SPP Procedures Manual for Programme Officers

Updated 30/04/2024 /JG

Contents

Introduction to manual

The manual is an internal tool for ForumCiv's Programme Officers on the procedures the Swedish Partnership Programme (SPP) requires. The manual aims to be as useful and accessible as possible. This means balancing the amount of details included when outlining each procedure. Use of the manual therefore assumes familiarity with the agreements and their appendices that govern the SPP grant as well as with Civis.

This manual is a living document. As the content is continuously updated you should always check the original version of the manual to ensure that you have the latest updated procedures. That said, please do not download or copy the manual, neither fully nor partly as it is subject to change. As soon as the manual is updated, Programme Officers will receive detailed information of what has been updated and when.

The manual refers to other steering documents. Some of these are specific to the programme and can be found on the website or in the folder Steering and reference documents for Programme Officers. Some steering documents apply for the whole organisation and/or all ForumCiv's programmes, such documents can be found on the ForumCiv Intranet under Manuals and Resources.

The Deputy Head of the SPP Unit is responsible for this manual and its content. If you have any questions or if you find that adjustments are needed, please reach out to this person directly.

It is highly recommended that you also read SPP's guides for partners that has the purpose to outline and explain SPP. One is the Programme Guide which presents SPP's principles and approaches to civil society cooperation in development and organising for change. The other one is the Procedures Manual for Partners which describes the details and routines that organisations must know to apply, implement and report an initiative within SPP. It functions much like this manual and is too a living document.

Civis

Civis is the name of ForumCiv's grant management system and the place where we and our partners manage applications, initiatives and reports and submit and store all relevant documents. Civis is also where we and partners manage the organisations, organisation documents, assessments and contact persons. Partners must create an account to use Civis.

We and our partners are all users in the same system but with different permissions. The partners can do a lot of the same things that we can but do not have access to all of the information and function that we have. As such, there is no separate portal or system only for the partners.

If partners are having technical issues with Civis they should contact portalsupport@forumciv.org.

All information about the initiatives and correspondence regarding the initiative should be kept in Civis as it also our official archive. Information on what documents should be archived in Civis and how can be found in the Global Guidelines for Archiving.

Resources and steering documents

The table below outlines what resources and steering documents should be considered at different steps of the SPP's grants management. Everything can be found in the Steering and resource documents for Programme Officers unless specifically linked.

Steering documents for partners are found on the website.

Process	Internal resources	Partner resources
Membership, eligibility and pre-registrations	Checklist membership, eligibility and pre-registration assessment	Membership and eligibility application form Instruction in Procedures manual
Assessing applications	Assessment support Decision-memo Medium Partnership Funding Decision-memo Partnership Pilot Funding Checklist Organizational document review Support questions in assessment	Application template PPF Application template MPF Template – Budget calculation and recommended amount calculation Template – Operational plan for MPF and PPF SPP Problem analysis framework Guidelines for exchange range management Programme Guide Instruction in Procedures manual
Signing agreements	Agreement documents Agreement letter	Agreement documents Q&A SPP Agreement Instructions in Procedures manual
Requisitions	Routine in Procedures manual (under Ongoing initiatives-section) Checklist SPP requisitions	Requisition form Simplified financial report Plusgiro/Bankgiro form Composition of the board form

		Instructions in Procedures manual
Budget update requests	Assessment support in Procedures manual (under Ongoing initiatives-section) Template for calculating budgets	Budget update request Guideline for exchange range management Instructions in Procedures manual
Carry-over requests	Assessment support in Procedures manual (under Ongoing initiatives-section)	Carry-over request Instructions in Procedures manual
Agreement amendment requests	Routine in Procedures manual (under Ongoing initiatives-section) Decision-memo Agreement amendment and Significant change	Alternative payment method request Instruction in Procedures manual
Significant change requests	Routine in Procedures manual (under Ongoing initiatives-section) If applicable, Decision-memo Agreement amendment and Significant change	Instruction in Procedures manual
Deviation cases	Guidelines for management of deviations and suspected corruption ForumCiv Deviation reporting template	ForumCiv Deviation reporting template Whistleblowing
Confidential management of Initiatives	Routine in Procedures manual (under Ongoing initiatives-section) **TBD**	Confidential management request **TBD** Instructions in Procedures manual **TBD**
Follow-up trips	Checklist for planning, travelling and reporting Template - Budget Follow-up trip Template - Agenda Follow-up trip	
FACT	FACT Manual	Partner FACT Manual
Assessing reports	Assessment Support Monitoring and Reporting Monitoring memo Decision-memo final report Checklist SPP reports Checklist Organizational document review	Annual monitoring template Final report template Annex to report - Information on Partners in subsequent step Form for transfer of ownership of assets Instruction in Procedures manual
Archiving	Civis manual Archiving checklist **TBD**	
Civis	SPP Civis manual	Civis instructions on website

Membership and eligibility assessments

SPP has the responsibility and mandate to do the membership and eligibility assessments of Swedish organisations. “Eligibility” refers to being eligible to apply for funds from ForumCiv, which for Swedish organisations is currently only available through SPP.

The Deputy head is responsible for coordinating the membership and eligibility assessments. This includes:

- Maintaining communication with organizations before applications are distributed.
- Distributing applications for assessment in the SPP unit.
- Deciding on a workplan for assessments.
- Coordinating with the SG office for board decisions on membership (including when to stop an organization’s membership).
- Coordinating with the Head of the SPP unit for decisions on eligibility (including when an organization becomes ineligible and must be re-assessed).
- Ensuring that organizations receive decisions according to the workplan.
- Coordinating with Communication for updating the member list on the website.

Organizations can apply for membership and/or eligibility at any time during the year. SPP will only assess such applications during February and June each year to align it with SPP’s pre-registration windows. Because of this, partners should **send in the required documents before February 1st or June 1s** if they plan to apply to a specific window.

Applications for membership and/or eligibility are submitted to membership_and_eligibility@forumciv.org by using a specific form that is available on ForumCiv’s website. This process will be moved to Civis when possible.

This email address is also the main channel of communication for membership and eligibility applications meaning that all questions should be directed there. Questions about membership in general (that are not related to the assessment) should instead be directed to the member coordinator at member@forumciv.org.

Membership requirements

The organisation:

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

Eligibility requirements

The organisation:

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

Assessing applications for membership and eligibility

The main resource during the assessment is the "Checklist membership, eligibility and pre-registration assessment". Depending on whether the organization has applied for membership or eligibility or both, the assessment will include different areas:

- Identity and values are always assessed.
- Governance is assessed for membership applications.
- Finance and administration are assessed for eligibility applications.

Please note that weaknesses in the different assessment areas are usually interconnected, i.e., the overall picture of the capacity of the organisation is often apparent. A weakness in just one of the areas can usually be disregarded.

