contractual provisions of the financing agreement**

### **1. CSO's commitments and obligations**

DPA/OSC informs the CSO that by signing the agreement, it commits to the following:

- The CSO must comply with all the commitments and obligations made under the agreement and ensure that potential partner(s) who may be reallocation beneficiary(ies) also comply with these commitments and obligations.
- The CSO must ensure that these commitments and obligations under the financing agreement are included, as appropriate, in the reallocation agreement with each partner. This reallocation agreement may take any form the CSO chooses. DPA/OSC does not provide a no-objection on this reallocation agreement. However, this agreement may be reviewed as part of an audit or on request by DPA/OSC.
- The CSO undertakes to comply with all local laws and regulations applicable to it and to the project, particularly in the areas of environmental protection, safety and labor law (environmental and social standards), and to comply with international standards in the areas of environmental protection and labor law, including the Fundamental Conventions of the ILO and international conventions on the environment, in keeping with the laws and regulations applicable in the country where the project is being implemented.
- The CSO undertakes to ensure that the funds invested in the project are not of illicit origin and that the project does not give rise to any act of corruption, fraud or anti-competitive practices.
- The CSO undertakes, when awarding contracts relating to the implementation of the project (contracts for intellectual services, services, works and supplies) to comply with the rules relating to procurement. If a contract is not awarded or performed in accordance with the commitments, AFD will be entitled to request the reimbursement of all or part of the funds it has paid.
- The CSO agrees to meet the various key dates of the project outlined in the agreement.
- The CSO agrees to comply with the reporting commitments outlined in the agreement (audit, evaluation, communication).
- The CSO undertakes to implement any specific commitments related to the implementation of the project, as defined with DPA/OSC during project appraisal and included in the agreement. The CSO must specify the conditions for their implementation in the implementation reports.
- The CSO undertakes to implement a system for tracking all project-related expenditure and resources (cost accounting).
- The CSO undertakes to open a dedicated account or, failing that, provide a certificate from its statutory auditor stating that the CSO keeps accurate cost accounting records.

### **2. Procurement rules and thresholds in the financing agreement**

In the procurement, award and performance of contracts relating to the implementation of the project, the CSO undertakes to:

- Observe the principles of competitive bidding, fair treatment and transparency, in accordance with internationally recognized standards recommended by the OECD and the United Nations Convention against Corruption;
- Comply with the laws and regulations of the country applicable to it in all aspects of the procurement process. The CSO shall apply the most restrictive of the provisions of the laws and regulations applicable to it and the provisions of this section;
- Award contracts to companies that are in all respects sufficiently assured of their ability to perform the contract;
- Require applicants to provide the proposed Integrity Statement (see Appendix 6 of the Financing Agreement) duly signed, and to include this signed document as a contractual document of the contract (including in the case of a negotiated contract) only if the contract is greater than or equal to €20,000;
- Keep the documents and accounting records relating to the procurement, awarding and performance of contracts for a period of ten years from the deadline for the disbursement of funds stipulated in the agreement, and submit them for verification to AFD or to an auditor appointed for the project.

In the procurement, award and performance of contracts relating to the implementation of the project, the CSO undertakes to follow the following procurement procedures (it may, if necessary, apply its own tender thresholds as long as they are lower than AFD's thresholds):

**For all contracts for intellectual services and services with an estimated value of:**

- ✓ **Less than €15,000:** Signing a negotiated contract is authorized, provided that the price set is in line with the market price;
- ✓ **Between €15,000 and €60,000:** A call for tenders without publication is authorized. The beneficiary invites at least three candidates of its choice to submit a tender, having previously ascertained their interest in and ability to provide the service. The contract will be awarded to the lowest priced compliant tender, with the exception of intellectual services, for which the contract will be awarded to the best tender based on scoring that gives greater weight to technical quality than to price;
- ✓ **More than €60,000:** Restricted call for tenders from a list of candidates selected by the beneficiary based on their qualifications and interest in providing the service. The contract will be awarded to the lowest priced compliant tender, with the exception of intellectual services, for which the contract will be awarded to the best tender based on scoring that gives greater weight to technical quality than to price;

**For all works and supply contracts with an estimated value of:**

- ✓ **Less than €15,000:** Signing a negotiated contract is authorized, provided that the price set is in line with market price;
- ✓ **Between €15,000 and €150,000:** A call for tenders without publication is authorized. The beneficiary invites at least three candidates of its choice to submit a tender, having previously ascertained their interest in and ability to provide the service. The contract will be awarded to the lowest priced technically compliant tender;
- ✓ **More than €150,000:** Open call for tenders published locally. The tender will be published as widely as possible, on any local media (websites and press outlets) deemed relevant. The contract will be awarded to the lowest priced technically compliant tender.

In the case of the award or performance of contracts with a restricted or open call for tenders, the CSO must ensure that:

- The time period allowed for preparing tenders is sufficient to allow the candidates to prepare good-quality tenders;
- Tenders must be analyzed by an evaluation committee based on the exclusion, qualification and award criteria announced in advance. This committee must be made up of at least three members, all of whom have the technical and administrative expertise required to formulate a sound evaluation of the tenders. At the end of the committee, a record of decisions must be written and signed;
- The total cumulative amount of amendments to a contract may not exceed 20% of the initial amount of the contract.

### 3. Contractual dates of the financing agreement

DPA/OSC informs the CSO that by signing the financing agreement, it commits to meeting the following dates:

- The **signature date of the agreement** may be later or earlier than the actual start date of the project;
- The **validity date of the agreement** is two years after the effective project end date;
- The **expenditure eligibility start date** is the same as the effective project start date. It may not be earlier than the date of the AFD grant, except in the case of retrospective expenditure detailed above;
- The **expenditure eligibility end date** is the same as the effective project end date. All expenditure must have been incurred (i.e. committed and paid) by this date, except for expenditure related to the final evaluation and audit, which may be paid up to one year after the effective project end date. If expenditure incurred before the end of the project has not been paid by the effective project end date, it may be allowed in exceptional circumstances, but it must be certain (final amount known from supporting documents) and be covered by a no-objection request;
- The **deadline for the disbursement of funds** is the date beyond which no request for disbursement may be made to DPA/OSC. It is set at six months before the effective project end date;
- The **deadline for the use of funds** is the same as the effective project end date. This is the date beyond which no expenditure may be incurred (i.e. committed and paid), except for expenditure related to the external audit and the final project evaluation, which may be incurred up to one year after the effective project end date. Funds not used by the deadline, not duly justified or insufficiently justified, must be returned to AFD;
- The CSO must send the **interim technical and financial implementation report for phase 1** (provided that at least 70% of total expenditure for the phase has been incurred) and the **program of activities for phase 2** to DPA/OSC no later than three months after the phase 1 end date;
- The CSO must send the **interim audit report** to DPA/OSC no later than three months after the phase 1 end date;
- The CSO must send the **final technical and financial implementation report** to DPA/OSC no later than three months after the effective project end date; this deadline increases to six months if the project has no subsequent phase;
- The CSO must send the **final audit report** for phase 2 to DPA/OSC no later than six months after the effective project end date;
- The CSO must send the **final evaluation report** to DPA/OSC:
  - No later than three months after the effective project end date if the CSO plans to submit a new application;
  - No later than six months after the effective project end date if the project has no subsequent phase.

### 4. Conditions precedent and specific commitments related to the project

The financing agreement may include conditions precedent to the implementation of the project. To lift any conditions precedent specified, the CSO must provide the requested documents at the earliest opportunity. The requested documents may differ greatly in nature, for example (list not exhaustive):

- A letter from the local authorities confirming that they agree to the project and its implementation;

- Evaluation report or audit report from the previous phase;
- Implementation report from the previous phase for approval by DPA/OSC;
- A document confirming that a monitoring and evaluation system is in place;
- A document outlining the project's or CSO's gender strategy;
- Detailed results indicators and/or the implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system;
- Written confirmation that other stated financing has been secured;
- Any other documents related to the implementation of the project.

The financing agreement may also include specific commitments related to the implementation of the project. The CSO must report on whether these specific commitments have been met in the implementation reports. Where applicable, the agreement will state these specific commitments at the very end of Article 6.

## 5. Safety- and security-related provisions

**CSOs that receive an AFD grant are responsible for the safety and security of their staff** (expatriate, local, ad hoc support, volunteers) during project implementation, and for the safety and security of the staff of the entities to which they entrust or delegate all or part of project implementation.

The terms of reference CSOs draw up for recruiting auditors, consultants, experts and external evaluators for projects must also include a clause on their safety and security if they are required to spend time in the field.

CSOs are advised to develop a security plan and update it regularly to reflect any changes in the project's operating environment. For reference, a best practice guide is available at the following link: <https://www.afd.fr/en/ressources/best-practice-guide-security-plan>. This guide highlights the importance of taking safety and security considerations into account and provides best practices for developing a dedicated plan. It is aimed at all entities receiving or that may receive AFD financing.

DPA/OSC allows any costs related to safety and security to be included in the project budget.

CSOs may, if they wish, use the services (free of charge) of specialized security solutions provider Amarante.<sup>7</sup> CSOs wishing to benefit from this assistance should contact the DPA/OSC project manager, who will put them in touch with Amarante.

## 6. Communication-related provisions

**CSOs that receive an AFD grant agree to give visibility to AFD's financial support and to follow the communication guidelines.**

**These communication guidelines apply to all projects that AFD co-finances** except in cases involving a sensitive security environment that puts project partners or beneficiaries at risk, or when communication may be harmful or detrimental to the smooth running of the project. The CSO and AFD will discuss these exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

Worksheet 7 provides CSOs with guidance on AFD's expectations in this area, detailing the expected communication guidelines and activities. Appendix 11 of the Communication Kit includes templates for the required documents, logos and other materials that CSOs may find useful.

# II. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

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<sup>7</sup> CSOs may also wish to visit the INSO website to gather information on security and safety matters.

## A. Disbursement of funds procedures

Projects are divided into two phases (with some exceptions), which correspond to the two disbursements that AFD makes to the CSO over the course of the project. At the request of the CSO, AFD will decide whether an additional phase should be set up if a particular situation requires it.

### /// KEY POINTS

The typical **schedule for a three-year project** is as follows: Phase 1 (18 months) and Phase 2 (18 months). However, DPA/OSC allows some flexibility in the duration of each phase. For example: Phase 1 (12 months) and Phase 2 (24 months) or Phase 1 (15 months) and Phase 2 (21 months).

In all cases, the CSO must always state the duration of each phase (number of months) in the technical and financial documents.

The disbursement for phase 1 is an advance paid on signing the financing agreement. The first disbursement will equal 100% of AFD's financial contribution to the budget for phase 1.

The lifting of the conditions precedent to the first disbursement only takes place after both parties have signed the agreement.

DPA/OSC reserves the right to cancel the financing granted if the conditions precedent to the signature are not lifted within 18 months from the date of the AFD grant.

**The disbursement for phase 2 is the balance of the grant requested by the CSO. The CSO must prove that it has incurred 70% of the total estimated expenditure in the budget for phase 1.**

The second disbursement will equal 100% of AFD's financial contribution to the budget for phase 2, as detailed in the CSO's program of activities sent at the same time as the intermediate technical and financial implementation report for phase 1.

**The CSO and DPA/OSC must hold a mid-term evaluation meeting no later than 18 months after the effective project start date. This meeting may be held remotely.**

CSOs are reminded that DPA/OSC cannot make the second disbursement without having previously received the technical and financial implementation report for phase 1 and the program of activities for phase 2, and without first approving these with a no-objection.

AFD will transfer the grant funds to any bank account designated by the CSO at a reputable banking institution acceptable to AFD (discussion required at the time of negotiating and signing the contract), located in the country where the CSO is domiciled.

The CSO is not required to open a bank account specifically for the project, but it must keep separate accounting records for the project that can be used to track the project's expenditure and resources.

### /// KEY POINTS

DPA/OSC reserves the right to make its first disbursement, or subsequent disbursements, conditional on the actual mobilization of equivalent resources from the financial partners listed in the financing plan, or possibly from other partners not initially listed.

## B. Disbursement request and lifting of conditions precedent

For each disbursement request, the CSO must upload **a PDF copy of the disbursement request letter** to the OSCar Portal (Projects menu – Disbursement Request section), addressed to AFD for the attention of the Head of the Civil Society Organizations Division. This letter must be:

- On CSO letterhead or stamped with the CSO stamp;
- **Signed in original** by an authorized person who has submitted a specimen signature to DPA/OSC.

**The original letter must be dated, include a subject line, the number of the relevant financing agreement, the amount of the expected disbursement (in figures and in words) and the bank account details of the account into which the disbursement is to be paid.**

The letter must detail all the accompanying documents required for the requested disbursement, including the bank account details document.

The CSO must also request the lifting of any conditions precedent; this may be included in the same letter as the disbursement request.

To lift the conditions precedent to the first disbursement, the CSO must provide DPA/OSC, via the OSCar portal, with its disbursement request, the supporting documents mentioned in Appendix 4 of the financing agreement, in particular:

- The single budget table including the detailed estimated budget (Expenditure/Resources/Valuations/HR Breakdown/Country Breakdown) identical to the one approved as part of the agreement, in Excel format, dated, signed and stating the name and position of the authorized person;
- The program of activities for phase 1 in Word format.

To lift the conditions precedent to the second disbursement, the CSO must provide DPA/OSC, via the OSCar portal, with its disbursement request, the supporting documents mentioned in Appendix 4 of the financing agreement, in particular:

- The interim technical and financial implementation report for phase 1 in Word and Excel formats;
- The program of activities for phase 2 in Word format.

See [Appendix 12](#) and [Appendix 8](#) to download templates for these documents.

## C. Program of activities

The program of activities ([Appendix 8](#)) must be detailed enough to describe in practical terms how the main activities in each phase of the project will be prepared and implemented. The CSO must send:

- **At the start of phase 1**, an initial program of activities (for phase 1) with the letter requesting the lifting of the conditions precedent to the first disbursement; **At the start of phase 2**, the CSO must send a second program of activities (for phase 2) as a separate document with the interim technical and financial implementation report for phase 1 and the letter requesting the second disbursement;
- For the program of activities of phase 1 only, the single budget table (in Excel format) including the **detailed estimated budget** (Expenditure/Resources/Valuations/HR Breakdown/Country Breakdown), dated, signed and stating the name and position of the authorized person. The estimated budget must be consistent with the estimated project budget defined in the NIONG and **identical to the one approved as part of the agreement**.

All the documents that make up the program of activities are used as a baseline and for comparison purposes when submitting and approving the technical and financial reports of the completed phases. The CSO must upload the program of activities in Word format to the OSCar portal (Projects menu – Disbursement Request section). It must upload the financial documents in Excel format.

### /// KEY POINTS

The program of activities submitted to DPA/OSC must be in the format used in the template on the AFD website; if not, DPA/OSC will return it and delay the disbursement. DPA/OSC no longer requires the timetable.

## MONITORING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

DPA/OSC monitors the implementation of the projects it supports in various ways, including:

- Approval of the interim and final technical and financial implementation reports submitted by CSOs;
- Field monitoring missions, carried out either by DPA/OSC or by the local AFD field office;
- Review of evaluation reports and the findings of monitoring and evaluation systems;
- Mid-term evaluation meeting with the CSO for each project;
- Interim and final audits.

### I. INTERIM AND FINAL TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORTS

#### A. General procedures for submitting the implementation reports

**The implementation report is submitted twice:**

- **On incurring 70% of total planned expenditure for phase 1** or at the end of phase 1, provided that this 70% level has been reached (the duration of phase 1 may be extended by a no-objection so that expenditure incurred at the end of the phase is at least 70% of total planned expenditure), the interim implementation report is sent with the letter requesting the lifting of the conditions precedent to the second disbursement;
- **At the end of phase 2**, the final technical and financial implementation report is sent to DPA/OSC no later than three months after the effective project end date. This deadline increases to six months if the project has no subsequent phase. The final report covers both the project as a whole and the second phase of the project.

### /// KEY POINTS

DPA/OSC reserves the right to set a different schedule for the delivery of the technical and financial implementation reports if the project warrants it.

The implementation report submitted to DPA/OSC must be in the requested format. If not, DPA/OSC will return it and delay the disbursement. Refer to the report template: the CSO must upload the report in Word format to the OSCar portal (Projects menu – Disbursement Request section). When submitting the report via the OSCar portal, the financial documents must be sent **in Excel format and not in PDF format**.



## B. Specific procedures

The CSO must send to DPA/OSC, via the OSCar portal (Projects menu – Disbursement Request section), a PDF copy of the original letter signed by an authorized person (with a scanned original signature):

- announcing the report;
- requesting the lifting of the conditions precedent to the second disbursement (for the interim implementation report), the expected amount of which must be specified (in figures and in words), and specifying the bank details of the account to which the disbursement is to be transferred;
- announcing the program of activities for the second phase of the project (for the interim implementation report).

**The CSO must submit the interim implementation report no later than three months after the phase 1 end date**, provided that at least 70% of total expenditure for the phase has been incurred.

The CSO may also submit the report before the end of phase 1, provided that at least 70% of total expenditure for the phase has been incurred. In this case, the CSO must submit a no-objection request to reduce the duration of phase 1.

**If total incurred expenditure does not reach the 70% threshold by the phase 1 end date, the CSO does not have to submit the interim implementation report but must submit a no-objection request to extend the duration of phase 1.**

DPA/OSC can only proceed with the disbursement for phase 2 after receiving and approving the technical and financial implementation report for phase 1 and the program of activities for phase 2.

**The final technical and financial implementation report must be uploaded to the OSCar portal (Projects menu – Associated Documents sections) no later than three months after the effective project end date.**

This deadline increases to six months if the project has no subsequent phase. DPA/OSC will not close the project until it has received and approved the final implementation report and any audit and evaluation reports.

The CSO must submit a duly justified no-objection request to DPA/OSC to obtain authorization for any delay in submitting the implementation reports.

DPA/OSC has one month to respond from the date of receipt of the request.

### /// KEY POINTS

The CSO must submit the interim implementation report no later than three months after the phase 1 end date.

If total incurred expenditure does not reach the 70% threshold by the phase 1 end date, the CSO does not have to submit the interim implementation report but must submit a no-objection request to extend the duration of phase 1.

The final technical and financial implementation report must be uploaded to the OSCar portal no later than three months after the effective project end date or six months if there is no subsequent phase.

## C. General procedures for submitting the technical report

### Interim technical report

The interim technical report must describe the implementation of the project during phase 1. It must provide quantitative and qualitative information on the progress of the project and what it achieved during this phase.

The CSO must detail the activities carried out and the resulting outcomes (indicators) in the tables provided for this purpose, and comment on any variations noted in relation to the initial logical framework (critical qualitative analysis).

The measures taken to address these variations and, if applicable, the difficulties experienced, must be explained (changes in the way activities are carried out, organizational or budgetary changes to the project, etc.). The report template provides information on how to fill out each section (see [Appendix 12](#) to download this template).

The interim audit report covering phase 1 of the project must accompany the interim technical report.

### Final technical report

The final technical report must describe the implementation of the project, both for phase 2 of the project and for the project overall. It must provide qualitative and quantitative information on the achievements and outcomes during this period, along with lessons learned, an in-depth analysis and an overall assessment of the project's impacts.

The CSO must describe the plans for the post-project period, including the exit strategy adopted, intended use of materials and equipment, and measures taken to ensure the sustainability and/or replication of the achievements (see [Appendix 13](#) to download a template for this document).

The final audit report covering phase 2 of the project must accompany the final technical report.

### Intermediate and final technical report for multi-country projects

For multi-country projects, the country sheets in the technical report template (intermediate and final) **must include the country sheets presented in the NIONG** (one sheet for each country where the project is being implemented).

These country sheets provide an understanding of how the project is being implemented and is progressing in each country. The other parts of the technical report provide information used to analyze the project's cross-cutting activities.

### General procedures for submitting the financial report

The financial report must be submitted at the same time as the technical report.

When preparing the financial report, the CSO must take into account the detailed estimated budget filled out for the NIONG and included in the agreement (see [Appendix 3 – Estimated Budget and Appendices 12 and 13 – Reports](#) to download this document). The detailed budget is the only financial document that must be completed as the project progresses.

In the narrative accompanying the detailed budget, the CSO must, as appropriate:

- Provide a reminder of the no-objections from DPA/OSC that it has received for variations greater than or equal to 20% of the initial planned (or revised, if applicable) **total** of a budget heading in the **overall** project financing plan;

- Explain systematically any variations greater than or equal to 10% of the total of any budget heading in relation to the initial estimated budget (or revised budget, if applicable) for that heading over the duration **of a phase**;
- Provide information on new financing obtained for the project (donor, amount and, if applicable relevant period).

### /// KEY POINTS

The Excel budget table must be dated, signed and state the name and position of the person who approves the budgets. This must be a person authorized to sign the agreement or disbursement requests. If not, the CSO must attach the authorization decision for the new signatory, an original specimen signature and a copy of their identity document.

## I. DIALOG AND MONITORING: MID-TERM PROJECT EVALUATION MEETING

The project's mid-term evaluation meeting (which may be held remotely) is an important milestone for the CSO and DPA/OSC. The CSO and DPA/OSC must jointly ensure that it takes place no later than 18 months after the effective project start date.

This meeting, held to review and discuss the status of the project, may be based on the interim implementation report that the CSO has already sent to DPA/OSC (at least 15 days before the mid-term evaluation meeting) or, if not yet sent, based on an interim document (a short 5-page report).

For the discussion to be constructive and effective, the CSO and DPA/OSC will discuss the following topics (the CSO may also suggest adding other topics to the agenda if it feels this is necessary):

- Possible changes in the project's operating environment;
- The extent to which the planned activities have been completed and the outcomes achieved (intermediate measurement of indicators);
- A description of the support that the CSO has provided and the difficulties or obstacles encountered, if any, in implementing the activities and achieving the expected outcomes, along with a description of the proposed solutions to overcome the difficulties or obstacles identified;
- The status of the partnership relationship between the CSO and its potential partner(s);
- The CSO's proposed evaluation process (timetable, nature of the internal/external evaluation, indicators, main evaluation questions identified at this stage, etc.);
- The CSO's proposed capitalization exercises (targets, times, stakeholders, scope, etc.);
- Main changes, realignment and innovations necessary for the next stage of the project (e.g. review of activities, changes in human resources, no-objection requests, new phase, etc.);
- Gender mainstreaming and the inclusion of young people as stakeholders in the project;
- The state of relations with embassies and AFD field offices at the local level;
- Financial audit (interim and final) procedures;
- Communication actions already undertaken and planned, if applicable.

### III. OTHER DOCUMENTS THAT MUST BE SENT TO AFD

The CSO must send these documents to DPA/OSC via the OSCar portal in the following circumstances:

Updates to the CSO's administrative file	Project-related documents created as part of the project	Final documents expected at the end of
<p><b>Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The audited annual accounts, approved by the General Assembly, are updated based on those provided in the initial administrative file.</li> <li>• The annual activity report, approved by the General Assembly, is updated based on the last one provided in the initial administrative file.</li> <li>• Organization chart (if changed).</li> </ul> <p><b>Changes</b></p> <p>i) New mailing address.</p> <p>ii) CSO's amended license or registration certificate.</p> <p>iii) Persons newly authorized to sign agreements, disbursement requests and/or implementation reports with the authorizations <b>and original specimen signatures</b> + copies of identity documents for these newly appointed authorized persons (which must also be sent by regular mail) (changes subject to AFD's AML/CFT risk controls).</p> <p>iv) Any change in the composition of the board and management team during the course of the project, with the new authorizations <b>and original specimen signatures</b> + copies of identity documents for these newly appointed authorized persons (which must also be sent by regular mail): in this case, the composition of the board must be dated and signed with names provided in full (last name, first name and position on the board) (changes subject to AFD's AML/CFT risk controls).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of the main publications financed under the project.</li> <li>• Minutes of any steering committees, monitoring committees or extended meetings held as part of the project (especially for concerted multi-stakeholder programs (CMSPs) and program agreements).</li> <li>• If the agreement includes specific commitments, the progress made in achieving them should be specified in the implementation reports at least.</li> </ul>	<p>v) Final audit report (see <a href="#">VC Financial Audit</a>).</p> <p>vi) Final evaluation report, if applicable (see <a href="#">VB Evaluation</a>).</p>

#### /// KEY POINTS

To make it easier to read the financial documents, if the latest accounts (balance sheet and/or income statement) show a deficit or an adverse trend, or if the CSO is facing financial difficulties over one or more years, DSP/CSO requests that the CSO provide information to assist in understanding its financial situation when compiling or updating its administrative file. The CSO must then include a detailed commentary in the related annual accounts.

## IV. CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRING A NO-OBJECTION OR AN AMENDMENT TO THE FINANCING AGREEMENT

During project implementation, the CSO must request a no-objection (ANO) from DPA/OSC in the circumstances described below.

To do this, the CSO must submit a **no-objection request** via the OSCar portal (Project menu – ANO Request section), explaining the nature of and reasons for the desired changes in a note attached to the request. The no-objection request is a scanned letter that clearly identifies the project (agreement number and project title mentioned in the heading) and the sender (first and last name, position and organization). This no-objection request does not have to be signed by an authorized person. It may be signed by a person typically in contact with DPA/OSC for the project's operational monitoring, in accordance with the CSO's internal procedures.

**No-objection requests must be submitted to DPA/OSC at the earliest possible opportunity; they must not be submitted after the fact.** DPA/OSC reserves the right to assess whether an amendment to the financing agreement is required if there are significant changes to the project. Failure to meet the deadlines set may result in the AFD making certain expenditure ineligible. The following changes require the CSO to submit a no-objection request:

### 1. CSO name change (no legal change)

Documents to be submitted with the no-objection request:

- New articles of association;
- Statement of registration with the relevant authorities.

### 2. Significant change to some of the project's data (implementation timetable, areas of intervention, activities, etc.) but which do not fundamentally affect the project

The CSO must submit the no-objection request prior to making the proposed changes.

Documents to be submitted with the no-objection request: description and justification of the proposed changes.

### 3. If a crisis and/or a natural disaster and/or a coup d'état occurs in the country(ies) where the project is being implemented

DPA/OSC is prepared to take the consequences of these events into account in terms of the timetable, program of activities and the current project budget. These aspects would need to be adjusted following the temporary or permanent suspension of project activities or following a change in needs related to reconstruction/rehabilitation or recovery. DPA/OSC will analyze the feasibility of the requested adjustments for the no-objection, and will make the necessary amendment(s). DPA/OSC will inform the CSOs concerned of this flexibility available to them as soon as such an event occurs in the country(ies) where the project is being implemented.

Documents to be submitted with the no-objection request: description and justification of the proposed changes (NIONG with changes clearly identified).

### 4. Significant change to the project's overall budget (Expenditure and/or Resources) attached to the financing agreement

The following changes **require** the CSO to submit a no-objection request:

- Any variation greater than or equal to 20% of the initial planned total of a budget heading in the **overall** project financing plan.

If DPA/OSC approves the proposed new overall project budget, it will be binding and the CSO will be required to use this new basis in its project reporting.

Documents to be submitted with the no-objection request: proposed new budget (Expenditures/Resources/Valuations/HR Breakdown) with explanatory narrative.

### **5. Any variation in contractual ratios from those specified in the resource plan**

- Increase in the percentage of AFD financing;
- Withdrawal/addition of one or more co-funders (public or private), contributing at least 15% of the total project amount;

If DPA/OSC approves the proposed new overall project budget, it will be binding and the CSO will be required to use this new basis in its project reporting.

### **6. Equipment financed under the project**

If the equipment was not foreseen in the initial application for financing (amount greater than €10,000 for "field" or "general interest" projects). The CSO must specify the conditions under which ownership of the equipment will be transferred at the end of the project.

### **7. Change or addition of a significant partner for the project**

The CSO must specify whether this new partner will be a beneficiary of reallocation and state its role in the project.

Document to be submitted with the no-objection request: project partner information sheet (NIONG Appendix 2).

### **8. Reallocation to one or more new partners during the lifetime of the project, not foreseen in the initial application for financing**

The CSO must submit this request before entering into the planned contract with the new partner(s).

Document to be submitted with the no-objection request: list of the partner(s) receiving reallocation (NIONG Appendix 6 (field projects) or Appendix 5 (general interest projects) and information sheet(s) for the new partner(s) (NIONG Appendix 2).

### **9. Procurement through a negotiated contract outside the thresholds specified in the financing agreement**

### **10. Evaluation**

Terms of reference for the final evaluation planned for the project to be submitted to AFD no later than 6 months prior to the project end date.

Documents to be submitted with the no-objection request: terms of reference on CSO letterhead.

### **11. Audits**

Terms of reference for the audit assignment (covering the interim and final audits) and auditor selection criteria to be prepared based on the AFD Terms of Reference template (Appendix 9 – forthcoming);

AFD reserves the right to require a no-objection on the selection of the auditor if necessary.

Documents to be submitted with the no-objection request, within the first 12 months of the project: terms of reference on CSO letterhead, covering the interim audit of phase 1 and the final audit of the entire project.

### **12. Request for additional time to complete and submit the interim and/or final implementation report**

**13. Request for an extension to the duration of a phase or postponement of the effective project end date**

**14. Early termination of the project**

**15. Change during the life of the project to the “Miscellaneous and contingencies” line item, allocated to another expenditure line item**

**16. The expenditure eligibility end date is the same as the effective project end date**

All expenditure must have been incurred (i.e. committed and paid) by this date, except for expenditure related to the final evaluation and final audit, which may be paid up to one year after the effective project end date. If expenditure incurred before the end of the project has not been paid by the effective project end date, it may be allowed in exceptional circumstances, but it must be certain (final amount known from supporting documents) and be covered by a no-objection request.

### /// KEY POINTS

In items 2, 4, 5, 9, 12, 13 and 15 above, no-objection requests must be exceptional and duly justified. No-objection requests for items 8, 9, 10 and 11 must be submitted to and answered by AFD before reallocation is carried out or before the call for tenders is launched, or in the case of a negotiated agreement, before signing the agreement.

## V. PROJECT EVALUATION, CAPITALIZATION AND FINANCIAL AUDIT

DPA/OSC encourages external evaluation, capitalization and audit exercises for all projects. They are mandatory for some projects.

CSOs must ensure that their audit and evaluation partners comply with the safety and security requirements of the CSO and its staff and partners.

### A. Evaluation

AFD encourages CSOs to integrate a voluntary evaluation process (see Worksheet 6):

- **Final external evaluation:** AFD encourages CSOs to make use of external expertise. The external evaluation is an eligible expense in the financing plan submitted to DPA/OSC. The project budget must therefore include the cost planned for the evaluation, based on a fair estimate that reflects the scope of the evaluation. This cost must not be underestimated.
- CSOs are expected to select the evaluation service provider through a call for tenders or, as a minimum, a restricted consultation (see [Procurement rules and thresholds](#), [I. Contract Agreement](#), [B.2](#)).
- AFD also encourages CSOs to implement **monitoring and evaluation systems** from the start of projects, particularly for large-scale and complex projects. This improves the effectiveness of both

the final external evaluation (without replacing it) and ongoing project management. This monitoring and evaluation is an eligible expense in the financing plan submitted to DPA/OSC. The CSO must explain how the monitoring and evaluation systems feed into the final external evaluation.

- **Change-oriented approaches (COAs)**, outcome mapping and similar are also eligible monitoring and evaluation methods.
- A **final external evaluation is required** at the end of each phase and must be carried out prior to any new application for financing.

## B. Capitalization

Capitalization on experiences is a collective process that allows project stakeholders to improve their capacity building efforts and share their knowledge with others. DPA/OSC encourages capitalization exercises because they are a way to learn from the actions taken and to share these lessons widely for the benefit of the CSO community and international solidarity in general. They also serve to highlight how non-governmental action contributes to development and international solidarity. The guidelines around capitalization are provided in [Worksheet 6](#).

## C. Financial audits (interim and final)

The external financial audit for the project is **mandatory** for all co-financed projects. **It will now be carried out in two stages: an interim audit covering phase 1 of the project, and a final audit covering phase 2.**

**The term “financial audit” used here refers specifically to an engagement to perform agreed-upon procedures regarding financial information in accordance with IFAC’s ISRS 4400 auditing standard, and not to a project financial audit (which would be performed under ISA auditing standards).**

The project budget must include the cost of the two audits, based on a fair estimate of what is needed (a minimum threshold is set at 1% of the overall project cost).

If the CSO plans to carry out an audit for another major donor involved in the same project (provided that the scope and timing are identical), AFD will not require an additional audit or specific rules on tendering. The CSO must provide DPA/OSC with a copy of the resulting interim and final audit report.

The financial audit must be carried out:

- for each project phase

The two financial audits must be carried out by an external and independent audit firm, selected according to the procurement rules (I. Contract Agreement, B.2). The auditor must be selected within the first 12 months of the project.

DPA/OSC issues its no-objection:

- **On the audit terms of reference for the two audits** (use the terms of reference template in the forthcoming Appendix 9), before the tender process starts, or before the consultation or contract agreement process with the auditor in the case of a negotiated agreement (in accordance with AFD’s procurement rules).
- DPA/OSC reserves the right to require a no-objection on the selection of the auditor if it deems this necessary.

The audit checklist (see [Worksheet 8](#) and the forthcoming [Appendix 9](#)) must always be attached to the audit terms of reference. This audit checklist must be completed and signed by the auditor and sent to AFD with the final audit report.



The financing plan must show the estimated cost of the financial audit.

The audit reports must be submitted no later than three months after the completion of phase 1 and six months after completion of phase 2.

Approval of the interim audit at the end of phase 1 will not be a condition precedent to the disbursement for phase 2.

However, submitting the final audit report (for phase 2) is a condition precedent to the first disbursement for the next phase. If the auditor raises any concerns, the CSO receiving AFD funds must present the planned remedial measures and the timetable for their implementation.

Any CSO may be subject to a random financial audit instigated and paid for by DPA/OSC.

# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AFD</b>	Agence Française de Développement
<b>AFD/GEO</b>	Geographic Directorate (formerly part of DOE – Operations Directorate – before split)
<b>AFD/MPC</b>	Mobilization, Partnership and Communication Executive Directorate
<b>AFD/SSD</b>	Development Solutions Directorate (formerly part of DOE – Operations Directorate – before split)
<b>AMI</b>	Call for Expressions of Project Intentions
<b>AML/CFT</b>	Anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism
<b>ANO</b>	No-objection
<b>APCC</b>	Call for Crisis and Post-Crisis Projects
<b>CA</b>	Board
<b>CDCS</b>	Crisis and Support Center
<b>CICID</b>	Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development
<b>CIF</b>	Cross-cutting Intervention Framework
<b>CRTF</b>	Technical and financial report (interim or final)
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organizations
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
<b>DPA/OSC</b>	Partnerships Department/Civil Society Organizations Division (within AFD)
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>F3E</b>	Fund for the promotion of preliminary studies, cross-cutting studies and evaluations
<b>FGEF</b>	French Global Environment Facility
<b>FID</b>	French Development Innovation Facility
<b>GA</b>	General Assembly
<b>GI</b>	General interest
<b>IATI</b>	International Aid Transparency Initiative
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>MEAE</b>	French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
<b>NIONG</b>	CSO Initiative Note
<b>RRMA</b>	Regional multi-stakeholder network
<b>SA</b>	Statutory Auditor
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable development goals
<b>SMA</b>	Structuring of the non-profit sector

# GLOSSARY

**Accountability:** The obligation to account for having carried out work according to agreed rules and standards, or the obligation to report clearly and impartially on results and performance, in relation to the mandate and/or goals set.

For evaluators, accountability refers to the responsibility to provide accurate, impartial and credible performance assessments and progress reports. For public sector decision-makers and managers, accountability is an obligation to be accountable to taxpayers and citizens.

**Achievements:** Goods and services produced by the project and made available to beneficiaries.

**Baseline:** An analysis that describes the situation prior to the start of the development action, against which improvements can be assessed or comparisons made.

**Beneficiaries:** Individuals, groups or organizations that benefit from the project, directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally.

Related terms: group/population affected, targeted or reached.

“End beneficiary” is defined as an individual or organization that is directly and positively affected by the project outcome. Beneficiaries do not necessarily receive a grant. They may not even be directly involved in the project. Beneficiaries may also leverage the results of the project to pursue their own goals.

**Civil society organizations:** In the context of the missions assigned by the French government to the Agence Française de Développement, the term “Civil Society Organizations” (CSOs) includes:

- Non-profit collectives and platforms.
- Non-profit groups under local law;

**Effect:** An expected or unexpected change attributable directly or indirectly to an action. Related terms: outcomes, achievements.

**Effectiveness (success, accomplishment):** The extent to which the goals of the development action have been or are being achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

**Efficiency:** The extent to which resources (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into outcomes in the most efficient way.

**Eligible project expenditure:** Refers to all expenditure included in the financing plan as appended to the financing agreement or as revised, and approved after AFD's no-objection or amendment. Expenditure costed under the project must be incurred within the project's geographical area and eligibility period. Any expenditure incurred and/or paid outside these limits requires a no-objection from AFD.

**Evaluation:** A systematic and objective assessment of a project, whether ongoing or completed, its design, implementation and outcomes. The purpose is to determine the relevance and achievement of goals, efficacy of actions taken, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide credible, documented, tangible and useful information that can be used to feed lessons learned into beneficiaries' and donors' decision-making processes.

**External evaluation:** Evaluation of a development project conducted by departments and/or individuals outside the donor and implementing organization.

**Financial audit:** A quality control activity carried out in an objective and independent way and intended to improve how an organization operates and increase its value. The audit helps an organization achieve its goals through a systematic and rigorous approach used to observe and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

**Financing agreement:** Agreement between the donor and the CSO beneficiary that determines the commitments of both parties and the legal framework for co-financing the project. Refers to the financing agreement, its appendices and, if applicable, any subsequent amendments to it.

**Impacts:** Positive and negative long-term effects, both primary and secondary, brought about by a development action, whether directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally.

**Indicator:** A quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable way to measure and report on changes related to the development action or to help assess the performance of a development stakeholder.

**Internal evaluation:** An evaluation conducted by the non-profit organization itself. Related term: self-assessment.

**Logical framework:** The logical framework approach is a formalized process for project planning focused on development outcomes, which also serves as the basis for the steering, monitoring and evaluation system. It is a series of steps to follow with analysis and summary tools. These considerations help make the project's intervention logic and key components clearer, as summarized in the logical framework table.

**Mid-term evaluation:** An evaluation conducted halfway through project implementation.

**Negotiated contract:** Refers to a process of awarding a contract to a provider without prior competition (also referred to as "direct agreement", "mutual agreement" or "negotiated procedure without advertising or competitive bidding").

**No-objection (ANO):** A document by which the donor acknowledges information and/or provisions in accordance with the reporting requirements listed in the financing agreement.

**Official Development Assistance (ODA):** ODA is the combined efforts of OECD member states to promote development in least developed countries (LDCs) and middle-income countries (MICs), in accordance with the rules of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

**Open Call for Tenders:** Refers to a competitive bidding process organized for the purpose of awarding a contract, which is preceded by public notice and is open, without limit in number, to all bidders meeting the eligibility and qualification criteria. This is the standard method for awarding contracts for supplies, equipment or works. There may be a pre-qualification stage. If not, the pre-qualification step is integrated into the tendering process.