The assessment process

1. An organization sends in an application for membership/eligibility via a task Civis. If the organization is new to ForumCiv the task will be created automatically. In other cases, it has to be created and assigned manually.
2. The Deputy head creates a list of applications received after the closing of the pre-registration windows every year (on 2/2 and 2/6) and distribute them in the SPP unit.
3. The responsible person assess the application by using the "Checklist membership, eligibility and pre-registration assessment".
    a) Responsible person ask for completions and clarifications by setting clear deadlines. If deadlines are not met, the responsible person will continue with the assessment and take this into account.
4. The responsible person finalize the checklist and motivate the decision. If relevant, the decision must clearly state when an organization can apply again, and what conditions must be fulfilled by then. If the organization should not apply again, clearly state why. It is better for the organization to know why instead of continue trying.
    - The decision is peer-reviewed by another team member.
5. The head of SPP takes a final decision on eligibility assessment.
6. ForumCiv's board takes decisions on membership assessments.
    a) The Deputy head prepares a list for the board that contain all the organizations that have been assessed for membership. The list should include rejections as well as the board also takes decisions on denying membership.
    b) The Deputy head sends the list to the SG office 2 weeks before the next board meeting.
    c) The Deputy head communicated the decisions to the responsible person after the meeting.
7. The responsible person updates the membership and eligibility status of the organization in Civis.
8. The responsible person notifies the organizations of the decision via task in Civis:
    a) <u>If the decision was to deny membership and/or eligibility</u>: offer a meeting to discuss the decision. If the organization was denied eligibility but approved of membership, ask the organization to, within two weeks, confirm whether they still want to go ahead and become members. Update the member status in case they do not want to go ahead.
    b) <u>If the decision was to approved of membership</u>: The membership fee must be paid before an organization can participate and vote at the ForumCiv annual assembly and member meetings. There is no deadline for payment connected to implementation of an initiative in SPP. Invoices are sent after the board's decision. Annual invoices for all organizations are sent out in the beginning of the year or end of the year. Organization only have to pay half the membership fee if they were approved as members after July 1st. Organizations who do not pay or intend to pay the membership fee will be excluded.
9. The Deputy head double-checks the membership and eligibility status of the organizations in Civis.
10. The Deputy head sends a list of new member to Communication who updates the website on new members.

Re-assessing eligibility

There are two scenarios when an organization must go through a new eligibility assessment:

The eligibility period is over

- This happens when the organization's last eligibility assessment was more than 3 years ago and/or the organization's last project's end date was more than 3 years ago.
- In these cases, the organization follow the regular procedure and submits an application during the pre-registration window.

The eligibility status is questioned or revoked

- This happens when ForumCiv have doubts or identified weaknesses related to the organization's capacity, governance, relation to partners, identity or values.
- In these cases, requests for re-assessments are sent to the Deputy head who save it under the organization in the Civis. The request should include a description of the weaknesses/doubts/questions and supporting material if relevant. Revoking the eligibility status of the organization must first be approved by the head of SPP.
- The Deputy head then assigns a responsible person from the SPP unit sets up the assessment process according to routine.
- The responsible person informs the organization that their eligibility is being re-assessed and why, request relevant information and starts the assessment.
- The assessment is sent to the Programme manager for decision.
- If the assessment finds that the membership may be questioned, the Deputy head is contacted as coordination with the SG Office and the board may be required. If the assessment concludes that the organization does not fulfil the membership criteria, the organization will always be offered to leave ForumCiv rather than ForumCiv deciding to revoke it. Otherwise, ForumCiv's Annual Meeting is the only one who can decide on excluding members.

SPPs funding modalities

SPP has the following funding modalities:

- Partnership Pilot Funding (PPF).
- Medium Partnership Funding (MPF).
- Large Partnership Funding (LPF).

SPP does not have a funding ladder within the programme where organisations automatically can apply for higher funding after a completed initiative. Instead, the amount recommended or granted is closely connected to the capacity of the Swedish organisation and previously implemented initiatives. This implies that the recommended or granted amount can remain the same across several implemented initiatives.

Partnership Pilot Funding

The main purposes of the Partnership Pilot Funding are to strengthen the strategic work of the local organisation, to set strategic goals for the partnership, and to plan for a joint development initiative.

Conditions for Partnership Pilot Funding:

- Max 300,000 SEK per Swedish organisation.

- Implementation period is maximum 18 months and depend on application window and alignment with following window.
- The applying organisations must have an existing partnership.
- The Swedish organisation's budget can exceed the 25%-limit (see "Application guidelines").
- Audit as per ForumCiv's instructions is required.

Medium Partnership Funding

Medium Partnership Funding is recommended for organisations that have conducted a partnership pilot, a previous SPP pre-study or initiative, or first-time applicants that have carried out development initiatives with local organisations.

Conditions for Medium Partnership Funding:

- Max 3 MSEK/year per Swedish organisation, including any parallel PPF.
- Max 3 years implementation period.
- A Swedish organisation can only have one ongoing MPF at a time.
- Several local organisations can be included in one MPF.
    - Note that Swedish organisations that have not previously worked with multiple local organisations but want to include several partnerships will be assessed accordingly by ForumCiv and should be ready to demonstrate capacity in that regard.
    - New partnerships may be included in an ongoing MPF after dialogue and approval from ForumCiv. Note that this does not change the granted amount for the MPF.
- ForumCiv will assess the local organisation(s) in the application.
- The flexibility should be extended to the local organisation as much as possible. The premise should be that the funding is as flexible as possible, based on the nature of the local organisation's work and its organisational capacity. ForumCiv assess and determines the maximum level of flexibility.
- The amount to apply for should be based on your self-assessment of your organisation's capacities and the following criteria:
    - Swedish organisations that have completed an initiative up to 500,000 SEK total can apply for maximum 500,000 SEK/year.
    - Swedish organisations that have been granted more than 500,000 SEK total by ForumCiv should apply for the same annual amount as their current or latest granted initiative.
    - Please note that the above recommended amounts are based on SPP's assessment of the organizations' capacity, which includes the organization's financial stability. Applications for increased amounts need to be strongly motivated and should include 1) documented decision and compliance record of managing funding from other donors with comparable agreements in terms of requirements and conditions (annual audits of the granted funding must have been a requirement), and/or 2) previous experience of managing ForumCiv funding with comparable agreement(s). Applications for increased amounts could be adjusted or rejected if SPP assesses that the capacity of your organisation does not correspond to the applied amount.
- Swedish organisations that have not applied to SPP previously are recommended to look through the SPP Programme Guide and the contents of this manual before applying. For questions please contact sokabidrag@forumciv.org.
- In the agreement, flexibility is determined by the level of detail in the budget and operational plan.
- Audit as per ForumCiv's instructions is required.

Large Partnership Funding

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

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

Two important differences between MPF and LPF should be noted:

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

Conditions for Large Partnership Funding:

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

Applications

All organisations are required to submit applications via Civis. No hard copies should be submitted to ForumCiv.

Application windows

SPP has two application windows, each with its specific timeline:

- October window – for PPFs and MPFs with start at the beginning of a financial year.
- April window – for PPFs and MPFs with start before the Swedish summer and final report date aligning with October window the following year.

As soon as the exact dates of upcoming application windows and deadlines are decided, the information is updated on the SPP page on ForumCiv's website.

Pre-registration windows

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

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

The purpose of the pre-registration is to allow for an updated assessment of the Swedish organisation's size and capacity and an overview of the local partner organisation(s), as well as to facilitate the planning of the application window. The assessment is done by using the "Checklist membership, eligibility and pre-registration assessment" that includes criteria that connects to SPP's prioritisation principles:

- Rights-based perspective in international partnerships/cooperation
- A pluralistic and diverse international civil society
- Rights-based perspective in Sweden
- Added outreach and engagement in Sweden
- Added value of the Swedish organisation

Organisations who are approved are informed that they can apply in the application window and, if relevant, given a recommended amount. The organisations apply by simply completing the submitted pre-registered application to a real one. Rejected organisations receive ForumCiv's assessment and are invited to discuss the decision.