**Outcomes:** Changes in the situation or behavior of beneficiaries, generally as a direct result of the project.

**Participatory evaluation:** An evaluation method in which representatives of aid agencies and other stakeholders (including beneficiaries) work together to develop and conduct an evaluation and draw conclusions.

**Partners:** People and/or organizations working together to achieve jointly agreed-upon goals. The concept of partnership refers to joint goals, shared responsibility for achieving those goals, mutual commitments and clear accountability. Partners should primarily be CSOs (formal or informal non-profit groups, grassroots communities, trade unions, networks and platforms) but may also be universities, professional associations, multilateral organizations, private companies, governmental organizations (centralized or decentralized), local authorities, etc.

**Project goal:** The outcomes that the project is expected to help generate in physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental or other terms.

**Purpose:** The overall objective toward which the development action is intended to contribute. Related term: development goal.

**Reallocation:** Reallocation is the process by which a French CSO passes on a share of the project funds to designated French or local partners, regardless of where the funds came from (AFD and other funding bodies).

**Relevance:** The extent to which the goals of the development action are consistent with beneficiaries' expectations, country needs, global priorities, and partner and donor policies.

**Restricted Call for Tenders:** Refers to a competitive bidding process organized for the purpose of awarding a contract, access to which is limited to the restricted list of bidders drawn up by the grant beneficiary; the number of bidders is limited in advance.

**Stakeholders (protagonists):** Agencies, organizations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in the development action or its evaluation.

**Target group (target population):** Persons or organizations for whose benefit the development action is undertaken. A distinction can be made between the primary target group for whose direct benefit the action is undertaken and the secondary target group that indirectly benefits from the outcomes of the action.

**Viability (long-term success and sustainability):** Benefits from a development action that continues after the end of the initiative/project. The likelihood of obtaining benefits over the long term. A situation in which the net benefits are likely to outweigh the risks. The ability of the action, or the model on which the action is based, to persist over time.

# WORKSHEET 1

## LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

### General comments

The logical framework should draw upon the transparency notice in the project document submitted by the association (the CSO Initiative Note or NIONG). The logical framework presents an overview of the project strategy, outlining how the activities will seek to address the problems identified and to change the situation or behavior of recipients.

This will first require the following:

- Analysis of the stakeholders to ensure that their needs and potential conflicts, motivating factors and capacities are taken into account
- Analysis of the wider context of the problem and its underlying causes
- Determining the objectives in terms of expected tangible changes for the main recipients
- Identifying the different possible strategies and selecting one of them
- Explaining the risks surrounding the project and the change scenarios the project is based on

The civil society organization (CSO) cannot do this on its own but must work alongside its partners and other stakeholders. Discussions between partners as to the expected tangible changes and change scenarios are important in creating a sense of structure.

The logical framework is a flexible tool that should be used to provide operational support throughout the duration of the project. Where applicable, it should reflect any changes to the project. Agence Française de Développement (AFD) will approve any changes made to the logical framework during project execution, provided there are solid grounds for making them. The logical framework can be used as a basis for coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating the project.

Indicators must answer the following questions: how? when? how many/how much? It is essential that genuine outcome indicators are determined (and not simply indicators for monitoring activities or project execution). Outcome indicators are used to determine whether specific objectives have been met, thus ensuring that the project is moving in the right direction at the right speed. These should correspond to situational or behavioral changes for recipients resulting directly from the project. These are different from implementation indicators, which correspond to deliverables (goods and services produced through the project).<sup>8</sup>

Depending on the nature of the outcomes, indicators may be quantitative and/or qualitative. These indicators should be limited in number and genuinely useful to project coordination. Monitoring should center around certain key monitoring questions (like the evaluation questions), based on the outcomes and projections from the logical framework. The indicators should provide clear answers to these questions.

Indicators and activities should incorporate interdisciplinary themes (gender, biodiversity, climate change, youth engagement) if the CSO has outlined in the NIONG that these will be taken into consideration.

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<sup>8</sup> For example, for a transport project: implementation indicator = the introduction of a new bus route; outcome indicator = time saved by users.

AFD encourages change-driven approaches. Change-driven approaches can be aligned with the logical framework.

During the project design phase, the CSO and other stakeholders may define a vision and change pathways before redrafting the logical framework for the project. Broadly speaking, the main expected changes can be used to identify the overarching objective and the specific objectives of the logical framework, while change pathways can be used to determine the expected outcomes of the logical framework.

The aim is to align the thinking behind the project and its temporality (medium-term) with those of the change-driven approaches (longer term and more strategic).<sup>9</sup> The project may explain how some of the change-driven approaches will be implemented, within a shorter timeframe.

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<sup>9</sup> For more details, please refer to the F3E guides [Coordinating a "change pathways and vision" workshop](#) and [How to monitor and assess changes](#).

## Model

I	Outcomes chain	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline conditions / Target values	Sources and means of verification	Critical hypotheses (relating to the context or to the program)
Overarching objective	Long-term changes that will result from the project, in addition to projects from other partners and endogenous dynamics. It must be shown that the project is expected to make a significant contribution to this change.	Impact indicator / long-term effect (signals used to determine that you are moving in the right direction by the end of the project)	BC: T:	(NB: a proxy that can often be analyzed using data taken from national statistical surveys)	
Specific objectives (SO)	Direct changes resulting from the project, expected upon completion of the project, and which will promote behavioral changes among the main targets, or changes in operation/status.  These will stem from the expected outcomes (with a clear logical connection) and the expected reactions of stakeholders.	Outcome indicators	BC: T:	(NB: often requires the use of indirect sources such as specialist surveys)	External factors and conditions relating to projects from other partners and local or global dynamics with a significant impact on goal attainment.  And/or: assessment of how this change is expected to take place, justifying the strategic decisions made by the project.



I	Outcomes chain	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline conditions / Target values	Sources and means of verification	Critical hypotheses (relating to the context or to the program)
Intermediate changes (optional)	In keeping with change-driven approaches, this is a space for the CSO and its partner to outline any noteworthy intermediate changes along the path towards change, i.e., the gradual process of change over time, between expected outcomes and specific objectives, or different changes for individual stakeholders. This is optional and is not required as part of the logical framework. This space can also be used to outline the process of change between the specific objectives and the overarching objective. In such cases it should be inserted above, between the overarching objective and the specific objectives.	Outcome indicators (optional)			Hypothesis as to how this change is expected to take place, justifying the strategic decisions made by the project.
Expected outcomes	The outcomes through which the specific objective will be met. These are the tangible products or services developed through the project.  R1:	Implementation indicators	BC: T:		External factors and conditions - the behavior of certain stakeholders, for example (excluding partners, administrators, and the project team) in response to project activities - which are likely to influence the relationship between implementations and the anticipated impacts.
	R2:		BC: T:		

I	Outcomes chain	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline conditions / Target values	Sources and means of verification	Critical hypotheses (relating to the context or to the program)
	R3:		BC: T:		
Activities	<p>What are the key activities that must be implemented in order for the expected outcomes to be met (group activities together by outcome)</p> <p>Activities for R1:</p> <p>Activity 1.1:</p> <p>Activity 1.2:</p> <p>...</p>				<p>Factors and conditions outside of the direct control of the project team/for which the project team is not responsible, and which must come together in order for the planned activities to produce the expected outcomes.</p> <p>And/or: assessment of the best course of action in order for implementations to be achieved.</p>
	<p>Activities for R2:</p> <p>Activity 2.1:</p> <p>Activity 2.2:</p> <p>...</p>				
	<p>Activities for R3:</p> <p>Activity 3.1:</p> <p>Activity 3.2:</p> <p>...</p>				

# WORKSHEET 2

## PLACING AN EMPHASIS ON “GENDER” IN PROJECTS

### What is meant by gender?

Gender refers to the social and cultural characteristics which come with being either a man or a woman. This is separate from sex, which refers to biological characteristics. Gender is a social construct: it is learned, changes over time and varies between cultures. The social roles assigned to women and men also change depending on their age, their social status, their religious or ethnic background and their sexuality. Social and cultural characteristics are not seen as being equal: those associated with being male are felt to be superior to those associated with being female. This leads to a significant amount of inequality between women and men. Taking a “gender approach” provides a way of understanding gender as a social construct and the unequal balance of power between men and women, as well as among men and among women. If properly understood, these social roles and relationships can be factored into development projects in order to facilitate their implementation and to ensure that their benefits are equally shared and that the project does not worsen inequality. Taking a more ambitious approach, they can also be deconstructed with a view towards transforming social roles and relationships by devising more egalitarian models.

### Gender equality: a sustainable development goal and a priority for AFD

The international community has recognized gender equality as a powerful factor in sustainable development and tackling poverty. Sustainable Development Goal n°5 puts the empowerment of women and girls and gender equality at the heart of the international agenda.

In the interests of contributing to sustainable, inclusive, and fair development between women and men, Agence Française de Développement (AFD) has adopted a proactive approach aimed at incorporating gender into its operations and strategies. An interdisciplinary action framework on the issue of gender and reducing gender inequality was adopted on the basis of the objectives set by the French government's 2nd Strategic Guidance Document on gender and development (DOS genre 2/2013-2017). The main goals of this action framework are guided by three operational priorities:

- Preventing gender inequality in AFD operations
- Promoting gender as one of its objectives
- Helping societies to evolve in relation to the issue of gender

2018 saw AFD enter a new phase, signing up to new, more ambitious operational commitments. This is in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID) in February 2018 and France's International Strategy on Gender Equality (2018-2022), which set specific objectives: 50% of annual commitments will feature gender as either a primary or secondary objective (corresponding to a score of 2 or 1 on the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) gender marker), with €700 million going on DAC2 projects (primary objectives) annually by 2022.

The French programming law on solidarity development and tackling global inequality from August 4, 2021 set the bar even higher. It aims for 75% of official development assistance (ODA) to contribute to gender inequality/female empowerment by 2025, while 20% of these projects will have as their primary objective a reduction in gender inequality (DAC2 in accordance with the gender marker used by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) DAC). The European Union's third Gender Action Plan (GAP) set the objective for 85% of ODA to be spent on gender by 2025.

**Gender is now routinely taken into consideration during the analysis and selection process for CSO Initiative co-financing requests submitted to AFD.**

Projects which are blind to gender could potentially help to worsen gender inequality.

*Boxed text – grading projects using the “Gender equality” marker from the OECD DAC*

*All operations funded by AFD are given one of three possible scores based on the OECD DAC’s “Gender equality” marker. For projects co-financed through the CSO Initiatives (CSO-I) mechanism, this score is awarded to each project by the Partnerships Department/Civil Society Organizations Division (DPA/OSC). This marker is used to assess the proportion of ODA that is spent on reducing gender inequality.*

*0: Projects which do not feature gender equality as a target are considered as being blind to the issue of gender.*

*1: When gender equality is an important, intentional objective but is not the main driving force behind the project. The target of gender equality must be explicitly referenced in project documentation; its presence cannot be either implicit or implied. In its handbook on the marker, the OECD states that “the project/program, in addition to other objectives, is designed to have a positive impact on advancing gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls, reducing gender discrimination or inequalities, or meeting gender-specific needs.” A number of criteria must be met to receive a score of 1: a gender-specific analysis of the project must be carried out, with any conclusions drawn from it used in the project design phase. A “do no harm” approach must also be employed. There must be at least one explicit gender equality objective backed by at least one gender-specific indicator (or there will be as part of the project); data and indicators must be disaggregated by sex where applicable, and a commitment must be made to monitor and report on the gender equality results achieved by the project in the evaluation phase.*

*2: When the empowerment of women or gender equality is the project’s main objective, having played a decisive role in its conception.*

**What are AFD’s expectations in this regard?**

AFD has tightened its requirements for projects in order to ensure that placing an emphasis on gender is not seen simply as an added extra but instead plays a constituent part in the context analysis, and the process of determining the project’s objectives, activities, and indicators, in addition to aiding capacity building for partner organizations.

When replying to the call for expressions of project intentions (AMI) (or, failing that, in the CSO Initiative Note [NIONG]), AFD expects non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to explain how gender issues were taken into consideration in:

- **The context analysis/diagnostic and key issues:** your presentation of the context of the project and key issues must address gender issues in the sector/area in which the project is to be implemented. If the NGO is not in a position to provide a comprehensive analysis of gender issues, this may be included in its activities, allocating money from the budget for this purpose.
- **The presentation of the NGO and its partners:** this must show whether the NGO and its partners have the skills to incorporate these issues into the project, or show how they plan to acquire or source these skills. The NGO must also indicate whether it has its own gender strategy.
- **The project origin and how it was designed:** the NGO will specify what roles were played by women and men in designing the project.
- **Determining the desired objectives and expected outcomes:** for each objective, the NGO will outline how the gender approach has been taken into account, showing clearly how this is reflected in the outcomes and activities. This will be used to assess how the roles, obstacles and needs specific to women and men have been considered and, where applicable, how the project will help to foster greater gender equality and change social roles and relationships.

- **Capacity building:** how the gender approach has been factored into general capacity building initiatives (looking at issues such as equal participation in training and governance) and gender-specific capacity building initiatives (such as training courses and workshops)
- **Qualification of recipients:** the NIONG will outline, where applicable, how the project will benefit women and men differently. Recipients and targets will be divided by sex.
- **Indicators:** these will be disaggregated by sex, and should make it possible to assess the project's ambitions with regard to the context and the current circumstances (a target of 40% of girls in education may be high in certain contexts, but could be the norm or only a slight increase in others), in addition to measuring participation and effects for both women and men.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** the NGO will outline how its monitoring mechanism (involving the gathering of disaggregated data) and evaluation can be used to monitor and evaluate the ways in which the project seeks to achieve the outcomes it set in relation to gender, any obstacles encountered and levers which could be deployed in order to rectify the project as a result (where applicable), and whether or not the project could be more ambitious in light of the issues at stake.

AFD also expects to see an emphasis on gender reflected in the project's logical framework and for all of these elements to be regularly monitored and reassessed over the course of project implementation. The terms of reference for evaluation must contain an evaluation question on gender, and the evaluator must be able to assess the effectiveness and the quality of the initiatives carried out and the outcomes achieved.

DPA/OSC encourages CSOs to take an intersectional approach to focusing on gender. This means taking into consideration other social characteristics, including discrimination factors such as age, disability and real or supposed origin.

**DPA/OSC also strongly encourages NGOs to introduce a suitable mechanism for preventing and responding to sexual abuse and harassment during project implementation. There is a specific worksheet for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in projects (Worksheet 10).**

### How can gender equality be taken into consideration for CSO Initiative Projects?

- **Project context analysis and diagnostic of key issues**

What roles do women and men play in households and within their communities? Does this result in inequality in terms of access to services and resources, or access to physical and decision-making spaces? Violence towards girls and women? What sort of role will this play in the project? Is it likely to stand in the way of project objectives being met? Which levers could the project activate in order to overcome such obstacles? Which goods and resources are controlled by women, and which are controlled by men? How are decisions taken within households and within the community? How are production and reproduction tasks divided up between women and men? What impact does this division of labor have on their availability and their capacity to participate in project activities? Was data disaggregated by sex and gender used for your analysis of the situation? Was the needs analysis and diagnostic carried out in consultation with both women and men, girls and boys? Are women seeking change? If so, how and when do they express themselves? Are they able to negotiate with the men in their lives and the authorities? Are they given support in doing so?

Have you identified NGOs, institutions or experts working locally to promote gender equality? Are you familiar with national policies and laws protecting and safeguarding the rights of women? Is the political and legal context conducive to gender equality?

- **Project design**

Is the project likely to have a negative impact on women, men, girls, or boys? This includes the double burden of women, retaliatory measures, loss of control over activities and decreased revenue. Is it likely to reinforce gender stereotypes and/or gender inequality (whether between women and men or between girls and boys)? Are there any social, religious, legal and/or cultural obstacles likely to stand in

the way of women, girls, men, or boys participating in the project? How does the project aim to prevent potential negative effects and overcome any obstacles that are encountered?

Do the project objectives take into consideration the different roles women/girls and men/boys play, as well as social relationships? Is the project aimed at reducing gender inequality in terms of access to essential services, control over resources and income, access to the law and justice, combating gender-based violence, the participation of women (including young women) and access to spaces for decision-making (whether economic, political, or social)?

Will the expected outcomes benefit both women and men? Are they aimed at reducing inequality and/or enabling economic independence and/or boosting women's capacities for taking action and decisions and/or developing and safeguarding women's rights?

Are the planned activities organized in such a way as to promote the participation of both women/girls and men/boys, on an equal footing (access to information, schedules, childcare, speaking opportunities for women, including young women)?

Will they help to reduce gender inequality, promote greater female empowerment and/or break down gender stereotypes and/or tackle gender-based violence? Could the project have an impact on gender-based social relationships and the division of labor, both within households and within society? Could it have an impact on social norms, common law, or national legislation?

Have the project team and partners been given sufficient training on gender and gender equality? Do the NGO and/or its partners have an internal policy or charter for preventing discrimination, tackling psychological and/or sexual harassment and combating sexist behavior and stereotypes, and will this be enforced?

- **Monitoring and evaluation, indicators**

Do the monitoring indicators show the number of women/girls and men/boys benefiting from the project? Do they show the number of women and men in positions of responsibility and the numbers participating in individual activities?

Can the outcome indicators be used to measure progress made towards equality or in reducing gender inequality in different fields?

Are there other indicators relating to knowledge, attitudes, and practices within the community regarding the participation and leadership of women (including shifts in perception as to women's capacities for decision-making), particularly young women, which should be included?

- **Budget**

If your NGO or its partners does not possess the requisite competencies in relation to gender, has money been allocated in the budget for training on gender, strengthening the project team or partners, or for recruiting a temporary consultant?

Has money been allocated in the budget for both women and men?

Does the budget reflect all of the measures you will seek to take aimed at promoting the equal participation of women and men in the project, making the necessary adaptations, and collecting data disaggregated by sex?

### **Find out more**

The AFD Group and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs have launched a [Massive Open Online Course \(MOOC\) on gender and development](#), which is available to access for free. A number of modules are already available: 1) Defining the concepts of gender and development and the historical background, 2) Incorporating gender into organizational practices, 3) Incorporating gender into public policy, 4) Incorporating gender into development projects.

[All you need to know about gender and development](#), a document made up of 24 "moments for reflection" on gender, aimed at creating a shared foundation of knowledge on issues linked to gender equality in the sectors and regions AFD operates in.

A set of [sector-specific toolkits](#) (Education; Professional training and Employment; Water and Sanitation; Energy; Transport and Mobility; Supporting the private sector, entrepreneurship and financial inclusion; Health; Urban development; Rural development, agriculture and biodiversity; and Environmental and social due diligence) have been developed by AFD aimed at outlining key issues in each of these sectors and providing tools and examples to assist with the integration of gender.

[Country gender profiles](#) provide an overview of the institutional and regulatory context, with presentations of the institutional, non-profit and research partners active in the field of gender equality. 40 country profiles are available among the countries AFD operates in.

To mark the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration, a roadmap for gender equality that was adopted in 1995 by 189 countries, national-level reviews were published on the UN Women website.

[Data on laws, social norms](#) and gender equality by country and by region is also available on the OECD website.

The F3E has produced worksheets on [Gender and development](#). These cover the basic concepts of gender, exploring intersectional approaches and gender-based violence in addition to providing a methodological framework for incorporating gender into field projects or education for citizenship and international solidarity. A number of documents on community capitalization of Gender practices are also available: [Vivre le genre !, Agir pour le genre](#).

Coordination SUD produced a [Support guide for incorporating the gender approach at an organizational level](#) plus a self-learning guide on [Sexist & sexual violence-Prevention and protection in the international solidarity sector](#).