Organisations must complete this step to be able to apply for a forthcoming window.

Language of applications

Applications must be submitted in English. Organisations that want to submit applications in other languages must send a request to sokabidrag@forumciv.org well ahead of an application window.

The Programme Officer in charge of the sokabidrag-mail assess the request. The organisation is informed of the decision. If approved, the decision is saved on the organisation in Civis.

Confidential applications

Important

NOTE #1: **No information may be shared** with individuals outside of ForumCiv or staff who are not included in the group that has access to the confidential initiative folder on G:/. This includes sharing information verbally.

NOTE #2: **All communication** during the implementation of the initiative **must be handled** using only the means approved for confidential information. For a list of these, see the latest version of Annex B of the Information Management Security SOP, which is updated regularly.

If an applying organisation believes their initiative needs to be treated as confidential, they should contact the sokabidrag@forumciv.org at a **minimum five weeks** before the deadline to submit application. The following questions are then shared with the organisation to respond to:

- What makes it necessary to treat the organisation as confidential?

- How did you establish this? (Did you do a risk-assessment?)
- What are you and the local organisation doing to keep information about the initiative confidential?

The Deputy head of SPP, with the support of the Security Coordinator and relevant Programme Officer if needed, then have a discussion with the organisation based on their answers, as well as share information on the differences in procedures between regular and confidential initiatives (see below) and how the information is handled by ForumCiv. **At this point, the organisation may decide that the initiative does not need to be classified as confidential. If so, the application can be submitted as usual.**

Procedure	**Regular**	**Confidential** *Please note that ForumCiv is not able to provide accounts to the services mentioned below.*
Verbal communication	Open	Pre-cautionary measures so that sensitive information cannot be overheard or recorded. Consider the sensitivity of call logs.
Digital meetings	Open	Teams, Zoom
Written communication	Open	Signal, SecureMail
Information management	Open in ForumCiv's grant management system.	Name of the initiative, country of implementation, total budget amount, and name of Swedish organisation are open in ForumCiv's grant management system. Securely in designated folder on ForumCiv's cloud, Signal, SecureMail
Internal information sharing	Open within ForumCiv.	Limited to key persons in ForumCiv. Shared securely in ForumCiv's system.
External information sharing	Approved initiatives are shared on Sida's CSO database	None.

If there are specific aspects that the organisation considers confidential, **the application can be managed according to the regular procedure as long as sensitive information is never shared with ForumCiv.** This requires that ForumCiv will be able to assess and manage the overall initiative without the sensitive information**.**

If it is assessed as necessary after the discussion, the organisation provides a thorough risk assessment (see "Risk assessment" below), and any other information or clarification needed. The risk assessment is reviewed by the Deputy Head of the SPP Unit and the Security Coordinator. If the risk assessment is forwarded to ForumCiv through open communication (and not through Signal or

SecureMail), the document must not include any information that identifies the applying organisation, its local partner organisation(s), or individuals involved with the initiative.

If it's **determined that it <u>should not be</u> classified as confidential,** it will be handled like all other SPP initiatives.

If it's **determined that it <u>should be</u> classified as confidential**, it will be handled as follows:

1. The application will be submitted via Signal or SecureMail directly to the relevant Programme Officer. (If the Swedish organisation and local organisation don't have Signal or SecureMail they must get that, not just to submit the application to ForumCiv but for all their email interactions about the confidential initiative.)
2. The Programme Officer saves all documents for the application in an assigned G:/folder. The folder in G is set up when the Deputy Head of the SPP Unit makes a request to the IT Coordinator. ***Downloaded documents automatically saved on the receiving laptop must be deleted immediately after being saved on the G:/ folder.*** (The assigned Programme Officer has access to the folder(s) for his/her initiatives, while the Head of SPPU, Deputy Head of the SPP Unit, Financial Controller SPPU, Financial Project Controllers SPPU and Deputy Secretary General have access to all the Confidential Applications. At the Regional Offices, the Regional Manager also has access to the initiatives that are handled by his/her Programme Officers.)
3. The application is reviewed following the standard procedures, but all email communication is done via Signal or SecureMail and all verbal communication via currently approved means for Confidential information. And all documents are created, downloaded to, and saved in the assigned G:/folder. (This includes documents converted from Civis to Word, including decision memos.)
4. The only information regarding the initiative saved in Civis should be the name of the initiative, country of implementation, total budget amount, and name of Swedish organisation. The process steps in Civis are also updated following standard procedures.
5. The application is discussed with the dialogue partner via Teams. If the application and/or other documents relating to the initiative need to be shared with the dialogue partner this should be done by giving the dialogue partner access to those specific documents through OneDrive and for a limited time only. (The Programme Officer must first move the select documents to a folder in his/her OneDrive.)
6. The Grant Committee for Confidential initiatives always consists of: Head of SPPU, Financial Controller, Financial Project Controllers SPPU, Deputy Secretary General, relevant Regional Manager (if necessary), and one additional person selected by the Head of SPPU. This "additional person" gets temporary access to the folder of the Confidential initiative that is being discussed.
7. As soon as the Grant Committee makes a decision on a confidential initiative, the <u>Application assessment-task</u> is Completed with a comment by the Head of the Grants Committee regarding the decision to approve or reject. If applicable, the total budget amount is also revised.
8. The agreement is signed by ForumCiv and the Swedish organisation in two copies. The signed agreement is scanned and saved in the relevant G:/folder. **The email with the scanned version needs to be deleted as soon as it is saved under G.**

9. If the initiative is rejected, dismissed, or withdrawn, the application is filed in a confidential archiving folder on G:/. Only the Head of SPPU, the Head of IQA, and the Deputy Secretary General have access to this folder. In addition, the regular ForumCiv archiving guidelines must be followed.

Risk assessment for confidential applications

A thorough risk assessment must be done to determine the appropriate classification of information and what actions and procedures are required to protect it.

When identifying and assessing risk start by asking yourselves if there are actors or phenomena that want to, or can, harm you. So, when assessing appropriate information classification ask yourselves the following:

- Who could be interested in harming us/perceives us as a threat to their interest?
- What information could these actors be interested in?
- What other reasons do we have to protect information?

Information should be classified based on the potential consequences of the information being disclosed, altered, or destroyed without authorisation. The larger potential consequences, the higher protection classification. Assessing consequence essentially means ranking threats based on their severity and probability. The severity level of potential impact is listed and ranked from *insignificant* to *critical* and the probability of an event is categorised from *unlikely* to *highly likely*.

The results of the assessment show the extent to which you may suffer if information is Compromised. Based on this assessment, you can determine what classification is needed for what information and what actions and procedures are appropriate to protect the information.

What is the risk?	**Severity[1]**	**Probability[2]**	**What specific information may have to be protected?**	**What actions and procedures are required to mitigate the risk?**	**Who needs to carry out the actions?**	**Deadline for actions to be completed**	**Follow up[3]**

1. Insignificant – the consequences can be handled within the scope of the ongoing operations;
   Minor – the consequences require actions at Cooperation Partner's or ForumCiv side;

   Major – the consequences require actions at Cooperation Partner's and ForumCiv's site;

   Critical – the consequences require actions and control by ForumCiv.
2. Unlikely – the risk will occur is basically non-existent (o – 1%);
   Moderately likely – the risk will occur is very limited (1 – 20 %);

Likely – it is likely that the risk will occur (20 – 50 %);

Highly likely – it is highly likely that the risk will occur (50 – 100 %).

3. If actions necessary to review (in case of major and critical severity of risk).

Managing application windows

The Programme Development Officer is responsible for the management of application windows. This includes:

- Opening the pre-registration window and the application window.
- Creating a workplan for the application window process.
- Distributing applications and establishing a list of applications to be assessed (Delegated to the Deputy Head of SPP).
- Setting up group discussion meetings.
- Setting up Grants Committee meetings.
- Concluding and evaluating the process.

A folder is set up on the SPP intranet for each application window which includes the workplan, the list of applications and the evaluation documents.

Opening the pre-registration window and the application window

A pre-registration window is opened a few months ahead of the actual application window so that organisations who intend to apply can submit their latest organisation documents for review. The purpose of the pre-registration is to facilitate the planning of the application window and, if required, allow for an updated assessment of the Swedish organisation's size and capacity based on SPP's prioritisation principles.

Organizations register by creating a "mock application" in Civis in which they only submit their organisation documents, and any other requested information. For the real application window, the same Initiative page is updated and completed with a real application. Organisations who are approved are then informed that they are able to apply in the application window, where they simply update and complete their pre-registration application to a real one. Rejected organisations receive ForumCiv's assessment and are invited to discuss the decision.

Once the pre-registration window is over, organisations who are approved to apply must be able to update and complete their applications during the application window. In practice, no new window is opened, organizations are instead required to submit their applications between specific dates. This is done by a Civis administrator who activates the options "October window" or "April window" to be able to select for partners under the Information box on the initiative.

Creating the workplan

The workplan is a very important document and will be used and referenced many times throughout the application window process. It should outline all the steps of application window with deadlines and actions, from receiving applications to communicating the decisions. Deadlines should be booked in everyone's calendars.

The workplan should also include any key principles or points that apply to the specific window (e.g. prioritizations, available amounts, additional information that may be required from organizations) as well as clarifications based on learnings and evaluations from previous windows. The workplan and its content must be clearly communicated, understood by everyone and easily accessible.

Distributing applications and establishing a list of applications to be assessed (Delegated to the Deputy Head of the SPP Unit)

Distributing applications is done by gathering a list of received applications and then assigning responsible Programme Officers and dialogue partners. The list is then shared with the Programme Officers within 2 days after the window is closed. The Programme Officers are given a deadline (2-3 days) for input on potential changes before the final distribution is determined.

The Programme officer in responsible for the initiative is also responsible for the Swedish organization. In Civis, the Programme officer must be added as "Responsible person" for the Initiatives and Swedish organizations in order to have the right permissions, for the workflow to work and to be able to know who is responsible for what.

How to create a list of submitted applications:

- In Civis, go to the Analyse tab or the Initiative tab
- Under the Analyse tab, select the relevant filters and save your query for future use.
- Under the Initiative tab, select the SPP programme and choose status "New".
- Under either of the tabs, choose "Export to excel" to generate a list.

The list of applications is a key document throughout the application window process, not only to have an overview of the applications and the distribution but also as a tool for monitoring. The latter includes controlling each application at different steps throughout the application window process and to be able to make continuous prognosis and priorities.

The list must therefore include information for each report in the following areas:

- Initiative number
- Initiative type
- Country
- Organisation
- ForumCiv member
- Responsible Programme Officer
- Dialogue partner
- Programme Officer decision (approval, rejection, dismissal)
- Ready for Grant Committee
- Grant Committee decision
- Agreement sent/signed
- Comment

Setting up group discussion meetings

The group discussion meetings are for Programme Officers to raise and discuss questions and problems together. These meetings are very important not only for solving problems, but also for our internal learning in the programme and for establishing best practices and common approaches to how we deal with different issues.

Setting up Grants Committee meetings

Grants Committee involves several staff members from different units and will most likely require several meetings. Because of this, the Grants Committee meetings should be set up and booked as soon as the workplan is ready so that the overall application window process is allowed to progress effectively, and for the applying organisations to receive their decision in due time.

It is important to remember to assign a notetaker for the meetings. This should preferably be the same person in all meetings as applications and decisions will be followed-up across meetings. The notetaker is also essential for gathering key learnings and follow-up points for the Programme Development Officer.

Concluding and evaluating the process

The last step of the application window process is evaluation. This can be done in different ways (surveys, end discussion, etc.) and with different focus areas. It is important to decide early on what areas should be followed-up across several windows and to do the evaluation early after the Programme Officers are done with assessments.

The evaluation should both the involved Programme Officers and the Grants Committee. The Programme Development Officer is responsible for coordinating and delegating further action on any key learnings and follow-up points from the process.

Remember to save the evaluation documents in the application window folder of the SPP intranet.

Assessing applications

Consult SPP's Assessment Support document for detailed guidance on assessing applications.

Assessing organisations

Assessing the Swedish organisation is a significant component of assessing an application. It is necessary to get a "feel" for the organisation in terms of whether it is aligned with ForumCiv's values, if it has the capacity to implement the initiative, if it is responsive to their local partner, and whether it has the capacity to comply with our requirements. This type of familiarisation goes beyond the organisation's documents per se and looks more into the organisation's methodology, communication with us, etc. **Consult SPP's Assessment Support document for detailed guidance on assessing organisations.**

Checking organisations against the EU sanction list

ForumCiv review all applying Swedish organisations against the EU saction list before entering agreement. This check is done when assessing membership and eligibility as well as for each organisation during the pre-registration window. Before the agreement is signed, the authorised signatories are also checked against the list.

According to agreement, the Swedish organisations are obliged to perform a similar review of all partners in subsequent step, including:

- Before deciding on a purchase that needs procurement, check that the supplier is not on the EU sanction list (all agreements will in 2024 be updated with a new procurement policy).
- If any money or goods are given to an organisation or an individual, make sure the organisation/individual is not on the EU sanction list.

Organisation documents

Swedish organisations are required to submit their organisation's documents at the time of application and reporting. Continuously reviewing the organisation documents ensure that we have an updated view of the organisation, their internal governance, democratic structure, financial stability, and organisational capacity. This review is the responsibility of the Programme Officer. Contact the Deputy Head of the SPP Unit for support on documents in Swedish.

Check that the following documents exist in Civis:

- Statutes with date of approval (Memorandum of association for foundations).
- Certificate of registration from the Swedish Tax Agency ("Länsstyrelsen" for foundations).
- Latest approved annual meeting minutes, signed according to general practice (commonly signed by two persons and adjusted by two persons).
- Extracts from minutes that show the organisation's elected authorised signatories, signed according to general practice (commonly signed by two persons and adjusted by two persons).
- Latest approved activity report, signed by the departing board.
- Latest approved annual report including income statement and balance report, signed by the departing board.
- Latest auditors' report, signed and dated by the auditor

Organisation document review checklist

SPP has a checklist for reviewing the organisation documents. It has the purpose of ensuring that we always have an updated view of the organisation and for coordinating the assessment between Programme Officers. The "Organisation document review checklist" is saved under the organisation page in Civis for each review of the latest organisation documents. This way, Programme Officers can easily see if the latest organisations documents require review or if this is already done by another Programme Officer, in which case the checklist should be looked through. The checklist also contains a section where important updates not necessarily relating to the organisation documents can be included.

In cases where an organisation submits several applications that are assessed by different Programme Officers, coordinate amongst yourselves who will look through the organisation document.