Should you wish to find the contact details of a female expert who can support you, please consult [The global directory of female experts on gender and equality. - Gender Experts](#)

# WORKSHEET 3

## THE THEME OF “BIODIVERSITY-CLIMATE CHANGE” IN PROJECTS

There are two dimensions to the theme of “biodiversity-climate change”:

1. The preservation of biodiversity and environment and natural resource management
2. Tackling climate change and its effects

## BIODIVERSITY IN PROJECTS WORKSHEET

### 1. THE PRESERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

#### WHAT IS MEANT BY BIODIVERSITY?

In the broadest sense of the term, biodiversity means life on Earth in all its forms. Drafted in 1992, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) describes it as “the variability among living organisms from all sources including, *inter alia*, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part: this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.”

The issues of biodiversity and natural resources link up with the CBD's Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) numbers 14 and 15:

- “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.”
- “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.”

Biodiversity helps to keep the biosphere in balance and provides services to human societies (most notably for supplies of food and energy). As such, close attention must be paid to it. Preserving it will also mean preserving all of the underlying biophysical mechanisms which support the ecology of these animal and plant species within their environments. This concerns small and large water or mineral cycles passing through the soil, particularly carbon.

The degradation of biodiversity continues worldwide, threatening the survival of humanity on Earth. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has warned of a sixth mass extinction and called for firm action from economic and political leaders in response to the urgency of the climate and environmental crisis. The expansion of crop growing and grazing into natural environments, unsustainable farming and forestry practices, urban expansion and the development of



extractive industries and infrastructure have all directly contributed to land degradation and the resulting loss of biodiversity, with direct consequences for more than 3.2 billion people. The annual cost in terms of the loss of services provided by biodiversity to economies is estimated at over 20% of world GDP (\$20,000 billion).

The aim of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is to neutralize the environmental impact of development by 2030 and for humanity to be a positive force for nature by 2050.

## FRANCE AND THE AFD GROUP'S BIODIVERSITY TARGETS

As a result of its overseas territories and exclusive economic zones, France boasts extraordinary natural heritage and has made the preservation of biodiversity a key part of the country's external activities. France is committed to a diplomatic approach to tackling this issue, promoting initiatives through its social investment and development policy and through the One Planet Summit's action agenda. Agence Française de Développement (AFD) intends to support France in its ambition.

The AFD Group supports development in harmony with nature, and over the past twenty years has overseen initiatives aimed at promoting biodiversity and sustainable agriculture, green cities, and a responsible blue economy. 2020 saw a shift in the Group's policy for the planet, focusing on two global targets for the year 2025:

- (i) To increase its annual contribution to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to €1 billion
- (ii) To ensure that its climate funding (totaling 30%) has a directly positive impact on biodiversity

**Biodiversity is now routinely taken into consideration during the analysis and selection process for Civil Society Organization (CSO) Initiative co-financing requests presented to the Mobilization, Partnerships and Communication Executive Directorate/Partnerships Department/Civil Society Organizations Division (MPC/DPA/OSC)**

### **Boxed text – grading projects using the “Biodiversity” marker from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC)**

*All operations funded by AFD are graded in accordance with the DAC's three-level “Biodiversity” marker, which the OECD introduced in 1992 to make it easier to monitor, coordinate and compare the actions of Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members in relation to the objectives of the three Rio Conventions (climate change, biodiversity, and desertification).*

### **For projects co-financed through the CSO Initiatives mechanism, a score is awarded to each project by DPA/CSO.**

*The DAC Biodiversity marker is used to identify official development assistance commitments and projects which are contributing to at least one objective of the United Nations (UN) Convention on Biological Diversity. These objectives are:*

- the conservation of biological diversity*
- sustainable use of its components (ecosystems, species, and genetic resources)*
- fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge*

*The OECD has outlined eligibility criteria for determining whether activities will contribute towards one of the objectives of the CBD, providing examples of the types of contributing activities. The activity may*

have a directly positive impact on biodiversity or natural resources, or on capacities and how biodiversity is governed (including policy; regulations; knowledge; skills; financial, human, and technological resources) With this in mind, it is vital not to exclude projects which adopt a “soft” approach from biodiversity funding. Such projects may concern the transformation of institutions or capacity-building in the interests of biodiversity.

**Projects can be given a DAC Biodiversity score from 0 to 2:**

**- DAC 2: The main objective of the project contributes to at least one of the CBD objectives**

**- DAC 1: A secondary objective of the project makes a major contribution to one of the CBD objectives**

**- DAC 0: The project is not designed to meet any of the CBD objectives**

**Notes to assist with understanding:**

A main objective is explicitly defined as one that is fundamental to the design and impact of the project. Ask yourself this question: could the project have been implemented or designed in this way without this objective?

A secondary objective, while important and explicitly described, is not among the main motivations behind the project. Although explicit reference to it is made, it is tied to another end goal, which could have been funded without this focus on biodiversity. Projects which fall into this category, which are sector-specific, are said to have “co-benefits for biodiversity.”

## **What are AFD's expectations when it comes to focusing on biodiversity in projects?**

For the AFD Group to meet its commitment to reach €1 billion worth of biodiversity funding by 2025, projects which have a positive impact on nature will be prioritized. Aside from managing the negative effects activities may have, the primary reason for incorporating nature and biodiversity into development projects supported by AFD is to make the most effective contribution to helping socio-economic models transition towards more sustainable practices. Development trajectories should focus on scenarios with significant long-term environmental sustainability, while ensuring that the essential services nature provides to societies are protected and accessible to all in a fair manner.

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There are three distinct categories for development projects:

1. Projects with a broadly positive impact on the preservation of biodiversity and environment and natural resource management, particularly those which:

- Improve the quality of environments and promote rational use of natural resources
- Will help to reduce pressure on sensitive environments and ensure the sustainable management of natural resources
- Improve biodiversity through conservation and sustainable development

This includes two types of projects:

1. Projects aimed at biodiversity preservation or environment management

2. Projects with co-benefits in these areas.

**Preliminary comment**

A project's impact on biodiversity and natural resources (including species found there and pressure on environments) must be assessed in context, meaning a context analysis is required.

Should the CSO wish to take this context analysis any further, they may choose to perform a baseline diagnostic (recommended for projects with "biodiversity" objectives). The cost of this may be incorporated into the funding requested from AFD.

**Examples of projects with a positive impact on biodiversity**

- Protected areas, supporting environmental NGOs, supporting biodiversity conservation projects
- Sustainable forest management; Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+); sustainable fisheries management; ecological restoration
- Agroecology, pastoralism-moving animals to summer pastures
- Promoting fair, organic food; sustainable management of drainage basins; sewage treatment; efficient water resources management
- Creating/preserving green spaces in urban environments, sustainable waste management - reducing the impact of waste, grants for projects aimed at cutting down on environmental pollution

2. Projects with a broadly neutral impact on biodiversity and natural resources, provided they seek to prevent or minimize any negative impact on biodiversity and the environment.

3. Projects which could have a negative impact on the state of biodiversity, the environment, and natural resources:

- If the project has a residual impact on the environment and natural resources at a local level despite offsetting measures being introduced
- If the project results in harm being caused to critical habitats (zones which are particularly rich in biodiversity, threatened species or old-growth forests)

**Funding requests submitted to MPC/DPA/OSC must clearly outline how the issue of biodiversity has been taken into consideration when responding to the call for expression of interest (and in greater detail in the CSO Initiative Note [NIONG]).**

**The CSO in charge of the project must explain the impact (whether negative, neutral, or positive) the project/program will have on the state of biodiversity in the medium to long-term, providing a detailed account of the expected impact of planned activities.**

**There are three possible cases:**

1. If the project could have a potentially negative impact on the state of biodiversity, then precise details are to be given of measures introduced as part of the project/program aimed at reducing, mitigating, or offsetting this negative impact. These measures will be proportionate to the biodiversity issues identified during the project design phase. Having adopted this new ambition, AFD will not support projects with a negative impact on the state of biodiversity for which the project leader does not intend to take appropriate action aimed at reducing, mitigating, or offsetting this impact.
2. If the project will have co-benefits on the state of biodiversity but does not have any specific objectives in this regard, then an analysis of its positive impact must be conducted and submitted with the project.
3. If the project/program has specific objectives regarding biodiversity and natural resources, then the CSO will provide, in accordance with the ambitions of the project:
  - An analysis of the context and key issues the project/program will seek to address
  - A description of the biodiversity policies introduced by the countries or regions in which the project is to take place, explaining how the program intends to contribute towards these policies, at their level and in accordance with the biodiversity issues occurring within the project's area of influence
  - Details of the objectives (main and secondary as outlined in the DAC grading system above): it must be clearly shown how the program's objectives will be achieved through the activities and outcomes to be monitored and evaluated
  - A list of proposed activities
  - Details of the outcome indicators that will be used to determine whether program outcomes have been met
  - A description of the resources to be implemented (both internal and external)
  - The planned capacity-building initiatives for partner organizations
  - Awareness-raising and training initiatives for recipients and citizens aimed at promoting civic involvement and engagement with these issues (particularly women and young people - see worksheet on "youth empowerment", which explores the issues of integration and intergenerational justice in relation to biodiversity and climate change)
  - Anticipated monitoring/evaluation mechanisms

**To guide their analysis and encourage them to consider the contribution their project will make to biodiversity, the CSO leading the project may refer to the sustainable development analysis grid used by AFD to ensure that Sustainable Development Goals (including those linked to biodiversity) are taken into consideration at all levels** within operations it finances. This grid can be found in the "find out more" section below. A self-assessment of the project using this table may be included in the NIONG, but this is not mandatory. This table can also be used to determine performance improvement objectives, moving between levels where necessary (the table includes five levels for assessing the extent to which biodiversity issues have been taken into account).

**Broadly speaking, activities with a very high risk of causing harm to the environment or biodiversity will not be funded by the Strategy, Partnerships and Communication Executive Directorate/Partnerships Department/Civil Society Organizations Division (SPC/DPA/OSC). Examples include:**

- Activities which cause damage to protected areas and species, particularly those with UNESCO World Heritage status or legally protected spaces (International Union for Conservation of Nature [IUCN] categories), including through the introduction of exotic animals/plants or activities
- Actions which could endanger threatened species or have a negative impact on their habitats (particularly swamps and tropical forests)

- Activities in forest environments: the conversion of forest areas into grazing ground for livestock farming, planned colonization of forests, unsustainable commercial wood extraction, the building of dams or other hydrological structures which will flood relatively unspoilt forests and the construction/development or upkeep of roads through relatively unspoilt forests (including temporary roads for use by the timber industry or other extractive industries)

## FIND OUT MORE

- For reference purposes, **examples of activities ranked in order of the risk** they pose to biodiversity preservation and environment and natural resource management can be found below.

**Low-risk activities****Medium-risk activities****High-risk activities**

<p>Providing education, technical support, or training.</p> <p>Community awareness-raising initiatives. Controlled agricultural experiments carried out exclusively for research and evaluation purposes, restricted to small areas (generally less than 4 hectares). Such experiments must be closely monitored and must not have any impact on any protected areas or other environmental sensitive areas.</p> <p>Studies, technical analysis, or other information-generating activities, not including intrusive sampling of endangered species or vital habitats.</p> <p>Nutrition, health care or family planning and nutrition programs for mothers and infants, except: (a) when certain activities may have a direct impact on the environment (such as construction and water supply systems, for example) or (b) when hazardous bio-waste is being handled (especially for HIV-AIDS) or when blood samples are being taken.</p> <p>Reconfiguration of water extraction points for household use, surface wells or hand-dug wells and small water storage systems. When choosing the locations of water extraction points, care must be taken to ensure that no protected areas or other environmental sensitive areas will be affected.</p> <p>Small-scale construction projects: construction or renovation projects where the total surface area is less than 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> (and where no protected area or other environmental sensitive areas may be affected).</p>	<p>Natural resource management on a small scale with no negative impact.</p> <p>Smallholder agriculture, natural resource management and sanitation.</p> <p>Agricultural experiments: controlled, closely monitored experiments, exclusively for research and evaluation purposes, across more than 4 hectares of land.</p> <p>Medium-sized construction projects: construction or renovation projects where the total surface area is greater than 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> (examples include warehouses, barns, shops selling staples and community training centers).</p> <p>Rural roads: construction or renovation of rural roads shorter than 10 km, with no impact on environmental sensitive areas (located at least 100 m away) or forests (located at least 5 km away).</p> <p>Sampling: studies, technical analysis, or other similar activities, not including intrusive sampling of endangered species or vital habitats.</p> <p>Water provision or storage: construction or reconfiguration of small-scale water extraction or storage points for both household and non-household use.</p> <p>Support for intermediary credit institutions where direct environmental damage is a possible outcome.</p> <p>Pesticides: small-scale deployment of general use</p>	<p>Nutrition, health, or family planning projects, if (a) these could have direct repercussions on the environment (such as construction projects or supply systems, for example).</p> <p>River basin development.</p> <p>The development of new agricultural land: leveling out fields.</p> <p>Planned resettling of people.</p> <p>Construction of access roads or renovation of roads (whether primary, secondary, or tertiary) longer than 10 km. More specifically, roads which may cross or pass alongside forests or other environmental sensitive areas.</p> <p>Laying pipes and constructing sewers for water supply purposes.</p> <p>Construction of large-scale water extraction points. Large-scale irrigation.</p> <p>Water control structures: dams and dikes. Drainage of low-lying land or other flooded areas. Large-scale agricultural mechanization.</p> <p>Acquisition or use of pesticides over large areas of land.</p> <p>Industrial exploitation or production: sawmills, agro-industrial processing of forestry products, tanneries, fabric dyeing, and so on.</p>
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**Presentation of the biodiversity table from AFD's sustainable development analysis system.**

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, the system for analyzing sustainable development issues incorporates the Agency's strategic thrusts and is made up of three pillars and seven dimensions: (i) there are three dimensions to the Planet pillar: biodiversity, transitioning towards a low-carbon economy and

resilience, (ii) two dimensions to the Human pillar: social and gender, and (iii) two dimensions to the Economics and Governance pillar: economics and governance.

**The analysis grids can be found on the AFD website:** <https://www.afd.fr/en/ressources/sustainable-development-analysis-grids>

The biodiversity grid is broken down into five sub-criteria for evaluation purposes, which can be used where applicable:

- Integrity, functionality, and connectivity of ecosystems
- Sustainability of natural resource usage
- Inclusion of local people in environment and natural resource management
- Enhancing and sharing relevant knowledge, data, and technology in relation to biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources
- Introducing or consolidating a political, regulatory or governance framework aimed at encouraging biodiversity

For each of these sub-criteria there are five impact levels: two negative, one neutral and two positive levels. The first four levels correspond to the marker DAC 0, level 1 corresponds to the marker DAC 1, and level 2 corresponds to the level DAC 2. Moving between levels involves placing greater emphasis on biodiversity within the project; this can be used by project leaders to determine improvement objectives.

**Tool for identifying climate and biodiversity positive activities at the same time within development projects.**

In keeping with the AFD Group's aim for 30% of its climate funding to have a directly positive impact on biodiversity, AFD has developed an Excel tool for identifying climate and biodiversity positive activities which could be incorporated into projects in order to place greater emphasis on climate/biodiversity synergies. This tool lists activities with co-benefits for the climate and biodiversity, helps project leaders to identify nature-based solutions and supports arguments in favor of acting on climate change by drawing on existing activities. It can also be used to direct analysis of key project issues in advance of the design phase. We would recommend that CSOs use this tool from the initial stages of the project/program design process, where possible.

**This tool is available on request from AFD.**

## 2. TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS EFFECTS

# CLIMATE CHANGE IN PROJECTS WORKSHEET

CSOs contribute to climate activity by developing projects and initiatives which are directly beneficial for the climate. They also encourage public stakeholders to incorporate climate-related issues into public policy, while improving their own internal practices through corporate social responsibility initiatives.

## WHAT IS MEANT BY CLIMATE CHANGE?

Climate change poses a significant threat to tackling poverty and enhancing prosperity. There is an urgent need to promote resilient, low-carbon development, every effort must be taken to stabilize the average world temperature and adapt economies and societies to global climate instability.

The Paris Climate Accords, which were adopted at COP21 in 2015, and the Sustainable Development Goals - particularly number 13: "Take urgent impact to combat climate change and its impacts" - provide a framework for countries and development stakeholders, encouraging these issues to be taken into consideration.

Below can be found definitions for mitigation, adaptation, and public policy:

- **Mitigation:** alignment with challenges linked to climate change and low-carbon strategies (*Action on greenhouse gas emissions, involving reducing them, restricting them, or protecting and improving carbon sinks and reservoirs*)
- **Adaptation:** resilience to climate change (*the extent to which a system must adjust in response to climate change (including climate variability and extreme weather) in order to mitigate potential damage, take advantage of opportunities or tackle consequences*)
- **Public policy:** factoring in the issue of climate change when determining or implementing public policy in the country/countries in question

## THE AFD GROUP'S CLIMATE TARGET

The AFD Group's target is for 50% of its annual financial commitments to go on projects with co-benefits for the climate, 30% of which will be for adaptation. A transition towards resilient, low-carbon development is possible, but it will require engagement from all stakeholders, both public and private. This is the concept behind AFD's "100% Paris Agreement" initiative.



As outlined in its Climate and Development - 2017-2022 Strategy (<https://www.afd.fr/en/ressources/climate-development-2017-2022-strategy>), **AFD has made five commitments:**

- To be "100% Paris Agreement", which means ensuring all funding granted by the AFD Group is consistent with resilient, low-carbon development, in addition to supporting countries on resilient, low-carbon trajectories
- To boost the amount of climate positive funding, which means strengthening commitments to projects with direct co-benefits for the climate. In 2021 the AFD Group started contributing towards France's new target, which is to set aside €6 billion for climate financing each year, including €2 billion to help developing countries to adapt
- To contribute towards the rerouting of capital flows and investment by encouraging the private sector to transition away from carbon (including through innovative financial instruments)
- To jointly devise solutions and influence standards, particularly through the International Development Finance Club (IDFC); AFD seeks to promote good practice such as alignment with the Paris Accords and convergence of climate and biodiversity financing
- To bring AFD's internal practices into line in order to reduce the Group's carbon and environmental impact

As we approach the end of the current strategy, the AFD Group will be taking stock with a view towards scaling up its ambitions for climate and nature as part of a **Joint Climate and Nature Strategy for 2023-2027**.

## WHAT ARE AFD'S EXPECTATIONS WHEN IT COMES TO FOCUSING ON THE CLIMATE IN PROJECTS?

AFD is keen, **where applicable, for all projects in receipt of funding to have co-benefits for the climate (adaptation and/or mitigation) and to be in alignment with public policy on climate change (local trajectories for mitigation and adaptation).**

CSOs are expected to factor the issue of climate change into their projects and must outline whether projects/programs incorporate specific objectives, expected outcomes and activities linked to climate change. In such cases the CSO will provide a detailed analysis of the context, the issues which the project/program will seek to address and the resources to be employed. The following points must be covered in this analysis:

- The alignment of activities with the Paris Accords and the country or countries' decarbonization strategies (measures and policies introduced by countries aimed at cutting emissions and adapting to climate change)
- An analysis of the project in relation to the three dimensions outlined below (mitigation, adaptation, and public policy), in function of their relevance with regard to activities
- An analysis of the context, including a "vulnerability assessment" for the area with regard to the effects of climate change, must be included in the "NIONG" in order to justify adaptation initiatives. Should additional analysis prove necessary (including "participatory vulnerability assessments" involving recipients), this can be incorporated into funding requests made to AFD. Go to the [Find out more](#) section for assistance with vulnerability assessments

- The medium- to long-term impact of the project/program on tackling climate change (mitigation AND adaptation) and its effects
- Any negative impact the project/program could potentially have on tackling climate change and its effects (particularly if the project generates high CO2 emissions); in such cases, details of the planned corrective measures must be provided.