Key areas to look for other valuable information:

- Previous assessments of the organisation done by ForumCiv.
- Decision memos for applications and final reports within the SPP programme and other ForumCiv programmes (Infocom, UHR).
- Completed Tasks in Civis, both on the organisation's page and connected initiatives.

Keeping track of Organisation documents

Organisation documents should always be stored under the organisation's page in Civis under the folder Organizational documents and be named according to the following principle "Title_Date_Organization".

As most organisation documents are updated annually, we need to keep track of the latest and applicable versions. This is done by keeping the latest documents in the folder Organizational documents, and the older ones in the subfolder Older. This also allows the organisations to keep track of which latest documents we have from them.

By reason or mistake organisation documents sometimes end under the initiative page and requires moving. There is a Move-function in Civis which allows you to move documents from an Initiative to an Organization and vice versa.

Lastly, organisations should always upload their latest organisation documents on their organisation page. Documents uploaded by organisations will most likely require re-naming according to the principle.

Dialogue partner

Instead of having traditional peer-reviewing of memos, the application procedure focus on dialogue and support between Programme Officers <u>during</u> the assessment process. Each application is therefore assigned a dialogue partner for the responsible Programme Officer to discuss with and use as a sounding board.

Categorizing the applications

After an initial screening, the applications are divided into three categories by the Programme Officer:

- Likely to be dismissed.
- Likely to be approved or rejected.
- Likely to have challenges in their assessments.

The Programme Officer send the categorisation to the Programme Development Officer and proceeds with the likely to be dismissed and rejected applications. Challenging applications are discussed when needed.

Note that the Programme Development Officer have the responsibility and mandate to coordinate the application window process while the Programme Officer has responsibility and mandate to recommend decision on assigned applications.

Coordination between final reports and applications

Ideally, we want to be able to receive a final report and have a look at it before we approve a new application from organisations. However, due to delays and impacts because of funding gaps this is not always the case. When this happens check the following:

- If the final report has not been submitted: assess the application for <u>the same level</u> of funding they are currently eligible for. Be sure to look through other reporting the organisation may have submitted, including from other programmes (e.g. Infocom). (The organisation must be cleared by the Financial Controller.)

- If the final report has been submitted but not assessed yet: Read through the report to see if there are any red flags or serious issues. The final report does not need to be completed to assess the application, but it is necessary to have a read-through of the final report, the outcome, and the audit report to check the logic of the initiative and that here are no major concerns or inconsistencies. The final report does not have to be formally approved by ForumCiv. It is enough if it has been assessed as ok by a Programme Officer.
- If the new application includes a new local organisation, it is worth to look extra closely at the local ownership component, the partnership, and the long-term goal to make sure they are in line with FS values.

Asking for completions

If the application is incomplete or further information is needed, you need to create a Complete your application-task**.** Aim to include all the completions required in bullet points. Remember to include a strict deadline (this depends on the completion, but standard is 7 days).

Once the Swedish organizations has Completed the task, the completions should be available in Civis and allow you to continue your assessment.

If further completions are required, create a new Complete your application-task and repeat the process.

Dismissals

An initiative is dismissed when formal program criteria are not met. Dismissals require a brief motivation and a decision by the Programme Manager. The Programme Officer communicates the decision to the Swedish organisation and offer a meeting or phone call to discuss the decision.

See the Civis manual for details.

Withdrawn application

An application may be withdrawn by the Swedish organisation at its own request without further explanation. A decision memo is not generated.

See the Civis manual for details.

Rejections

Applications that do not fulfil SPP's criteria are rejected. The reason as to why the application is rejected needs to be very clear. The Programme Officer determine what appropriate criteria that applies and makes sure that the decision is clear, that important feed-back is included and that the tone is well balanced.

Report dates

Both annual monitoring reports and final reports are submitted 1/5.

An annual monitoring report is to be submitted for every calendar year of an initiative that is longer than 18 months.

The final report date for PPFs is set as 4 months after the end date. The main point is to ensure that the final report, at the latest, is aligned with a forthcoming application window.

Support functions during the assessment

Dialogue and communication are key for moving on with complicated issues and for solving unclarities. Besides your dialogue partner, the Programme Development Officer is first line of support during the assessments and will help delegate to the Deputy Head of the SPP Unit, Programme Manager or Finance when needed.

The Financial Controller and the Financial Project Controllers checks the financial aspects of the application and organisations when support is called for. Please note that the financial aspects are required to be checked at least once before the decision-memo is ready for the Grants Committee.

The QSU focal point checks for any needs for coordination and potential overlaps with other programmes on an overall level. The QSU focal point is therefore not involved in any specific applications, unless there is need for coordination with other programmes.

It is important that the **Programme Officers' mandate and responsibility for assessing applications and communicating with organisations are respected and upheld.** Support should not mean imposing on this mandate nor removing the responsibility.

Concluding the application assessment

1. Grant Committee reviews memo and contacts Programme Officer if there are questions/need for clarification.
2. When Grant Committee has reached a decision:
    a. The Head of the Grants Committee approves the Application assessment-task.
    b. For approvals, the financial controller allocates funding to the Initiative.
    c. The Programme Development Officer informs the responsible Programme Officer that the decision can be communicated.
3. Programme Officer communicates the decision to the Swedish organisation by using the Read ForumCiv decision-task.
    a. In the case of rejections, offer a meeting or phone call to discuss the decision.

Completions from the Grants Committee

The aim once a decision-memo is ready and sent to the Grants Committee is for the Grants Committee to only take a decision. However, sometimes completions and clarifications are required before that can be done. As the Grants Committee process can be a long one and with several meetings, it is very important that points of completion and clarification are documented, followed-up with the Programme Officer, and that it is clearly stated when it has been addressed.

Resolving completions from the Grants Committee is done accordingly:

1) The Grants Committee member that has identified the completion makes a comment in the word copy of the decision-memo, thus clearly showing which Grant Committee member identified and will follow-up the completion.
2) The Grants Committee member initiate a dialogue on the point with the responsible Programme Officer with the aim to resolve it ahead of the next Grants Committee meeting.

Take into account that completion may require dialogue between the Programme Officer and the applying organisation.

3) If a point for completion is identified during a Grants Committee meeting, the responsibility to follow-up must be clarified before the meeting is closed. The point is noted down and followed-up as point 1 and 2.
4) If several decision-memos or applications indicate the same or similar point of completion, the follow-up with the involved Programme Officers (or whole team) is to be coordinated with the Programme Development Officer.
5) Once a point has been addressed, the Grants Committee member responsible for follow-up verifies that any required changes are reflected in the decision-memo and on the initiative in Civis, including adding any relevant supporting material. The Grants Committee member then clearly state that the point has been addressed next to it in the decision-memo, or other designated document for assessments during that window. The point should not be deleted.

Appeals

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

Agreements

When a project has been approved, it is time to start the preparing the agreement.

Note that ForumCiv's decision to grant an application is revoked if the Swedish organisation has not sent back a complete signed agreement within 6 months after the Programme Officer communicated the decision.

Agreement between the Swedish organisation and the local organisation

All partners transferring funds to another organisation are required to sign agreements. Agreements need to be signed between the parties before funds can be transferred.

The template for the agreement between the Swedish organisation and local organisation is available on the website. Swedish organisations are required to submit a copy of the agreement to their responsible officer within one month of signing and by the second requisition at the latest.

LPFs are not required to submit the agreements they have with their partners, but these must be made available for spot checks.

Bank account

Swedish organisations are required to have a Bankgiro or Plusgiro bank account in the name of the organisation. A Bankgiro or Plusgiro account allows for traceability of all funds that enter that bank account, including ForumCiv funds.

The local organisation is required to have a bank account in the name of the organisation and the organisation must be able to submit proof of this in writing. Local organisations are not necessarily required to have a separate bank account for ForumCiv funding but the funds must be traceable. It is up to the Swedish organisation to determine whether the local organisation has a good system for this or whether a separate bank account is a better way to ensure traceability.

Amendments to agreements

In some cases, amendments must be created that regulate different departures from the agreement. Amendments to agreements are best assessed and decided on *before* signing an agreement with the partner. This facilitates the risk assessment of the overall initiative and any potential re-assessment that might follow due to the amendment. It also makes the process of amending the agreement much simpler.

If an amendment is required after the agreement has been signed, the partner needs to submit a request to ForumCiv and that the responsible Programme Officer write a brief decision-memo. If approved, a separate agreement amendment is then signed by ForumCiv and the Swedish partner, and in extension between the Swedish partner and the local organisation if relevant.

See the Decision Memo for significant changes.docx for further instructions.

See detailed routine below for amendments concerning alternative payment methods.

Contact the Deputy Head of the SPP Unit for support regarding amendments to agreement.

Signing agreements

The agreement is sent via Scrive to two of the Swedish organisation's authorised signatories for digital signing using Swedish Bank-ID. The authorised signatories are checked against the EU sanction list.

The agreement consists of the following documents:

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

The agreement is sent together with an accompanying letter with important information for the organisation and with the requisition documents to be filled in and submitted to the Programme Officer before the first disbursement can be made.

ForumCiv sends the agreement for signing via Scrive with the Swedish organisation signing first. This is to ensure that we first give the opportunity for dialogue with the partners if there is something they do not understand or agree upon. Once the Swedish organisation and ForumCiv have signed, each recipient connected to the signing process (not only authorised signatories) received a copy via email.

If the partners have any questions or comments to the agreement this should be communicated to the Programme Officer before the agreement is sent out. The Programme Officer will have to consult with the Deputy Head of the SPP Unit or Programme Manager whether an agreement amendment is required and whether it can be approved.

Requisitions

Requisitions are handled after receiving the agreement from the Swedish organisation. It is the responsibility of the Programme Officers to process the requisition, assess the funding need and make sure that disbursements are made according to the agreement and ForumCiv routines. It is the Programme Officer who has the most knowledge of the initiative and partnership and is the one able to make an assessment that considers more than just the amounts in the simplified financial report. In turn, finance is involved in processing of requisitions and follow-up on certain points to make sure that the routine is followed and that the funding need is reasonable.

Organisations must inform their Programme Officer of which audit firm they intend to contract when submitting the first requisition. If there is evidence of past issues with the suggested audit firm, the Programme Officer will strongly recommend contracting another one.

When a requisition has been processed by a Programme Officer it is controlled by the Financial Controller or Financial Project Controllers, authorised by the Programme Manager, and paid out by the Accountant. Disbursements are made on Thursdays. The organisation can usually see the money on its account the following Monday. For disbursements to be paid out on a Thursday, requisitions (after checking it according to routine) must be sent for approval at the latest <u>on the Friday the week before</u> at 15:00 Swedish time.

Note that if the Swedish organisation has not submitted a requisition to ForumCiv before 1/12 during the financial year for which the funds are granted, the possibility to request those funds expire. For example, the Swedish organisation cannot submit a requisition in 2023 for funds granted for 2022. So, when you notice that 1/12 is approaching and you have not yet received a requisition for funds granted that year, bring this up with the Swedish organisation to inquire why.

Under the Transaction tab under the Finance tab in Civis you will be able to see when the funds have been paid out. Occasionally the money gets stuck in the banking system, but if you see that the payment has been made the money should be visible in their account within three days.

ForumCiv's general requisition plan is to disburse funds two times a year. The first requisition each year should cover the first 8 months of implementation and the second requisition the remaining 4 months. The second requisition each year except the first is paid out after the annual monitoring report has been formally approved.

General requisition plan:

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

- <u>First requisition remaining years:</u>
    - 2/3 of the sum according to budget for the year, or approved sum according to funding needs.
    - Paid out at the beginning of the year.
- <u>Second requisition remaining years:</u>
    - Remaining sum of the budget for the year, or approved sum according to funding needs.
    - Paid out by August 31 at the earliest.

Quality assurance of audit firms

ForumCiv have started to quality assure audit firms in the SPP Programme 2023-2027 to address the issue of audit reports not complying with the audit instructions, or being of a quality that makes it difficult to assess whether or not they comply with the audit instructions. The reasons behind such audit reports stem from audit firms disregarding or not comprehending the assignment they are contracted and paid for. Besides invalid or incomprehensible audit reports, this also has consequence for the partners when audit reports have to be updated and the cost for the audit increases.

”8.3 ForumCiv förbehåller sig rätten att godkänna Samarbetspartnerns val av revisor och kan komma att kräva att revisorn byts ut om denne inte har utfört sitt uppdrag på ett tillfredsställande sätt eller om det förekommer misstankar avseende revisorns oberoende ställning eller professionella kunskaper.”

As per the SPP agreement 2023-2027 paragraph 8.3 ForumCiv has the right to approve the audit firm which the Swedish partner organization intend to contract. The Swedish organization has this right in subsequent step as well. ForumCiv requests partners to submit the name of the audit firm the intend to contract by the first requisition so that an assessment and decision can be made in due time.

Audit firms that do not perform satisfactorily or where the auditor’s independence or professional competence can be questioned will be noted and documented in a list with reference to the initiative number, the year audited, and a description of the issue(s) of non-compliance or incomprehensibility identified by ForumCiv. These audit reports will be assessed case by case to account for:

- The significance of identified issues.
- If issues call for questioning the overall audit report and/or its methodology and findings.
- Repeated occurrences of issues across years and/or different Swedish organizations.
- The audit firm’s ability to effectively complete or clarify the issue.

The assessment is done jointly between the responsible Programme officer and the Financial project controllers or Financial controller. In the assessment and when adding the audit firm to the list, consider the following:

- Ensure that any issue(s) is not a result of the Swedish organization failing to provide the right instructions or supporting material.
- The description of the issue(s) must be detailed and with reference to the instructions where relevant.
- Reference to specific Iinitiative number for details.
- ForumCiv's motivation for not approving the audit firm in the future must be understandable and be able to share with the audit firm upon request.

After the assessment, ForumCiv’s decision and motivation is sent to the Swedish organization and the audit firm upon request.

Audit firms that have been noted and documented according to the routine above need to provide documented evidence of compliance in other assignments, updated routines, completed trainings or other in order to be considered again. ForumCiv will then assess the provided evidence in relation to the identified issues.

When a Swedish organization intend contract an audit firm on the list, ForumCiv will strongly recommend the Swedish organization to choose another audit firm. If required, ForumCiv will reference to the agreement and enforce the request to change audit firm.

Ongoing initiatives

Dates in the SPP Programme cycle

Jan-March – The first requisition each year is paid out.

May 1 - Budget for the current year is updated after the annual closing of the previous year, accounting for any actual carry overs. Note that the previous year's budget should not updated.

May 1 – Deadline for Final reports and Annual monitoring reports for MPF and LPF.