**The NIONG does not ask you to provide an exact estimate of your project/program's carbon footprint. However, you are asked to provide an overview of the potential impact it could have on the climate, using the points below.**

### **1. Mitigation - Alignment with issues linked to climate change and transitioning away from carbon**

The project is in alignment with the country's climate targets or will make a significant contribution to transitioning away from carbon:

Mitigation projects that will help to reduce emissions at a regional level

Pioneering mitigation projects in a sector with the potential for replication

Pilot agroecology projects

Projects aimed at raising awareness of issues linked to climate change among the wider public, including mitigation

Projects promoting innovative approaches which are in keeping with the low-carbon transition within companies (such as social enterprises)

#### **Types of "Mitigation" projects:**

Cutting greenhouse gas emissions: clean energy technology (improved cookstoves, for example), solar electrification, energy efficiency in buildings.

Carbon sequestration: reforestation, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, preservation of mangroves, preservation of coral reefs.

Education for citizenship and international solidarity (ECIS) projects centered around climate issues, including mitigation.

### **2. Adaptation: resilience to climate change**

For a project to be resilient to climate change, it must meet some of the following criteria:

#### **The project is adapted to climate change**

Can the project deliver on its stated objectives, despite the climate risks?

Will the project help to protect and/or improve infrastructure, thus enhancing resilience to climate change and variability?

**The project will have short- and long-term effects on the adaptation of the region and/or the sector/system in which it is to take place**

Will the project help to increase the percentage of people who are aware of the anticipated effects of climate change and to devise the most appropriate responses?

Will the project help to reduce the number of people killed, injured, or affected by extreme weather events?

Will the project help to maintain or improve ecosystem services and the management of natural resources in the context of climate change?

To what extent will the project promote capacity-building within local civil society in relation to adapting to climate change?

**The project will have a transformative effect on its sector/system**

Will the project steer sectors/regions/systems towards new development modes which are more resilient to climate change?

What potential for replicability and scaling up does the project have?

**The project factors in uncertainty (yes if it meets any of the criteria below)**

*The adaptation of and by the project will remain effective even in extreme climate scenarios.*

- Will the project be able to have a positive impact even in the extreme scenarios outlined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)?
- To what extent do the project's information and awareness-raising initiatives entail significant, lasting change in terms of how people think and act (behavioral changes)?

OR

- *The project incorporates corrective measures in the event of different climate scenarios.*
- Will it be easy to make changes to the project at a low cost in the event of new information (whether related to the climate or monitoring-evaluation) coming to light? This will involve switching from one solution to another previously identified solution (change or gradual progression).
- Will the project help to increase the number of people with livelihoods which are more resilient to climate change?

**Types of "Adaptation" projects:**

Agricultural resilience: sustainable agricultural practices, agroecology, agroforestry, irrigation, water resource management, erosion control, sustainable land management.

Sustainable ecosystem management: management of drainage basins, preservation of mangroves, preservation of coral reefs.

Urban or rural sanitation: reducing the risk of flooding for areas affected by extreme weather events.

Improved, climate-resilient housing.

**4. Support for public policy**

This relates to projects which involve advocating for, helping to develop, or helping to implement public policy linked to climate change (mitigation or adaptation) at a national or regional level.

**The project will contribute towards sustainable regulatory or strategic decisions for stimulating low-carbon development**

Supporting or implementing sectoral policy decisions (in fields such as energy/electricity, agricultural development, forests, urbanization, waste, and transport) for stimulating low-carbon development

Assisting with the development of strategy plans (long-term low-carbon strategies)

Contributing towards the introduction of sustainable laws and regulations which promote the development of renewable energy

The project will result in or assist with the introduction of quality standards, certifications or labels which exceed those currently in place and which promote a low-carbon trajectory

**The project will have an impact on the institutional environment**

Creating institutions geared towards promoting policies and/or investment plans which are in keeping with low-carbon development

Gathering more relevant data for developing low-carbon strategies

Boosting planning and coordination capacities for the implementation of low-carbon projects

Capacity-building, training, supporting public stakeholders with the implementation of low-carbon strategies in different sectors

**Types of projects:**

Themes: promoting agroecology, sustainable management of natural resources (soil - water - plant resources), sustainable territorial development, "clean" energy policies, waste management - at a local, national, or regional level.

Types of initiatives: advocacy, training, and information for local stakeholders, helping local stakeholders to draft policy position papers, helping local stakeholders to participate in public policy and national/international negotiations.

**[Find out more: tools available](#)**

**[Sustainable development analysis grid](#)**

As is the case for biodiversity, in order to direct their analysis and to encourage them to consider the contribution their project will make to the climate, the CSO leading the project may refer to the sustainable development analysis grid used by AFD to ensure that Sustainable Development Goals (including those linked to climate change) are taken into consideration at all levels within operations it finances. This grid can be used to set targets for improving practices. With regard to climate change, there are two grids: one for **low-carbon strategies** and the other for **resilience to climate change**; these

can both be found on the AFD website <https://www.afd.fr/en/ressources/sustainable-development-analysis-grids>

These grids can be used to analyze the expected outcomes of projects with regard to climate-related issues. Using a series of criteria and questions, the aim is to adopt a "do no harm" approach, so as to ensure that all projects are in keeping with individual countries' climate strategies and to identify ways of better integrating these strategies into the project design process.

### **Vulnerability assessments - documents**

- USAID climate risk country profiles

Very clear, with national coverage, but some countries are not available

- THINK HAZARD portal

- Outlines climate risk levels for individual countries/regions based on historical evidence. Details are given as to qualitative future trends in relation to a baseline
- Not infallible, but no false negatives

### **Promoting convergence between biodiversity & climate**

AFD has made a commitment to ensuring that by 2025 30% of its climate financing also benefits biodiversity. Climate financing for projects with a DAC Rio/Biodiversity marker 1 or 2 will be regarded as "climate and biodiversity" financing. In keeping with this objective, AFD has developed an Excel tool which can be used to suggest climate and biodiversity positive activities which could be incorporated into projects in order to place greater emphasis on climate/biodiversity synergies. This tool is available on request from AFD.

# WORKSHEET 4

## YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FOR PROJECTS AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### WHAT IS MEANT BY YOUTH?

There are a number of ways of defining youth, making it a difficult concept to pin down: biological age, social and cultural constructs, and physiological, psychological, social, and economic empowerment. In the interests of greater inclusivity for Civil Society Organization (CSO) Initiative projects managed by the Partnerships Department/Civil Society Organizations Division (DPA/OSC), the term youth is to be understood as referring to the period of transition between childhood and adulthood, the end point being socio-economic, civic, and environmental empowerment.

There are currently 1.2 billion young people aged between 15 and 24, making up 16% of the world's population. By 2030 the number of young people is expected to rise by 7%, reaching close to 1.3 billion.<sup>10</sup> Young people make up more than half of the population in most countries AFD operates in.

### EMPHASIZING THE ISSUE OF YOUTH IN FRANCE'S POLICY FOR SOLIDARITY DEVELOPMENT AND TACKLING INEQUALITY

The French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) launched a youth strategy in 2015,<sup>11</sup> guiding France's foreign policy through the prism of this priority generation. This reference document outlines France's commitment to empowering young people to bring about change. It recognizes associations as the best means of initiating the engagement and independence of young people in their journeys as citizens, helping them to open up to the world.

MEAE's policy on youth is consistent with that of many bilateral and multilateral backers. Some of these have introduced ambitious strategies in this field, with significant resources. In 2015 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), targets to be reached by 2030 in order to transform our world and our societies. **The UN has recognized the pivotal role that young people across all countries will play in meeting the targets set out in the 2030 Agenda.**

**The French programming law on Solidarity Development and Tackling Global Inequality of August 2021** outlines this ambition in a sustainable way, identifying young people as a priority target for this policy, which is geared towards involving young people in dialog with partners.

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<sup>10</sup> [UN Global Issues - Youth](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Rapport Jeunesse FR Web\\_cle869574-1.pdf \(diplomatie.gouv.fr\)](#)

### 1. Full integration for youth

**“Full integration”** - both economic and professional, social and civic, and environmental and climate-related - will be crucial to meeting the SDGs. This will involve considering these three different dimensions in conjunction with each other, thus preventing the instability which can arise from a silo approach, while respecting the “do no harm” principle.

### 2. Intergenerational equity

The concept of **intergenerational justice and equity** involves taking steps to ensure that future generations do not suffer the negative consequences (whether environmental, social or economic) of development or “maldevelopment”, as promoted by the 20th century’s economic and industrial model, centered around the unbridled consumption of resources (or the inaction) of a single individual or group (and eventually all of humanity). This can also lead to an evaluation of the ecological debt which a group or process may pass on to future generations, raising the concept of the anticipated “reimbursement” of this debt in the form of compensation. This is a valuable complement to the related concept of the ecological footprint, the aim of which is to improve individuals’ or groups’ perceptions of the spatial impact of their actions.

### 3. Youth and Gender: two common issues

In much the same vein as inclusion and tackling inequality, the issues of gender and youth would appear to be linked and mutually transformational. The specific role to be played by young women and men within projects and in tackling gender inequality must be clarified.

**If young women and girls are given the opportunity to stand up for their rights, they represent a truly vital resource.** There is a growing awareness of the role which young women and young men can play within society, which is increasingly being reflected in development policies and projects. There is still a lot of progress to be made, however, requiring a more proactive and more intersectional approach to these two issues.

### 4. The vital role played by civil society organizations

Having reaffirmed their commitment to empowering young people in order to help them to bring about social, political, economic, and environmental change, CSOs are the driving force behind this objective. In 2017 Coordination SUD created the “Youth and International Solidarity” commission, which is aimed at promoting and implementing this vision of young people engaged with international solidarity, just like with gender.

### Recommendations for placing an emphasis on youth in international solidarity organizations

1. Develop a shared vision for youth within your organization
2. Make youth engagement attractive and encourage young people to play prominent roles within projects **across all stages**
3. Rethink your organization's youth communication strategy
4. Promote intergenerational dialog
5. Adapt to the needs of young people to enable them to participate
6. Introduce a suitable support system
7. Give young people the chance to learn by doing within projects with a view towards full integration, from an economic/social, civic/professional, social/citizen and environmental/climate perspective

Find out more: [Coordination-SUD-Etat-lieux-jeunes-dans-SI.pdf \(coordinationsud.org\)](#)

Publications by CoSud's Youth and International Solidarity Commission: [Publications by CSUD - Coordination SUD](#)

## AFD'S EXPECTATIONS FOR INCORPORATING YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INTO PROJECTS

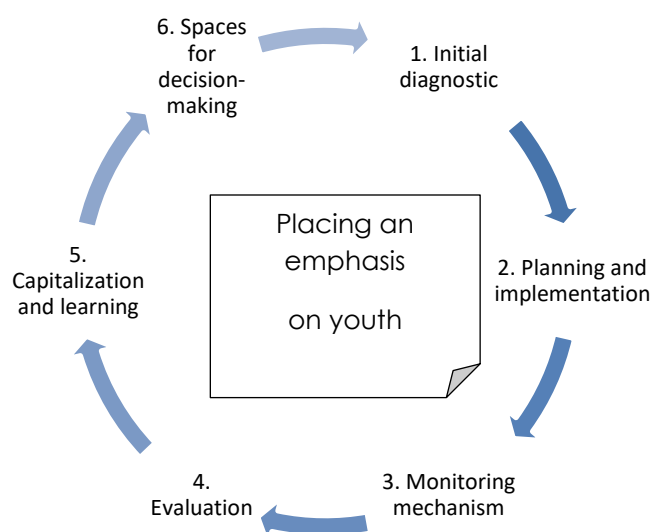
In 2021 DPA/OSC identified more than 61% of projects in receipt of funding which were targeted, either wholly or in part, at "young" people. This included as recipients of projects, but nearly half were projects in which young people were fully involved in project implementation. Such progress is encouraging, but modest in relation to the ambition outlined in AFD's **"100% Social Link" strategy for young people to be involved in half of all projects supported by the AFD Group.**

But this does not simply mean including young people as recipients of projects or ensuring that a certain percentage of recipients are young people. It is also not about generational diversity among recipients. These are necessary conditions, but they are not enough on their own. Action must be taken on inequality, restrictions, violence, and discrimination against young people, aimed at changing their role within society in order to empower them (in the short-, medium- and long-term) to address the SDGs in their environment, while incorporating specificities linked to their age. Change objectives should ideally be devised alongside and led by the individuals concerned. If this is not possible, these individuals must at least be able to claim ownership of them, if the objectives are not made official.

The appraisal document questions CSOs about the emphasis placed on young people in their projects. **AFD is keen to ensure that this issue forms an increasingly integral part of the projects it supports, at all levels. During appraisal of CSO Initiative projects, specific attention will be paid to efforts aimed at ensuring that young people have the opportunity to take decisive action on the Sustainable Development Goals and are not simply passive recipients.** The aim is for **young citizens to be able to learn through their actions**, empowering them to address local and global issues. This will also help to tackle the rise of extremism, to develop future civil society leaders and to stimulate dialog between partners.



## Placing an emphasis on youth at every stage of your project



AFD encourages CSOs applying for funding to place greater emphasis on youth engagement in their projects at every stage. This may involve: contributions from young people to project creation; taking the initiative to launch projects; forming project teams; preparing, and drafting projects; training and access to information; project implementation; evaluation and sustainability.

### 1. Initial diagnostic and key issues

CSOs must document their understanding of the project context

through the prism of youth. This will involve analyzing the role played by young people in society/in their communities and their capacity for speaking out, making independent choices, organizing themselves and taking decisions. The specific challenges young people face must be analyzed, exploring how these can be overcome in order for young people to play **a role in the dynamics of social, economic, ecological, and political change with a view towards becoming potential solutions**. CSOs must involve young women and men as much as possible in the project diagnostic phase, factoring in their understanding of the context, their aspirations, and their capacity for engagement in project implementation. This will also help to develop a clearer understanding of local dynamics involving young people. Projects can help to highlight what connects the problem the project is seeking to address, and the place given to young people/and their engagement in the area in question. Details must be provided as to the resources deployed aimed at improving the knowledge of both professionals and recipients. Examples include surveys, studies, training courses, demonstrations, eyewitness accounts and information gathering.

### 2. Planning and implementation for greater youth engagement

Projects may seek to set targets for improving youth engagement across all fields, exploring aspects such as inclusion, consultation, and strategic dialog alongside this target group. This might involve **changing the status and role of young people** in projects through initiatives geared towards empowerment (independence, critical thinking, their capacity for influence, decision-making), improving their organizational skills or giving them a more prominent role within non-youth-specific organizations. Such "strategic" changes may take the form of measures geared specifically towards **building young people's capacities for initiative**, their organizational skills, and their power to influence. Targeted awareness-raising campaigns among the general public and in an intergenerational context may help to bring about such changes, the goal being to encourage young people to get involved in public life and civic participation. From an operational perspective, young people can participate at all levels of projects, **playing an essential role in adaptation, ownership, and accountability**. Stakeholders which are directly involved in initiatives - such as spaces for decision-making and dialog involving young people - must be quantified, with as much detail as possible provided on the varied and specific needs of young people. Details may also be provided as to what roles young people will occupy in the field.

### 3. Monitoring, evaluation, and capitalization

Implementing a "Youth" strategy (whether primary or secondary), producing new knowledge, and documenting and identifying ongoing changes requires specific resources and measures, in addition to particular outcomes and performance indicators. These must be explicitly included in projects. Where necessary, methodological support may be included, enlisting the services of experts within the project country or within the CSO. This will make it possible to document the emergence of key youth issues and how they are being addressed, including through changes to plans of action, training, or activities. Project evaluations should endeavor to pay close attention to how the issue of "youth empowerment" has been incorporated into the project, as well as to the effects of the project in terms of boosting young people's power to act.

#### 4. Spaces for decision-making: the importance of youth participation

Irrespective of whether young people are the main recipients of a project, it is essential that they participate in the decision-making process. Details must be provided as to their role within the project, dialog frameworks and partner organizations. If they are significantly marginalized in the initial context, reasonable progress will be expected, taking the local context into account. This participation may be evaluated based on laws introduced in the countries in question and civil society reference documents from each country. Tools for measuring the participation and contribution of young women and young men can also focus attention on their participation,<sup>12</sup> thus stimulating their role within spaces for civic participation.

## **EXPERIENTIAL AND EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES**

### 1. Stimulating civic engagement through youth and volunteering

Through civic and solidarity engagement, a range of different volunteering opportunities<sup>13</sup> are available for enabling young people to acquire the capacities to take decisive action on the SDGs. Such an approach also helps to promote learning by doing, and education on citizenship and international solidarity. It is designed to enable the practical development of the skills needed for civic engagement and to help to bring through future leaders in civil society and the non-profit sector worldwide. Providing learning opportunities to the youth of partner countries through charity and volunteer work adds value to projects, which must be factored in to both the logical framework and the budget (in the section on value creation).

When undertaken as part of an ambitious public policy, volunteering provides a rare opportunity to establish a connection between education, full integration (economic/professional, social/citizen and environment/climate), and active citizenship. It empowers young people by enabling them to make meaningful contributions to activities of general interest.

### 2. Youth and education for citizenship and international solidarity (ECIS)

ECIS is centered around education, politics and empowerment, the overarching objective being to promote the building of a fair, united, and sustainable world by encouraging everyone to seek out information and to take action to deliver change. It is designed to respond to the major challenges of our time, whether social, environmental, economic, cultural, or political, all of which are complex,

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<sup>12</sup> Booklet - Cross capitalization of FISONG "civic participation" projects, AFD

<sup>13</sup> See worksheet on incorporating volunteering into projects

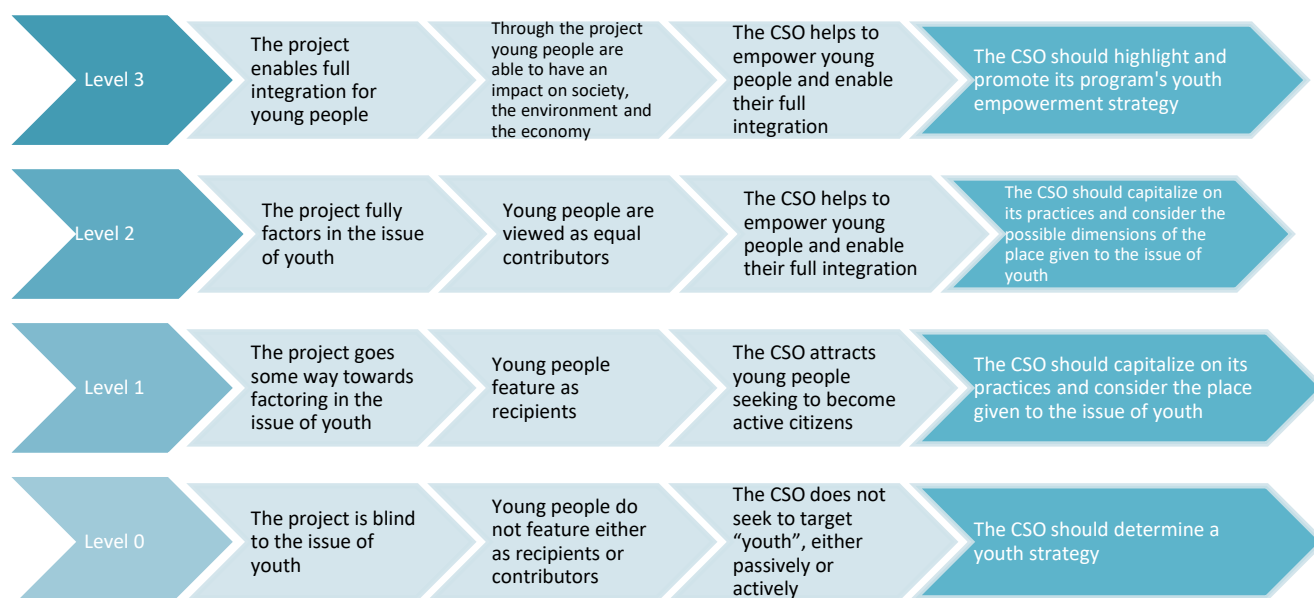
interdependent, and international. A multi-stakeholder group coordinated by AFD was set up in 2017 to facilitate dialog surrounding ECIS. In 2021 it published a joint paper<sup>14</sup> outlining the scope of ECIS and the vital role it plays in establishing and promoting a set of common values, empowering citizens, and raising awareness of a whole host of complementary practices.