Aug-Sep – The second requisition each year is paid out. Budget is updated if the funding need is lower than budgeted.

Nov 15-Dec 15 – Window for submitting carry over requests.

Budget updates can be expected during any time of the year, but they are more likely in connection with the second requisition and after the annual closing of a financial year, i.e. when the organizations look over their planning and liquidity. Budget updates should be done systematically but not in an over-exaggerated manner. There needs to be a balance between effective resource management and a level of monitoring and administration.

In turn, carry-over requests can be expected by the end of the year (between 15 November and 15 December). Carry-overs should be made after the organizations have received all requested funds for the year and have a prognosis of how much unused funds might be carried over to the next year.

Agreement amendments and significant changes

During the implementation of initiatives, partners will request changes that require ForumCiv's prior approval, some of them constituting a formal agreement amendment or significant change.

All change requests from partners must as a minimum always be clear on the background and reason for the change, and how it affects the Initiative and the achievement of objectives. Some changes follow specific routines and require additional information (e.g. budget updates, carry-over requests, alternative payment method, confidential management of initiative). When a specific routine is required this is clearly indicated or referred to in this Procedures manual.

Assessing a change request require that the request and decision are documented in Civis. In some cases, this requires using the Decision-memo for Agreement amendments and Significant changes, which includes documentation of our assessment. As a general rule, using the memo also means that the change request requires approval by the Head of the SPP.

Changes that are approved by the Programme officer usually only requires using the Significant change request-task. The partner then sends the request via the task, including any supporting material, and the Programme officer approves or rejects. Note that some of these changes may require approval by the Head of the SPP if it changes the whole initiative in a significant way, or requires an agreement amendment. Reach out to the Head or Deputy head in such cases

Below is a table with requests that require ForumCiv's prior approval. Reach out to the Head or Deputy head if you receive a change request that cannot be categorized according to the below.

Change	**Routine**	**Decision**	**Result**
Purchases of equipment that is not specifically stated in the budget and that exceeds 50 000 SEK per unit.	Significant change request-task in Civis.	Head of SPP	
Transfer of agreement and/or grant to a third party.	Agreement amendment-task in Civis. Require decision-memo.	Head of SPP	Agreement amendment
Budget updates.	Specific routine. Budget update request template.	Head of SPP	Budget update in Civis
Carry-over request.	Specific routine. Carry-over request template.	Programme officer	If approved, the carry-over is reflected in the budget update after annual closing.
Alternative payment method	Specific routine. Require decision-memo.	Head of SPP	Agreement amendment
Confidential management of initiative	Specific routine. Require decision-memo.	Head of SPP	Agreement amendment
Significant changes to planned activities that affect the objectives and results of the Project.	Significant change request-task in Civis. *May require decision-memo.*	Programme officer *May require Head of SPP*	*May require agreement amendment*
New or modified objectives/sub-objectives/expected results.	Significant change request-task in Civis. *May require decision-memo.*	Programme officer *May require Head of SPP*	*May require agreement amendment*
Changes affecting the ability of the partners to implement the initiative according to agreement, and/or in other ways affecting their organisational capacity and capability.	Significant change request-task in Civis. *May require decision-memo.*	Programme officer *May require Head of SPP*	*May require agreement amendment*

Assessing requests

As mentioned, the request from the partners must always be clear on the background and reason for the change, and how it affects the Initiative and the achievement of objectives.

Assessing requests for changes must consider the following factors:

- Whether the change is relevant, effective, and feasible.
- Whether the change aligns with the objectives and logic of the approved initiative and the partnership.
- Whether the partners have the capacity to implement and manage the change.
- Whether the change impacts the achievement of objectives.
- Whether there is a risk analysis and management connected to the change(s).

Consult the Head or Deputy head of SPP for support in your assessment or when you are unsure if a request requires a documented assessment and decision.

Budget updates

Budget updates can be expected during any time of the year, but they are more likely in connection with the second requisition and after the annual closing of a financial year, i.e. when the organizations look over their planning and liquidity. Budget updates should be done systematically but not in an over-exaggerated manner. There needs to be a balance between effective resource management and a level of monitoring and administration.

Partners must always request budget updates by submitting the Budget update request template found on Forms and templates | ForumCiv. The template must be signed by two authorised signatories and be filled in according to instructions.

Once the budget update is decided upon by ForumCiv it becomes the latest approved budget in the agreement. This means that it must be referred or related to in all future budget updates, reporting, requisition plans and other agreement conditions.

Assessing budget updates

Budget updates are assessed and managed by using tasks in Civis.

The points below are general guidelines for assessing budget updates. However, assessing budget updates inherently requires looking at the initiative in relation to its specific context and pre-conditions, and how this is changing. Thus, it is also required to look at any prior budget updates when receiving a new one to assess the outcome of the prior update and whether any negative patterns and tendencies can be avoided in the future.

- 8% Administration in Sweden – this can differ across years but must be maximum 8% on an overall budget level. If the granted support is lowered during a budget update, the administration needs to be lowered as well.
- 5% Self-financing – this can differ across years but must be 5,00% on an overall budget level. We must avoid increases of self-financing over 5,00% in budget updates as this contractually binds the Swedish organization into adding more than they must.
- The 75-25% division - stick to the approved amounts instead of the % per year. This does not have to be calculated as long as funds are not reallocated from the partner organizations to the Swedish organization (which we are very restrictive with approving) OR the partner organizations' budget posts are constantly lowered in comparison to the Swedish organization.

- Changes in salaries and renumeration – All changes in budget that include changes in salaries and renumeration require ForumCiv's approval, regardless of how small. Costs should be reasonable "in both directions", i.e. they should not be too high or too low.
- Income – the partners received or planned requisitions for the year this must be reflected in the budget update. A mismatch can mean that partners plan to requisition funds at a later stage but which in fact have been forfeited. It will also lead to wrong info in Civis, for example:
    - Civis showing that income is missing to cover the costs in the budget, i.e. the partners might have carry-overs they have not requested or informed us about.
    - Civis showing that there is too much income in relation to the costs in the budget, i.e. the allocation of granted support might be lowered although it should not.
- Outline – the budget lines should be presented with the same names and in the same order as the budget in Civis, i.e. the agreement budget.
- Programme officers take decisions if the update changes the budget with 20% or less. Otherwise, Programme Manager's decision is needed.

Budget update after the closing of a financial year

- The update is submitted by May 1st at the latest together with the annual monitoring report.
- The update should only change the ongoing year's budget and include any carry-overs from the closed year. The closed year's budget is not changed.
    - Remember to check the included carry-overs against what we have approved. A slight difference can be expected but adding "new" carry-overs or a significant increase can be reason for repayment. Contact the Financial controller for support.

Budget update as a result of lowered funding need

- The update is submitted together with the second requisition each year if the funding need is lower than the granted support for the ongoing year. A lowered funding need will be indicated by the Simplified financial report which is sent in together with the requisition.
- Budget updates submitted together with requisitions does not have to be approved before funds are paid out. We must however check and ensure that it is in line with the approved initiative and agreement. The aim is to avoid delaying the partners from getting funds and be clear on that paying out funds is does not mean that their budget update is approved.
- The update should reflect the lowered funding need for the ongoing year by amounting to the same total sum as that requested in the first and second requisitions of the year plus the own contribution.
- If applicable, the update can also reflect change in funding need in the next year's budget.
    - SPP monitor all budget updates that changes the total sums per year in case a decision from Sida is required.
- We want to avoid budget updates for very small sums. If this is the case, check with the organization if the simplified financial report can be updated instead and if the amount can be included in the requisition.
- Budget updates must always match with the "Difference"-line in the simplified financial report. If this happens, ask the organization to adjust the budget update.
- The requirement of 25-75 divide can clash with the requirement of a realistic prognosis. The goal is to have a 25-75 divide on the overall budget. This needs to be discussed with the partner when it happens. Repeated budget update requests that lower the 75 for local partners will complicate the goal of an overall 25-75 divide.