ECIS is for everyone, but many of its initiatives are aimed at younger generations, and it is particularly well-suited to placing a greater emphasis on youth and the potential of young people to make an active contribution to the ecological transition, the transition to democracy and other interdependent transitions. ECIS provides a complementary alternative to formal education, helping with the development of young citizens by fostering critical thinking, providing guidance, breaking down prejudice, discouraging inward-looking thinking, giving value to engagement, and supporting meaningful solidarity initiatives. Project objectives can be used to promote a learning by doing approach for young participants in projects. This will also help you to distinguish between age-dependent strategies for supporting young people in their active involvement, developing over time a dynamic approach aimed at enabling them to become fully-fledged citizens of the world (once they enter adulthood), irrespective of their gender, religion, or social background.

## APPRAISING PROJECTS THROUGH THE PRISM OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

DPA/OSC employs a specific grading system for assessing the emphasis placed on youth in projects. The system is designed to better consider this interdisciplinary issue across all sectors and geographies for projects in receipt of funding.

### *Grid for assessing the emphasis placed on youth by the CSO*



<sup>14</sup> [The pivotal role played by education for citizenship and international solidarity: joint paper](#) | AFD - Agence Française de Développement

## USEFUL POINTERS

Here are a few questions to ask yourself when considering **the issue of youth and the role it plays in your project**:

How prominent are young people and youth engagement in the project?

- ▶ Are young people a target for the project? Are young women a specific target?
- ▶ Out of the total number of recipients, what percentage are young people?
- ▶ Are young people organized into teams or groups within the project?
- ▶ What roles do young people occupy in governance of the project and/or the CSO and its partners?
- ▶ What contribution is made by young people to the project's objectives and expected outcomes?
- ▶ How many volunteers are involved in the project (including those from the project country/countries and reciprocal volunteers)?

What measures have been taken aimed at changing the place given to young people?

- ▶ Does the project help young people to build their capacities for action (particularly in terms of democratic leadership and governance)?
- ▶ Does the project enable young people to "learn by doing" with a view towards full integration (not just economic/professional, but also social/civic and environmental/climate)?
- ▶ Are young women encouraged to actively participate across all spaces and roles, enabling them to play key roles in the dynamics of social transformation, including in leadership positions?
- ▶ Does the project seek to change national policy or regulatory frameworks? Do young people contribute to the design process?
- ▶ Do the terms of reference for project evaluation make specific reference to the role of young people and is this worksheet included in the appendices for the attention of the evaluator?

Which youth engagement levers have been activated? Are there any plans for volunteering or ECIS initiatives?

- ▶ Does the project include any measures aimed at promoting a dynamic of accountability, empowerment, and solidarity engagement among young people?
- ▶ Are there any plans to recruit young people through volunteering schemes in France or partner countries? Is the principle of reciprocity between young people encouraged?
- ▶ Does the project draw upon ECIS initiatives involving young people in their execution?
- ▶ Do capacity building and support initiatives involve young people addressing other young people?

Are young people involved in drafting the budget?

- ▶ Have resources or expenditure items been clearly earmarked for youth activism?
- ▶ Have specific resources linked to volunteering schemes been incorporated?
- ▶ Does charity work carried out by young people feature in the budget?

Is the role played by young people a clear part of the logical framework?

- ▶ Do the objectives and expected outcomes reveal the role played by young people in the project?
- ▶ Have specific indicators been identified for assessing the emphasis placed on youth?
- ▶ Has the active contribution made by young people to meeting the SDGs been described?

# WORKSHEET 4A

## INCORPORATING VOLUNTEERING INTO PROJECTS

### What is meant by volunteering?

International volunteering provides a way for **people to show their solidarity** by participating in initiatives, projects, or organizations of general interest. Recognized by the French law on solidarity development of August 4, 2021 as one of the mechanisms for official development assistance (ODA), it is supported by the French government and local authorities, engaging with civil society organizations (CSOs) as part of a partnership approach.

Volunteering differs from international charity work in the length of the commitment required and the types of contracts which are signed. Charity work is a part-time commitment, with activities which are either recurring, one-off, or temporary taking place over an unspecified period of time. Charity workers do not receive any payment, making this an altruistic endeavor. **Volunteer workers, meanwhile, commit to working full time on international solidarity initiatives which can last anywhere from a few months to several years.** They are given a living allowance, access to social security and training. In France, long forms of volunteering for international solidarity are governed by **two main laws, both of which contribute towards Agence Française de Développement's (AFD) objectives of supporting CSOs:**

- The **Volunteering for International Solidarity (VSI)** law from 2005: this is part of France's international cooperation policy. The purpose of VSI is to carry out missions of general interest overseas in the fields of development cooperation and humanitarian aid. Coordinated by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE), VSI employs the use of two operators: the Fonds de coopération de la jeunesse et de l'éducation populaire (FONJEP), which is responsible for MEAE loans for volunteering, working with accredited CSOs and volunteers; and Frances Volontaires, which is responsible for promoting and organizing volunteering for international solidarity. VSI is targeted at anyone over the age of 18 and takes place outside of Europe, with the exception of foreign volunteers volunteering in France (reciprocal volunteering). There are around 30 or so accredited VSI organizations specializing in training and monitoring at an international level.

**Between 2010 and 2019 more than 20,800 volunteers took part in a VSI mission** (2019 MEAE statistics).

- The **Civic Service (SC)** law from 2010: Civic service is part of France's wider youth policy; it aims to strengthen social ties and cohesion by giving all young people the opportunity to take part in projects of general interest. It is managed by the Agence du Service Civique (the French Civic Service Agency), which employs accredited organizations and is specifically targeted at young women and men aged between 16 and 25, irrespective of their background or nationality. The principle of reciprocity through volunteer work is made possible through civic service.

**Between 2010 and 2020 more than 8,000 volunteers undertook Civic Service overseas** (Agence du Service Civique data).

In addition to these frameworks for civic engagement and cooperation at an international level, there are a range of volunteering schemes and initiatives<sup>15</sup>:

- Targeted at groups of young people (examples include Chantiers Solidaires [work project schemes centered around practical initiatives, independent learning and working with others], international solidarity and youth initiatives (Jeunesse Solidarité Internationale - JSI) and Ville, Vie, Vacances [a scheme which provides access to cultural, civic, sporting and leisure opportunities for at-risk youth aged between 11 and 18]/International Solidarity (VVV/IS), and youth projects)
- Targeted at people in work (unpaid leave for volunteering)
- Targeted at the retired (volunteering opportunities for seniors)
- Run by the European Union (the European Solidarity Corps)
- Run by the United Nations (United Nations Volunteers)

State support for stakeholders engaged in volunteering is taken from the MEAE's budget for engaging with volunteering initiatives. Part of a long-term strategy, the size of this budget has continued to rise, the goal being to meet demand for engagement from young people in keeping with ODA's upward trajectory. *The budget was €20.67m in 2020. It is expected to sit at €22.5m in 2021 and could reach as high as €23.4m in 2022.*

### What volunteering can achieve

Described by the UN Secretary General as a "powerful, interdisciplinary lever for implementing the **Sustainable Development Goals**", by the Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID) as "an interdisciplinary lever for solidarity and development policy", and by the **French planning law on solidarity development and tackling global inequality (LOP-DSLIM) of August 2021** as "**an interdisciplinary lever for solidarity development policy**", international volunteering for exchange and solidarity is a versatile, reciprocal and practical mechanism. Volunteering has benefits for partners, for the development of cooperation and projects, and for the implementation of innovative solutions and initiatives through the fresh perspective it offers on projects and organizations. But it also benefits the volunteers themselves, assisting with their development at a personal level (self-discovery), at a professional level (providing technical skills which can be put to use for studies or in a professional context) and in terms of being an active environmental citizen (seeing the world in a different light). Volunteers promote a positive image of France abroad, representing its values of solidarity and dialog between peoples.

### France Volontaires - France's platform for international volunteering opportunities for exchange and solidarity

Launched in 2009 and **reporting to the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs**, France Volontaires is **France's platform for international volunteering opportunities for exchange and solidarity**. A joint creation involving public stakeholders and international solidarity associations, it was set up to promote international volunteering for exchange and solidarity in all its forms, while expanding on the range of missions from both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. Its aim is to make international volunteering ever more accessible, regardless of the age, the background, the region, or the competencies of the individuals seeking to participate. France Volontaires is able to rely on its members - experts in volunteering initiatives - on its partners in France and across the world, and on its network

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<sup>15</sup> Please refer to the summary table of volunteering opportunities in the "Find out more" section

across mainland France, France's overseas territories and internationally, with 24 volunteering spaces in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

France Volontaires and the AFD Group signed a framework agreement in December 2021. This partnership between two organizations with a long history of supporting French cooperation initiatives is designed to **build their respective capacities - both here and over there - for engaging volunteers, particularly young people, in the Sustainable Development Goals** and International Solidarity, primarily through **volunteering in projects funded by AFD**.

The AFD Group, Expertise France and France Volontaires have a shared ambition to make volunteering accessible to as many people as possible, both here and over there, in all its forms, with ever higher demands in terms of quality. To make a real difference, volunteering must employ a "do no harm," no replacements approach, while respecting gender equality and preventing or minimizing any risks linked to the operational context. Volunteers will require a framework and the appropriate resources to achieve this. The principle of reciprocity provides an opportunity to establish a more balanced cooperative relationship with partner countries and regions.

### Why encourage volunteers to take part in CSO projects?

Volunteers engage in local cooperation and have the capacity to promote the local innovations they discover at an international level. Volunteers act to bridge the gap between communities and local authorities. Upon their return, wherever they are in the world, international volunteers form a pool of expertise, helping to bring about change within organizations, partnerships, and society. They contribute to all phases of projects on a daily basis, across a wide range of geographies and themes. AFD provides support to CSOs committed to assisting with the professional integration of young people, while encouraging them to take the initiative in the interests of galvanizing their projects.

### Volunteers helping to reach and promote the Sustainable Development Goals

As outlined in the 2030 Agenda, volunteer work contributes towards active citizenship, while helping citizens to get to grips with the challenges of sustainable development. Based on improvement and mutual understanding, volunteers help societies to heal while strengthening social cohesion. They offer spaces for both individual and collective development, helping to build strong, dynamic societies. Volunteer work has a multiplier effect, enabling local action at the heart of communities aimed at ensuring **that no one is left out**. Volunteers act as co-incubators and have the capacity to promote the local innovations they discover at an international level. They often serve as a bridge between communities and local authorities. They form a pool of expertise, providing vital resources for cooperative projects. From health, education and professional training to revenue-generating activities, water and sanitation, waste management and social integration, every day volunteers help to implement projects in a wide range of areas at the heart of the 2030 Agenda's push for inclusivity.

### Empowering young people

AFD is committed to **empowering young people in at least half of its projects**, in keeping with its "100% Lien Social" strategy. The Partnerships Department/Civil Society Organizations Division (DPA/OSC) pays close attention to initiatives which promote the involvement of young people in project processes and organizations. In 2015 a specific indicator was introduced to monitor progress made in relation to this target.<sup>16</sup>

The anger of young people worldwide and the natural altruism which resides in every one of them are not enough on their own to bring about the change needed to make the world a better place, or to help

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<sup>16</sup> See the Youth Empowerment worksheet



these young people to find their place in it. By giving young people access to international volunteering opportunities, **CSOs are able to place an emphasis on youth** in their projects, their strategies and dialog with their partners. They activate the **process of youth empowerment, which has a positive impact on the volunteers themselves as well as on society, making them feel useful and providing opportunities for self-development**. Taking a “youth empowerment” approach means getting young people involved in the dynamics of social transformation. But this is not limited to simply consulting them: young people must be involved in decision-making, for which they need to be given the requisite support in building their capacities to act and take responsibility. International volunteering schemes help to facilitate and promote learning.

### Aiding full integration through volunteering

A key component of AFD's “100% Social Link” strategy, **full integration** can be achieved through volunteering pathways for young people as well as through dialog with partners. The full integration of young people is defined as their capacity to successfully become independent, and to assert their rights in an active and sustainable way with regard to social, societal, economic, professional, environmental, and climate-related concerns. Full integration must be a target when writing descriptions for volunteering opportunities. AFD believes that volunteering should be used to assist with the full integration of as many young people as possible, beginning with those who need it the most.

### Volunteering and the reciprocity principle

In the context of volunteering, reciprocity will be crucial if we are to leave the North-South paradigm behind and begin to factor in the interdependent nature of local and international issues. This will involve working towards **more equitable and more balanced relationships between countries and partners**. One of the means through which this can be achieved is the deployment of international volunteers in France.

Bringing international volunteers into France is part of a wider approach aimed at restoring balance to partnership-based relationships and working together to address transnational issues. This will directly contribute towards meeting **Sustainable Development Goal 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development**.

Reciprocal mobility (South-North, South-South) is becoming increasingly commonplace as a result of the global volunteering ecosystem, helping us to move away from the dated North-South dichotomy. Many countries have made volunteering a crucial component of their youth civic engagement policies.<sup>17</sup> AFD works with France Volontaires to support these public policies and the **development of national volunteering ecosystems**. These have proven to be complementary and just as important as policies linked to education, training, and socio-professional and environmental integration for young people.

**The LOP-DSLIM of 2021 outlines the ambition of the reciprocity principle:** “In devising its policy for solidarity development and tackling global inequality, France is seeking to share responsibility with other backers as well as the leading international development organizations. Greater requirements have been placed on partner countries, while promoting a spirit of reciprocity. As stated in article 3, an annual report will be submitted to the legislative authorities on **“activities undertaken by France aimed at consolidating reciprocal mobility and reciprocal volunteering.”**

CSOs are the main recruiters of volunteers, contributing towards a process of shared learning on practices and experiences of working with international volunteers on their projects.

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<sup>17</sup> Togo, Benin, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Paraguay, and overseas cooperation areas. France Volontaires' remit is to support these pivotal dynamics.



France Volontaires statistics show that **251 international volunteers** were involved in civic service work in France in 2019 (+45% on 2018, confirming the rising trend). Out of the 24 countries these volunteers came from, nearly half were from just four countries: Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Côte d'Ivoire.

Excerpt from a volunteering reciprocity capitalization initiative

*"Bringing international volunteers to France gives them the opportunity to explore their relationship with the world. Through intercultural exchange, this encourages us to question the relationship we have with time (as a resource, working time, leisure time), family relationships (intergenerational solidarity), and gender equality, moving towards greater reciprocity in volunteering.*

*"In Europe, time is seen as just another resource. Everything is scheduled and organized. In Senegal time is seen as being infinite. There are advantages and disadvantages on both sides. Professional ambitions eat away at personal and human ambitions. Reciprocity helps to bring these two viewpoints together. People in Senegal waste time, but they use that time to live. French people do not waste time, but they mostly disregard the human aspect. There are things which both sides can learn from each other." Mame Ousmane Diene, CEMEA (Training Centre for Active Education Methods) Senegal.*

**The forming of binational volunteering partnerships can provide an opportunity to establish reciprocity**, with such partnerships paying witness to and playing a part in the effects of projects, both here and over there. CSOs, operators and public authorities actively cooperate with each other in support of these dynamics and in overcoming obstacles which can limit the activities of CSOs. The deployment of volunteers is not authorized in certain countries (French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs [MEAE] security zoning is applicable to all volunteers). Requests for visas and temporary residence permits must be anticipated by CSOs. Effective levers can be activated, including reciprocity agreements incorporating volunteering, with multiple countries deploying significant resources. Similarly, capitalization helps to disseminate the knowledge and practices of CSOs and their partners, who have been working on reciprocity for a number of years.

### What position do volunteers occupy within projects?

The position occupied by volunteers will depend as much on their abilities as on the role assigned to them by the CSO. This decision will be taken based on the project objectives set by the CSO and its partners. It shall be informed by dialog between the different stakeholders, including young people involved in the project diagnostic and design phase. This will also depend on the CSO's youth emphasis strategy<sup>18</sup>. A range of different actions are possible, from project management and awareness-raising to partnership coordination and training and education for citizenship and international solidarity. All of these actions can be performed in the spirit of reciprocity.

Volunteers for International Solidarity chiefly undertake development projects, emergency projects and restoration projects, serving a range of different interests:

- **Policy/ethics:** Helping to bring countries closer together. Effectively serving the interests of partner organizations through support and implementation of high-quality human and technical assistance.
- **Economic:** Safeguarding the financial sustainability of CSOs. Volunteers for International Solidarity give CSOs access to skilled, committed professionals. This contribution can also be included in the budget as financial compensation.
- **Professional:** forming a deep pool of potential future employees, VSI equates to a period of professional training.
- **Environmental:** Running for an average of 12 months, VSI placements are long-term

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<sup>18</sup> See the youth empowerment worksheet

commitments. This helps to minimize travel and limits their environmental impact, while providing an alternative to the ad-hoc use of technical experts.

As a result, most Volunteers for International Solidarity occupy project management/coordination or technical assistance roles. 73% of them hold master's degrees. Many of the French people involved in international solidarity started out as volunteers after their studies.

#### **An example of a project employing the use of volunteers for international solidarity**

The project **Promoting Alternatives to the Detention of Children in Madagascar and Niger** was run by **Grandir Dignement**, a CSO that was launched in 2010 to work with children and young people in conflict with the law. It seeks to ensure that human dignity is respected in custodial settings and throughout the criminal process more generally. The aim of the project was to develop measures and penalties as alternatives to imprisonment in both Madagascar and Niger, in the interests of aiding the integration of children in conflict with the law and protecting their rights.

Volunteers for International Solidarity occupied supervisory roles within projects in Madagascar and Niger over periods running from 12 to 24 months.

**Civic service** provides a way of addressing other issues linked to **youth civic engagement**. It allows you to put together mixed teams for your projects, irrespective of whether the engagement is individual or collective, or whether these are young French people or young people from the project country. Projects which factor in the interdisciplinary nature of the Sustainable Development Goals are particularly conducive to engaging young people from different countries.

In 2020, civic service volunteers working internationally were more likely to be women and more likely to have a degree than other civic service volunteers. 76% of volunteers had the equivalent of a two-year higher education diploma while 22% were baccalaureate level. 68% were women and 47% were aged between 23 and 25<sup>19</sup>. International civic service attracts a younger, less qualified demographic than VIS. CSOs cannot expect a professional level of performance from Civic Service volunteers. Once the terms of the assignment and the CSO's capacity for support have been established, steps must be taken aimed at ensuring accessibility for all young people.

#### **An example of a project employing the use of civic service volunteers**

The **Development Cooperation Department** project **PrODDige** was launched with the aim of getting social transformation stakeholders in the Greater Lyon area to engage with the Sustainable Development Goals through **reciprocal volunteering**.

Awarded €402,690 worth of funding through AFD's I-OSC (CSO Initiative) mechanism (out of a total budget of €890,402), this three-year project (2020-2022) involved the deployment of 72 volunteers - half of whom were French nationals - on a training-action pathway linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. These young people took up 9-month Civic Service assignments, which were divided up into individual assignments with non-profit organizations, local authorities and higher education institutions and projects carried out in four-person teams linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. PrODDige was an original project for a number of reasons, including for developing a local response to universal sustainable development challenges based on perspectives from different cultures; and its innovative training program, alternating between formal and informal skills acquisition.

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<sup>19</sup> Sources: 2020 annual report for the French Civic Service Agency [rapport-activite-agence-service-civique-2020.pdf](#)

### The questions you need to ask to make volunteering work for your project

1. For what **objective** are volunteers being deployed within the project?
2. Which volunteering mechanism should I choose? What prior **authorization** is required?
3. What **geographies** may volunteers be deployed in? And in what circumstances?
4. What is the best way of showcasing volunteers in the CSO Initiative Note (**NIONG**)?
5. How can volunteering be incorporated into the **logical framework**?
6. Where can room for volunteering be found in the CSO's **budget**? What is the cost of volunteering?
7. How can volunteering be entered in **OSCAR**?
8. How can I **capitalize** on volunteer work as part of the project?
9. What **outcomes** should I expect from volunteering as part of the project? How can it be promoted?

## FIND OUT MORE

### NGO liaison committee for volunteering (CLONG Volontariat): Volunteering: a core part of international solidarity

A member of Coordination SUD (the national coordination of French NGOs for international solidarity) CLONG Volontariat provides a space for dialog for both development and humanitarian projects.

In 2019 CLONG Volontariat began working on a project for the development of the non-profit sector with support from AFD. The aim of **volunteering for international solidarity** is to establish skilled volunteering in development projects conducted by international solidarity associations.

### Tools

- Summary table for volunteering opportunities: [Dispositifs VIES 2019.pdf \(france-volontaires.org\)](#)
- MEAE information sheet: [fiche repere volontariat web-2\\_cle075c8f.pdf \(diplomatie.gouv.fr\)](#)
- Guide For increasing reciprocity in volunteering [Guide-reciprocite-volontariat.pdf \(france-volontaires.org\)](#)

### Contacts

- France Volontaires and its global network of Volunteering Spaces [www.france-volontaires.org](http://www.france-volontaires.org)
- Clong Volontariat [www.clong-volontariat.org](http://www.clong-volontariat.org)
- Fonjep [International Solidarity, Volunteering for International Solidarity | FONJEP](#)
- French Civic Service Agency [www.service-civique.gouv.fr](http://www.service-civique.gouv.fr)

### Legislation

- ⇒ [French programming law on solidarity development and tackling global inequality, August 4 2021](#)
- ⇒ [Civic Service Law, March 10 2010](#)
- ⇒ [Law on Volunteering for International Solidarity, February 25 2005](#)

# WORKSHEET 6

## PROJECT EVALUATION AND CAPITALIZATION PRINCIPLES

The evaluation and capitalization of civil society organization (CSO) projects jointly financed by Agence Française de Développement (AFD) are both hugely important.

The aim of this document is to outline the main guiding principles for the evaluation and capitalization of CSO Initiatives. These guidelines are not set in stone and may be adjusted, clarified, or expanded to factor in the diversity of CSO projects and any changes to practices, particularly when it comes to identifying the most appropriate evaluation tools or supporting new experiments in this field. In addition to the protocols outlined by AFD in the methodological guide (details of which can be found below), dialog is constantly maintained with CSOs on this subject.

Guidelines regarding CSO Initiative projects are in keeping with AFD's wider strategy for project evaluation, which is set out in the AFD Group's monitoring and evaluation policy.<sup>20</sup> This policy promotes evaluations which have an impact, i.e., which have value, and which are used. To ensure this, evaluations must involve all project stakeholders. Evaluations must also be tailored in terms of questions, method, and timing.

To boost transparency regarding its activities and to make it easier to exchange best practice with other stakeholders in sustainable development, AFD intends to publish the results of its own evaluations routinely and encourage publication of evaluations carried out by its partners. Over and above this evaluation approach, AFD promotes capitalization, interdisciplinary studies, the widespread exchange of expertise and all other processes for identifying evaluation tools and methods tailored to suit the work carried out by development stakeholders.

The evaluation of CSO Initiative projects is a vital component of the evaluation of development support activity. Evaluations are required as a result of the diverse range of stakeholders, strategies, objectives, and initiatives, plus the fact that it is public money being allocated. There are, however, specific challenges relating to measuring outcomes owing to the often-complex nature of their end goals - geared as they are towards social change (capacity building, seeking influence through advocacy, partnerships, and so on), - their size, and the way in which they operate.

AFD encourages CSOs to fully incorporate a focus on evaluation and to carry out evaluations of their projects. The sharing of evaluations is also encouraged, the goal being to actively stimulate discussions, learning, the improvement of practices and capitalization.

There are two types of evaluation for CSO Initiative projects: individual project evaluations (see § 1) and interdisciplinary evaluations (see § 2).

### 1. EVALUATING CSO PROJECTS CO-FINANCED BY AFD

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<sup>20</sup> The evaluation policy is in the process of being drafted; it should be validated before the end of 2022.

## a) Methodology

CSO Initiative projects are to be evaluated in line with best practice for the evaluation of development projects. Evaluations should draw upon the guidelines issued by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) for the evaluation of development projects (impartiality and independence, credibility, usefulness, participation, and coordination). Evaluations are generally performed with reference to six criteria determined by the DAC (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability). This regulatory framework is to be used as a template and should not prevent you from tailoring evaluations to suit the specificities of the projects or project portfolios being evaluated. AFD promotes evaluations which have an impact, and which are designed in such a way as to meet the objectives and uses of the evaluation as outlined in conjunction with stakeholders. In addition to the DAC criteria or with reference to them, the aim is to identify the evaluation questions which the evaluation will seek to provide answers to.

Evaluations must assist the CSO in clarifying key issues relating to the project, in assessing its implementation and outcomes and in furthering its knowledge. **The full set of DAC criteria does not have to be used for each evaluation, as this can lead to evaluations which only gloss over the project and from which little can be learned.**

Evaluation of the first cycle of the project (1st phase), for example, will focus on the criteria of relevance and coherence, without necessarily exploring other effects or impacts. Evaluation of the 3rd phase of the project, meanwhile, will deal in depth with effects, changes, impact, sustainability, and so on. Evaluations should be tailored.

Depending on the type of project, other more interdisciplinary criteria often have to be taken into consideration: the extent of the changes the project is seeking to contribute towards; and the extent of the project's impact in terms of capacity building, governance, empowerment, the quality of partnerships and contribution to/influence on public policy are more complex concepts, requiring a more sophisticated approach. Such concepts must also play a more prominent role in evaluations.

Evaluations of CSO projects must also assess whether interdisciplinary themes (such gender, biodiversity & climate, and youth) have been taken into account. The terms of reference guiding the evaluation may choose to refer to the corresponding worksheets from the Partnerships Department/Civil Society Organizations Division (DPA/OSC) guide (worksheets 2, 3 and 4).

AFD is open to multiple evaluation methodologies. Most project evaluations will be based on project objectives. Depending on the evaluation, non-objective based approaches (such as outcome harvesting or most significant change) may prove useful. The use of change-driven approaches is encouraged.<sup>21</sup> AFD also encourages impact assessments. These should focus on specific questions relating to impact at project level and aim to attribute said impact to the project. These assessments shall concern projects which are relevant both in terms of research questions (addressing a knowledge deficit) and in operational terms (with outcomes that will prove useful to CSOs, AFD and even the development community). Specific methodologies are to be employed, many of which are experimental or semi experimental, involving the use of counterfactuals.<sup>22</sup> However, AFD also seeks to promote other mixed methodologies combining quantitative and qualitative approaches (such as contribution analysis, qualitative comparative analysis, and realist evaluation). CSO Initiative (CSO-I) projects may take advantage of PAIRES, a partnership between AFD and the IRD (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement) which funds these sorts of assessments for projects co-financed by AFD.

## b) Evaluation procedures

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<sup>21</sup> <https://f3e.asso.fr/boite-a-outils/>. See also the guides [Coordinating a "change pathways and vision" workshop](#) and [How to monitor and evaluate change](#).

<sup>22</sup> A comprehensive assessment aimed at identifying those impacts which can be fully attributed to a project through the use of counterfactuals. This involves comparing what has happened to a group to what would have happened had the project not taken place.

**Thought should be given to the final individual project evaluation from the start of the project, with human, technological and financial resources set aside for this purpose. An evaluation schedule should also be drawn up. This requires particular focus for initiatives comprised of multiple phases. The evaluation must be included in the project design/implementation schedule in order to feed into the formulation of the next phase.**

**In such cases, any lessons drawn from the evaluation of one phase should be used during formulation of the next phase and must be incorporated into the CSO Initiative Note (NIONG) (for which there is a specific appendix). The evaluation report must be submitted with the NIONG.**

**Evaluations should also be viewed as a participatory process, carried out in conjunction with the main partners involved in the project, and should involve contributions from as many project stakeholders as possible: the association leading the project, partner associations (both national and international), recipients, and financial and institutional partners.**

AFD promotes the use of external experts. However, CSOs may wish to carry out project evaluations internally. In situations where a final evaluation is mandatory (see below), the Partnerships Department/Civil Society Organizations Division (DPA/OSC) will assess the suitability of this solution based partly on the level of independence of the internal evaluators. DPA/OSC is also open to peer evaluation (evaluations overseen by or involving an evaluator from an NGO working on the same themes but not involved in the project being evaluated).

Most evaluations relating to CSO Initiative projects will be final evaluations: evaluations carried out during the last year or the last six months of the project. CSOs may, however, choose to carry out *in itinere* evaluations: evaluations spread out across the entire duration of the project. This differs from heightened monitoring in that the evaluative analysis is external. Such an exercise may prove beneficial from a learning perspective.

The cost of evaluations may be included in the financing plan submitted to DPA/OSC. For final external evaluations, CSOs are encouraged to use a tendering process for selecting service providers or failing that restricted tendering. Other than in specific cases and depending on the size and the number of countries involved in the project, a minimum budget of €15k is recommended.

**The terms of reference must be submitted to AFD for approval prior to the beginning of the evaluation.**

**The evaluation team is encouraged to contact whoever is in charge of the project within DPA/OSC.**

### **c) AFD requirements for individual evaluations**

AFD encourages CSOs to incorporate a process of voluntary evaluation into projects of a certain scale, but this is not mandatory.

- A final external evaluation is required for multi-phase projects and programs: CSOs planning to implement their project over multiple phases must complete an external evaluation at the end of each phase before any further funding requests are made.
- Impact assessments will be encouraged for large-scale field-based programs running for longer than six years. This will lead to detailed discussions between the Mobilization, Partnerships and Communication Executive Directorate/ Partnerships Department/Civil Society Organizations Division (MPC/DPA/OSC) and the CSO in advance of the exercise.
- For projects of general interest, an external evaluation is required at the end of each phase, while an impact assessment on the resulting change processes is required every nine years (every three phases). This impact assessment must be scheduled from the beginning of phase 1.
- Ideally, the evaluation report should be included in the attachments to the NIONG (project document) for the next phase; failing that, the provisional report will be accepted, provided the final report is submitted by the beginning of the project appraisal phase at the latest.
- Evaluation reports or summaries of them are to be published on the CSO's website. In keeping with AFD's policy of transparency and subject to approval from the CSO, evaluation reports or

summaries of them may be published on the AFD website (publication formats may be suggested to the CSO).

#### **d) Monitoring & evaluation**

AFD encourages the introduction of monitoring & evaluation mechanisms from the beginning of the project, particularly for complex or large-scale projects. Monitoring of the context and the changes and outcomes of projects is an essential part of project coordination, helping to ensure quality. It also helps to boost the efficacy of the final external evaluation. The cost of monitoring and evaluation may be included in the financing plan submitted to AFD.

#### **e) Capitalization procedures**

Experience capitalization is a collective process through which stakeholders are able to build capacities and share their knowledge with others. Experience capitalization is conducive to learning and both individual and collective progression. Capitalization can take place over the course of the project, drawing on contributions from project stakeholders (as is the case with evaluations). In the event of an external expert being called upon, they will act as more of a supervisor, facilitator, or coordinator than as an objective expert (as is the case with evaluations).

AFD strongly encourages capitalization exercises (these are mandatory for program agreements, multi-year partnership agreements and joint programs involving multiple stakeholders); the purpose of these is to draw lessons from the project and to ensure that these are widely shared among CSOs and within the wider international development sphere, in addition to promoting the contribution made to international development and cooperation through the non-governmental initiative.

CSOs are free to decide on which capitalization strategies they feel to be most appropriate and most useful and are encouraged to use all available capitalization mechanisms (media platforms, web, and so on). AFD has no specific requirements regarding content or form, but capitalization exercises should demonstrate their value and be justified within the wider context of the project, in addition to being shared as widely as possible externally.

## **2. Interdisciplinary studies/evaluations coordinated by AFD**

In addition to project evaluations, AFD may find it necessary to order and coordinate more wide-ranging, strategic evaluations, looking beyond individual projects.

Wide-ranging evaluations are to be carried out with the goal of educating CSOs, AFD and the development community. They are part of a broader process aimed at analyzing the relevance, the coherence, and the effectiveness of non-governmental initiatives with regard to individual tools, sectors, sub-sectors, countries, or regions in relation to the objectives of the CSO Initiative mechanism, or perhaps even more broadly in relation to development issues. DPA/OSC will work closely with AFD's evaluation department when carrying out these studies. Some studies may be carried out in conjunction with the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) or the official development assistance evaluation committee.<sup>23</sup> AFD may also choose to commission interdisciplinary studies, capitalization exercises or meta evaluations of the non-governmental projects it supports.

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<sup>23</sup> Decree n° 2022-787 of May 6 2022 regarding the functioning of the official development assistance evaluation committee.



The primary objective of these interdisciplinary evaluations is to contribute to strategic discussions on core issues of interest both to CSOs and AFD. These cover funding mechanisms and stakeholder practices, dealing with issues such as supporting the development of the non-profit sector, supporting capacity building, partnership quality, alignment with public policy, the existence of multiple stakeholders, contributions made through advocacy, local development, and human rights.

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## Document resources

- To view the F3E's publications and methodological resources: <https://f3e.asso.fr/eclairer/publications/>
- To view studies supported by the F3E: <https://f3e.asso.fr/recherche-croisee/>
- Microproject evaluation: <https://f3e.asso.fr/comment-suivre-et-evaluer-un-microprojet-de-solidarite-internationale/>
- Evaluating Education for Citizenship and International Solidarity (ECIS) projects: <https://f3e.asso.fr/evaluer-les-effets-de-ses-actions-decsi/>
- AFD: <https://www.afd.fr/en/ressources/analysis-monitoring-and-evaluation-contributions-social-change-meaningfully-measuring-international-solidarity-and-decentralized-cooperation>
- AFD: <https://www.afd.fr/en/evaluate-our-actions>
  - [Evaluation of the F3ONG mechanism](#)
  - [Joint multiple-stakeholder programs: progress report and capitalization](#)
  - Evaluating human rights projects: <https://www.afd.fr/fr/comment-contribuer-au-renforcement-des-droits-de-lhomme>
  - [Responding to crisis: AFD, the Fondation de France and the funding of NGOs in Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake](#)

# WORKSHEET 7

## GUIDELINES COVERING COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY FOR PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY AFD

Agence Française de Développement (AFD) is a public financial institution that implements the development and international solidarity policy defined by the French government. As such, it has transparency and accountability obligations towards both French citizens and recipients of its funding. In this capacity, AFD is responsible for ensuring the visibility of its support across all of the projects and programs it co-finances.

**Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in receipt of financing from AFD shall ensure the visibility of financial support from AFD and adhere to the guidelines on visibility set out in the funding agreement.**

**There are four obligations regarding visibility and communication for projects run by local CSOs and supported by AFD:**

1



**Mention support from AFD**

2



**Provide photos illustrating the project**

3



**Produce a project communication form**

4



**Invite AFD to key project events**

The CSO must include the AFD logo on all communication materials relating to the project throughout project implementation

The CSO must send one or two photographs to the AFD project manager with the communication form one month after the agreement has been signed, followed by a selection of photographs when sending the intermediate report and the final report.

**The CSO must produce a communication form** for the project using the template and format available on [www.afd.fr](http://www.afd.fr)\*. The CSO must upload this communication form to OSCar when making their initial funding request.

[The CSO] agrees to invite AFD representatives to project-related events, throughout project implementation (the local AFD agency for field projects and the Paris head office for projects of general interest)

In addition to the visibility of AFD, the guidelines cover use of the AFD brand and its activities, ensuring its image and values are respected.

CSOs must inform AFD of the communication strategies that will be deployed as part of the project. AFD may relay information via its own channels, helping to raise the profile of the project.

**These communication and visibility guidelines are applicable to all projects co-financed by AFD, with the exception** of sensitive security situations where project partners or recipients are put at risk or where communication could prove harmful to the smooth running of the project. Exceptions will be discussed by the CSO and AFD on a case-by-case basis.

⇒ **All of the level 1 Communication Guide guidelines and information are available online as part of the Communication Kit** ([Appendix 11 - Reference documents](#))

**The communication kit** available online ([Appendix 11 - Reference documents](#)) contains the following documents:

- The visibility guide with guidelines
- The communication worksheet: including a template and instructions to guide you
- A folder containing AFD logos
- A short presentation on AFD in multiple languages (French, English and Spanish)
- An image rights agreement and a copyright agreement for photos and videos
- For media relations, an example press release and invitation to journalists

# WORKSHEET 8

## FINANCIAL AUDITS OF PROJECTS (INTERIM AND FINAL)

Financial audits of projects are about more than simply gathering accounting records. Their aim is to monitor the use of funds allocated to projects, in accordance with the terms of the agreement and their own purpose, while following this methodological guide.

The goal is to improve both the quality and the consistency of the information produced by the CSO, verified by the auditor and passed on to the Partnerships Department/Civil Society Organizations Division (DPA/OSC).

In order to achieve this, the issue of the financial audit must be addressed at the earliest possible opportunity during the project appraisal phase. This will involve establishing effective communication between the CSO, DPA/OSC and the auditor, in addition to specifying the terms for the financial audit.

The project audit will be carried out in two stages: an interim audit covering phase 1 and a final audit covering phase 2.

### Which CSOs are subject to auditing?

#### **All CSOs in receipt of co-financing for implementation of their project.**

DPA/OSC may wish to conduct a random financial audit of CSOs for projects it has co-financed. These will be funded through program 209.

### Budgets for financial audits

Because financial audits are co-financed by AFD, their cost must feature in the budget for the project included in the attachments to the CSO Initiative Note (NIONG).

During the project appraisal phase DPA/OSC will pay particular attention to the amount allocated for carrying out the financial audit. Care must be taken not to underestimate this amount in relation to the requirements and scope of the financial audit (a minimum of 1% of the overall budget for the project is recommended).

### Selecting an auditor

The contract for the financial audit must be awarded within the first 12 months of project execution. DPA/OSC will issue a notice of no objection to the terms of reference for the financial audit and the selection criteria. **The CSO shall be required to use the terms of reference template available on the AFD website.**

- DPA/OSC reserves the right to issue a notice of no objection to the choice of auditor, should it feel this is warranted.

The terms of reference template to be used for financial audits (which can be tailored to meet the requirements of CSOs) will soon be available to download from the AFD website.

The CSO must select an external, independent auditor or audit firm, a member of a national organization of chartered accounts or statutory auditors.

The auditor's role will be clearly outlined in the terms of reference for the financial audit.

As a service provided, financial audits are subject to the rules governing AFD tendering procedures as outlined in AFD's funding agreement.

**Should a CSO decide to launch one single call for tenders for audits on multiple ongoing projects funded by DPA/OSC, they must send DPA/OSC:**

- **A request for a notice of no objection to the terms of reference for the call for tenders**
- **Once an auditor has been selected, one request for a notice of no objection for each project, within the first 12 months of project execution, to the auditor's engagement letter, to which a checklist for audit items must be appended**

## THE TWO FINANCIAL AUDIT PERIODS DURING THE PROJECT

### Scoping meeting with the auditor

#### When and with whom?

This meeting should take place between the CSO and the auditor as soon as possible after the beginning of the project once the auditing contract has been awarded. The CSO must assemble the project managers and the chief financial/accounting/legal officers for the project. This is a one-off visit from the auditor to the CSO at the start of the project. The auditor will only return again at the end of the project for the financial audit.

#### What is its aim?

The primary objective of this meeting is to ensure that the CSO fully understands the scope of the audit and what it will involve. It should enable the CSO to strengthen the internal procedures needed for ensuring contractual obligations are met. It should also make the job of the auditor easier, keeping any ineligible expenditure items observed upon completion of the project to a minimum. This meeting also provides the auditor with an opportunity to make recommendations to the CSO at the start of the project.

Please note: audited expenditure items must not under any circumstances be sampled at this stage. The auditor may choose to outline the aim and the sampling procedures (% of expenditure items, breakdown by budget item, random selection, and so on), but sampling will only be conducted during the financial audit at the end of the project.

#### What preparations should be made?

To ensure that the meeting runs as smoothly and as constructively as possible, the CSO will share any documents the auditor requests of them in advance of the meeting (such as the CSO's articles of association, CSO accounts and activity reports, the AFD funding agreement and any supplementary clauses, the partnership agreement, the project document (NIONG) and the methodological guide).

### **What points should be addressed?**

Each auditor will be responsible for setting the agenda for the meeting. If a scoping meeting is to take place, DPA/OSC wants at least the following points to be addressed:

- The CSO's contractual obligations to AFD under the terms of the agreement (this includes scheduling, eligibility of expenditure items, tendering, activity reports and partnership agreements).
- The scope and the nature of the project co-financed by AFD.
- The nature of any partnerships within the project (outlining their scope, their purpose, financial reallocation or reallocation in kind, contractual arrangements for supervision, and the fiduciary circuit)
- Any information relating to the existence of a consortium, where applicable, and the contractual arrangements for implementation of the consortium
- The tendering arrangements the CSO intends to employ within the project (CSOs are encouraged to share an indicative tendering plan with the auditor, listing all of the contracts to be awarded or in the process of being awarded within the project and including all of the relevant key information)
- The funding mechanism for the project (including the types of co-financing arrangements, the level of co-financing and payment procedures)
- Financial and accounting traceability procedures for the project and the CSO's internal control procedures
- The procedures for applying contractual obligations regarding compliance with International Sanctions Lists (vetting)

### **What should this meeting achieve?**

It should give the auditor the opportunity to:

- Acquire sufficient knowledge of the project's organizational procedures, in addition to accounting and information-sharing processes
- Identify weakness and risk factors in relation to the nature of the project and the type of partnership
- Identify key, specific control points
- Identify the CSO's traceability procedures for financial and accounting information

It should give the CSO the opportunity to:

- Get to know its contractual obligations to AFD and their involvement in practical implementation of the project
- Identify any areas of potential risk in its management method which could prevent it from meeting its obligations and to determine how these can be addressed
- Identify best practice regarding the traceability of project information (examples include introducing analytical monitoring of the project, time sheets and pay slips) and tendering
- Understand what form the financial audit will take, what is expected and how they can work effectively with the auditor

Following this meeting, the auditor will draft an independent scoping report outlining their main recommendations for the financial audit. This report will be shared with the CSO.

At the mandatory halfway point meeting, the CSO may present the contents of the scoping report to DPA/OSC and any measures the CSO has taken aimed at meeting the recommendations made by the auditor.

## Execution of the financial audit and report

The auditor will carry out their assignment at the end of phase 1 and at the end of phase 2, and will prepare a report for each audit. For multi-phase projects, they must check to ensure that any recommendations made during the audit on the previous phase have been implemented by the CSO.

The CSO must send the interim financial audit report to DPA/OSC within three months of the end of phase 1, and send the audit report for phase 2 within six months of the project end date.

Should the audit identify ineligible expenditure items, any unsubstantiated funds should be paid back to AFD within six months of the audit report being validated by DPA/OSC.

### Financial audit checklist (forthcoming)

The auditor selected through the tendering process shall commit to carrying out all of the following checks. A copy of this list, completed and signed, must be included in the attachments to the financial audit reports. If certain points cannot be verified, this must be stated in the management letter, with reasons provided.

Information to be included in the report:

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Auditor (name/status/address)

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Certification/qualification

---

CSO or partner being audited

---

Audit dates

---

AFD agreement n°

---

Amount audited

---

Tranches

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**Please use the terms of reference template provided**

# WORKSHEET 9

## PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE WITHIN PROJECTS

### WHAT IS MEANT BY PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE?

Sexual exploitation,<sup>24</sup> abuse<sup>25</sup> and harassment<sup>26</sup> often occur as a result of power imbalances linked to social and gender inequality. In the humanitarian and development sector, the risk of abusive behavior is exacerbated by what are often significant power imbalances, the sometimes weak or defective nature of local legal frameworks, and the vulnerable situations people in fragile contexts find themselves in.

All forms of sexual abuse and sexual harassment are unacceptable.

All organizations, whether private or public, must be aware of the risk of abusive behavior, **both internally and as part of their activities**, and must act as swiftly as possible to deal with it.

AFD has adopted a **zero-tolerance** policy for these situations of abuse, which are not only criminal, but also cause serious and lasting harm to victims.

### AFD's expectations with regard to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

As a financial backer and employer, AFD is aware of its **responsibilities** when it comes to tackling sexual exploitation and abuse; protecting its employees, its partners and recipients of its activities; and promoting the highest possible standards of behavior.

In line with commitments made by France at the Safeguarding Summit in London in October 2018 and the subsequent working groups (bringing together the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, AFD and civil society representatives to develop measures for preventing and responding to cases of sexual violence), AFD has sought to **strengthen its efforts** in order to **prevent** abuse, sexual exploitation, improper treatment and harassment; to **respond** to any cases; and to strengthen **awareness-raising** mechanisms.

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<sup>24</sup> Sexual exploitation involves the abuse or attempted abuse of an individual's vulnerable state (this includes someone who depends on you for their survival, for food rations, for school textbooks, transport or other services) or an unequal balance of power or trust in order to gain sexual favors, including but not limited to offering money or other social, economic or political advantages. This includes human trafficking and prostitution. (Source: UNHCR)

<sup>25</sup> Sexual abuse: physical intrusion of a sexual nature committed by force, under coercive conditions or as a result of an unequal relationship, or the threat of such intrusion. Any sexual activity with a child is considered sexual abuse. (Source: Global Affairs Canada)

<sup>26</sup> Sexual harassment involves repeatedly subjecting an individual to comments or behavior with sexual or sexist connotations, undermining their dignity as a result of its degrading or humiliating nature, or creating an intimidating, hostile or hurtful environment. Sexual harassment also includes using any form of severe pressure, even when not repeated, with the perceived or real intention of getting an individual to perform acts of a sexual nature, whether on the individual responsible for the harassment or on a third party. (Source: French Criminal Code)



AFD is aware that partner CSOs involved in the “CSO Initiatives” mechanism need **support** when it comes to **designing, strengthening, deploying and establishing** their policies, procedures and practices for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). This is a complex and sensitive subject, and AFD is now keen to **provide enhanced support**, while recognizing the diverse and varied nature of its partners' circumstances, resources and capacities in this regard. This support is likely to change over time, but currently takes two forms:

### 1) 2021-22: a study

As part of the “CSO-Initiatives” mechanism, AFD conducted a study aimed at helping partner CSOs to develop and strengthen their practices and policies for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. The purpose of the study - which looked at French and some international CSOs - was to identify the **best tools and practices** for preventing and tackling sexual exploitation and abuse. The study also sought to **analyze** progression, experiences, obstacles and key factors for success, in addition to change levers and resources. The study's final aim was to promote dialog and the sharing of experiences, in addition to stimulating discussion with a view towards a **collective improvement of practices**.

The study report is available on request. The report also contains the presentation made at the post-study workshop held in February 2022, plus four best practice worksheets:

- Building the capacities of local partners regarding their protection policies
- Deploying complaints handling procedures
- Awareness-raising and training for staff on protection
- Transparency and communication

### 2) The eligibility of PSEA expenditure items within projects from the 2022 call for expressions of project intentions (AMI) onwards

Budgets for projects submitted to AFD for co-financing through the “CSO-Initiatives” mechanism may now include expenditure items linked to **introducing, strengthening, deploying, establishing or updating** policies, procedures and tools for tackling sexual exploitation and abuse. These must be justified and adapted to the needs and specificities of the CSO, its partners and the project.

Such expenditure items may be linked to:

- Training, information and awareness-raising for CSO staff and partners (both at head office level and out in the field), as well as recipients and recipient communities
- Joint workshops for discussing and analyzing risks linked to PSEA
- Translations
- External, technical, one-off support required by the CSO, irrespective of what stage they are at regarding policies and tools for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

This is not an exhaustive list. The budget for the project and the CSO Initiative Note (NIONG) must include these expenditure items: the budget will list them in accordance with their nature (or as an activity which does not fall into any category) in the relevant budget section; the NIONG will outline the approach sought by the CSO and/or its partners, the nature of these expenditure items, their objectives and their scope, plus the implementation context.

#### A few useful links for PSEA:

- The United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/protection/operations/405ac6614/secretary-generals-bulletin-special-measures-protection-sexual-exploitation.html>
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC):
  - Report drafted by the working group responsible for the prevention of exploitation and sexual violence in situations of humanitarian crisis

- [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy\\_files/iasc%20poa%20and%20report%20french.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/iasc%20poa%20and%20report%20french.pdf)
- International standards governing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment:  
[https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/210609%20RSH%20Summary%20Brief\\_Global%20SEAH%20Standards\\_Final\\_0.pdf](https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/210609%20RSH%20Summary%20Brief_Global%20SEAH%20Standards_Final_0.pdf)
  - Best Practice Guide, Inter-Agency Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms  
<https://psea.interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/Best%20Practice%20Guide%20on%20inter-agency%20CBCMs.pdf>
  - Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) website:  
<https://psea.interagencystandingcommittee.org/>
- Self-learning guide, published by Coordination Sud in 2021:  
<https://www.coordinationsud.org/document-ressource/guide-dautoformation-violences-sexistes-sexuelles/>

# WORKSHEET 10

## NEW MECHANISM FOR MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH SANCTIONS REGULATIONS FOR CSOs AND FOUNDATIONS

AFD must – like all legal entities under public law and all private entities incorporated or established in France and conducting business in France or abroad – comply with the provisions of Article L. 562-5 of the French Monetary and Financial Code (CMF), which bans “making funds or economic resources available, directly or indirectly, to or for the benefit of persons whose funds or economic resources are subject to a freezing order” (individual financial sanctions), adopted by the United Nations, the European Union and France, and requires compliance with these provisions in its model agreements. International financial sanctions also include sector-specific measures (embargoes, bans on transactions with certain entities in a given sector, export bans on dual-use goods, etc.). Failure to comply with these prohibitions may result in the entities and their representatives being held criminally and disciplinarily liable.

**AFD is therefore implementing a new mechanism for monitoring the risk of breaching financial sanctions in projects financing CSOs, as detailed below.**

### 1) Stakeholder screening

AFD expects CSOs to screen the Stakeholders financed under the approved grant (suppliers, staff, and implementing partners, including reallocation beneficiaries).

AFD will continue to support CSOs in this process, providing them with assistance in using the single list of asset freezes available free of charge on the DG Treasury website (publicly available at <https://gels-avoirs.dgtresor.gouv.fr/>), which collates the various lists of applicable sanctions.<sup>27</sup> CSOs may also install an automatic filtering tool by purchasing a solution from specialized software vendors. AFD will continue to help CSOs finance purchasing this type of filtering solution if they request it.

The beneficiaries of AFD funds are responsible for the extent and frequency of due diligence, and the methods used to comply with the ban on making funds available.

### 2) Introduction of a risk-based approach to screening final beneficiaries

Reminder – Only in cases where the funding granted by AFD includes monetary transfers (cash transfer, cash for work, per diem for taking part in a workshop or training course, scholarships, etc.) or the provision of goods with a exploitable market value (livestock, equipment, inputs, etc.) does the ban on making funds or economic resources available to a person under sanction apply and require AFD's counterparties to implement measures to comply with the ban.

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<sup>27</sup> DG Treasury also provides users with Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) so that CSOs' information systems can access the lists.

In other cases – including food support, medical kits, and access to medical or school services – these provisions do not apply.

**There are three exceptions to compliance with this ban:**

**a. Humanitarian exemption or dispensation obtained from the competent authorities**

- a) If the project qualifies for a humanitarian exemption,<sup>28</sup> where the country in which the funding is to be spent is covered by a Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) or a flash appeal issued by the UN (OCHA or UNHCR), and the project falls within the areas covered by this HRP or flash appeal; or
- b) If the CSO can take advantage of a waiver obtained by the national sanctions authority and can forward the relevant authorization to AFD Group.

**b. Exceptions for projects targeting certain population groups**

If projects target certain population groups but do not qualify for the humanitarian exemption linked to the purpose of the project funded. These groups are:

- Minors;
- People whose identity needs to be protected, because of persecution “on account of their political opinions, their religious affiliation, their race, their nationality, or their membership of a particular social group,” as defined by the Geneva Convention of July 28, 1951, or people “persecuted for the reason of their action in favor of freedom,” as defined in paragraph 4 of the Preamble to the French Constitution of 1946;
- People without official identity documents.

Specific constraints that make screening impossible (in the absence of identity documents) or inapplicable (due to age or the overriding need to protect the identity of individuals, such as people living with HIV or threatened due to their gender identity) are analyzed on a case-by-case basis for these groups of people, to determine whether to adjust the procedures or exempt all or some of the final beneficiaries from screening. CSOs seeking such exemption must specifically state their reasons for doing so during the appraisal process: the AFD Compliance Department will issue an opinion on each case, and its Board of Directors or its Specialized Committees (including the NGO Committee) will be automatically consulted for a ruling.

**3) Use of a risk-based approach except in the two above-mentioned cases – Information gathering procedures for all CSOs**

Unless beneficiaries qualify under one of the two cases above, AFD asks CSOs to screen all beneficiaries of cash transfers or economic resources with an exploitable value, or to ensure this by using a method of disbursing funds via a bank or an official payment service provider.

In exceptional cases, AFD may allow the CSO to use alternative screening methods. To assess this, AFD analyzes the robustness of the CSO's documented procedures based on responses to a “Compliance Questionnaire: Analysis of the CSO Counterparty System.” This is supplemented, for each project, by the “Compliance Questionnaire: Project-specific Analysis.” AFD Group always carries out an analysis of the robustness of the CSO's documented procedures. The aim is to assess, in accordance with the principle of proportionality, the quality, completeness, and degree of maturity of the system designed to manage

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<sup>28</sup> Exemption under applicable law due to the humanitarian purpose of the project, including the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2664 adopted on December 9, 2022.

the risk of non-compliance by CSO counterparties, particularly in relation to the risks of money laundering, terrorist financing, and banned behavior (including fraud, corruption, and misappropriation of aid).

This analysis is supplemented by the additional information requested in the "Compliance Questionnaire: Project-specific Analysis." This additional information is used to determine the quality and robustness of the CSO's methods used to transfer funds or make economically exploitable resources available to aid beneficiaries:

- A. **If, for this type of component, the CSO indicates that it screens** the final beneficiaries and stakeholders, no additional measures on this particular aspect are requested of the CSO.
- B. **If the answers to this questionnaire reveal that the CSO does not screen beneficiaries** and that the project involves cash transfers (except in cases where the CSO qualifies for humanitarian exemption or a waiver granted by the national sanctions authority) or the making available of economically exploitable resources:
  - The analysis of the CSO's documented procedures should provide an assessment of the robustness of the processes the CSO follows.
    - **If the CSO's documented procedures are assessed as robust**, and if the answers to the Compliance Questionnaire: Project-specific Analysis are deemed satisfactory, AFD may accept the alternative method of screening aid beneficiaries proposed and detailed by the CSO. In addition, the CSO must provide AFD with an annual declaration stating that the due diligence carried out and documented in the questionnaire is sufficient to ensure that none of the sanctioned individuals were recipients of the goods and funds made available under the grant.
    - **If the CSO's documented procedures are assessed as unsatisfactory**, AFD will support volunteer CSOs in improving their documented procedures, using a service provider that it will finance. In the meantime, CSOs must screen the aid beneficiaries (AFD may finance the purchase of screening software). Failing this, AFD will not be able to provide funding for the cash transfers or exploitable economic resources component. It is important to note that the CSO's documented procedures must be reassessed at the end of the support provided by AFD.

AFD's assessment of the quality of the funded NGO's risk management system will be valid for a fixed period (three years), at the end of which the assessment will be updated (and extended for a further three years), unless circumstances arise which lead AFD to believe that the way this system is implemented is not effective or would present an increased risk of breaching sanctions regulations.

#### **B. Tighter ex-post controls as part of project audits**

Compliance with the contractual commitment and the fact that no funds have been made available to persons listed within the project will be checked during the project audit (interim and final), by the auditor, using all appropriate means (which may include screening if necessary), based on a sample of expenditure financed by the AFD-awarded grant.

This control will be tailored to the type of project in question. In cases where the CSO qualifies for an exemption or dispensation, or in the exceptional cases referred to above, the audit may be limited to checking that the project complies with the relevant exemption framework, without requiring any additional controls.

A new version of the standard terms of reference for AFD audits (interim and final) will be added to the Methodology Guide as soon as possible.

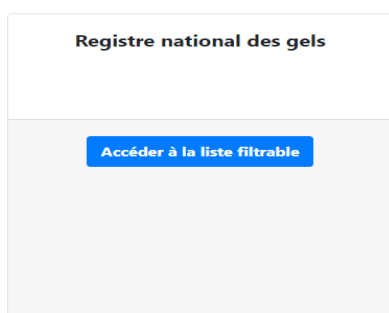
## APPENDIX: VETTING USING SANCTIONS LISTS VIA THE FRENCH TREASURY TOOL (FOR CSOS)

If the CSO does not possess vetting software, vetting may be conducted manually using the tool made available for free by the French Treasury:

This can be found by going to the following link:

<https://gels-avoirs.dgtresor.gouv.fr/>

Step 1: Go to the French national asset freeze list and select "Access filterable list"



Step 2: Enter the partner's name in the "Search" box

### Liste des gels

Exporter vers pdf

Afficher 20 lignes par page

Chercher:

Example: Your partner's name is "World partner" and their representative is Edouard Denis

Chercher:

Id	Régime	Type de nature	Nom	Prénom	Alias	Date de naissance

Précédent Suivant

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Chercher:

Id	Régime	Type de nature	Nom	Prénom	Alias	Date de naissance

Précédent Suivant

- If no results appear, then the natural person or legal entity in question has not been added to any sanctions lists applicable to AFD and the CSO may form a relationship with them.

For more information, please refer to module 3 of the French Treasury's code of conduct for associations relating to "Asset freeze lists".<sup>29</sup>

- **For proof that this check has been conducted, you must print out a screenshot showing the name of the natural person/legal entity and the result. This must then be retained for the entire duration of the project.** Auditors may ask you to present these documents.
- **Homonyms:** If the name of the natural person or legal entity does appear on this list then the CSO should seek to confirm that it is not a homonym. This can be done using other information such as their date of birth or nationality. Any searches made or information used to rule out possible homonyms should also be retained in accordance with the GDPR regulation.
- **How to rule out homonyms** National identity card or other identity document showing the individual's date of birth and place of birth.<sup>30</sup> If it is not possible to resolve the issue, it must be referred to the French Treasury, and AFD must also be informed, in accordance with the information obligations outlined in the funding agreement<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/Institutionnel/Niveau3/Pages/13d1cb87-cf27-49ca-ad57-dc2855a2b26e/files/af9b595d-2404-4d95-9e56-2b61e2ed55be>

<sup>30</sup> Please refer to the section of the GDPR covering the storing of personal data.

<sup>31</sup> All information is accessible online on the French Treasury website, in the handbook, and in the guide for exemption requests, published by the French Treasury.