Budget updates required by article 13 of the agreement

- The update is submitted throughout the year when needed, except for:

- Changes to the total budget sums per year, which are submitted with the second requisition (see above).
- Requests for carry-overs, which are submitted between 15/11-15/12 each year by using the Carry-over request template (see below).

Article 13.1 b) in relation to budget update requests

"13.1 b) Reallocation of funds involving a deviation of one or more budget posts from the last approved budget by ten (10) percent or more"

This means that reallocations that do not change one or more budget posts more than 10% from the latest approved budget can be made without ForumCiv's prior approval. This does not mean that the budget in the agreement with ForumCiv can be updated under the same circumstances. All updated to the agreement always require ForumCiv's prior approval. This 10% is to allow for flexibility to adjust for deviations in expected costs. Important to remember is that the financial reporting is always done against the latest approved budget, which will also be checked in the audit.

Carry-overs

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

Requests are submitted by using the Carry-over request template which is found on Forms and templates | ForumCiv. In the template, the partners state the budget and their prognosis for the current year, which will demonstrate the carry over. The partners also need to explain the variance and describe how they plan to use the funds the following year. If approved, the actual carry-overs are included in the budget update submitted after the closing of the financial year and followed-up by ForumCiv.

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

It is important to distinguish carry-overs from budget updates on two main aspects:

As carry-over requests are only be made after all requested funds for a year has been paid out they are different from budget updates that lowers the granted amount an ongoing year and increase it the next. Such budget updates are not considered carry-overs since they should be done before ForumCiv pay out the second requisition and instead adjusting the budget and the requisition plan.

Carry-overs which are not approved should be repaid to ForumCiv. Reasons for not approving carry-overs can be for example:

- The request is submitted after deadline.
- "New" carry-overs are included in the budget update after annual closing.
- Actual carry-overs are significantly higher than previously approved.
- Actual carry-overs continues to be higher than previously approved across several years, regardless of how much.
- Concerns if/how the prognosis for carry-overs is carried out.

Contact the Financial controller for support in cases where carry-overs might not be approved.

Assessing carry-over requests

The points below are general guidelines for assessing carry-overs. However, similar to budget updates, assessing carry-over requests inherently requires looking at the initiative in relation to its specific context and pre-conditions, and how this is changing. Thus, it is also required to look at any prior carry-over request when receiving a new one to assess the outcome of the prior request and whether any negative patterns and tendencies can be avoided in the future.

Carry-overs are assessed and managed by using tasks in Civis.

- Carry-overs must depart from the latest approved budget.
- Carry-over requests must only show the prognosis for each budget line. It should not include updates to the budget.
- Although we have paid out funds based on a funding need until the first requisition the coming year (i.e. across financial years), carry-overs must be requested and approved beforehand.
- The self-financing can be over 5% in the prognosis but it should not include additional self-financing compared to the latest approved budget.
- Carry-over requests can be decided upon by Programme Officers directly. The task in Civis must be used to document the decision.
- The agreement budget is <u>not</u> changed after approval of a carry-over request.
- Deviations of more than 10% Additional self-financing compared to the latest approved budget should not be included in the carry-over request.

Article 13.1 f) in relation to LPFs carry-over requests

"13.1 f) Reallocation of unused funds from one year to another within the same Agreement. LPF: Reallocation of unused funds from one year to another within the same Agreement involving a deviation of one or more budget posts from the last approved budget by ten (10) percent or more. Note that approvals in writing in advance are made on estimations of reallocation of unused funds. Actual reallocations are decided upon together with update of the budget during the current year"

LPFs require ForumCiv's approval if their prognosis in the carry-over request shows that at least one budget post has an amount of unused funds that differs by 10% or more compared to the latest approved budget. The carry-over request must clearly show the total amount of carry-overs, not only the amount exceeding 10%.

Changes to project dates

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

The only exception is if a bridge year has been agreed upon in dialogue with ForumCiv. In those cases, remember that an additional annual monitoring report may be needed.

Alternative payment method

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

However, some circumstances may cause the international banking system to be unavailable or non-functioning, In such situations, an alternative payment method may be required and a request needs to be sent to ForumCiv. The request must include:

- A risk analysis.
- A detailed description of the alternative payment method including a risk monitoring procedure and management plan.
- If applicable, a due diligence assessment made on any intermediary Third Party (Company, Organization or Individual) that fulfils ForumCiv's minimum requirements.

Programme ofiicer together with support from finance assess the requests for alternative payment methods based on the internal routine for alternative payment methods. If the request is approved, the agreement is amended and include details on the specific method(s) that have been approved, the maximum number of transfers, the maximum amount per transfer, the risk analysis, reporting requirements and any possible follow-up points. Remind the Swedish organisation that the agreement needs to be amended in subsequent steps as well.

When requests are made after the agreement is signed, the Decision Memo Agreement amendment and Significant change should be used to assess the request and document the decision. The partners request and the decision-memo are attached to the agreement amendment and as such become formal agreement documents.

Approved alternative payments methods are followed-up annually in connection with the annual report unless otherwise specified. The Programme officer then sample checks and transfers and assess the partners' compliance with the agreement during the reported year. This is documented in the checklist for SPP Reports.

Contact the The Deputy Head of the SPP Unit for support.

Deviations

Contact the Financial Controller for reporting deviations and suspected corruption.

See Guidelines for deviation and suspected corruption available on the intranet for more details regarding management of deviation cases.

See the ForumCiv Deviation reporting template for details on reporting.

Re-distribution of Initiatives and Organizations

Sometimes re-distribution of initiatives is required within the team. This is the responsibility of the Deputy head of the SPP Unit which considers the following principles in the re-distribution:

- Regional focus and/or experience
- Experience of the partnering organizations
- Fair workload in relation to employment.
- Responsibility for at least one LPF and MPF.

As with other distributions, a list with the suggested re-distribution of all ongoing initiatives is shared with Programme officers for input before it is decided.

Handover between Programme officers

The handover between Programme officers is a very important step. The former officer initiates the handover and introduces the new officer to the organization. How the handover is done in practice is decided by the involved Programme officers but should fulfill the following:

- The new Programme officer has all relevant background and knowledge of recent and current changes, processes and decisions to handle the initiative and organization in a responsible and professional way.
- The former Programme officer has ensured that all relevant information, communication and documents on the Initiative and the Swedish organizations is uploaded and up to date in Civis, including the archiving being updated.
- The new Programme officer is added as the Responsible person for the Initiative and the Swedish organization. This is required for in order to have the right permissions, for the workflow to work and to be able to know who is responsible for what.

Ongoing confidential initiatives

When an initiative has been classified as confidential, the following routines must be maintained at all times:

Important

NOTE #1: **No information may be shared** with individuals outside of ForumCiv or staff who are not included in the group that has access to the confidential initiative folder on G:/. This includes sharing information verbally.

NOTE #2: **All communication** during the implementation of the initiative **must be handled** using only the means approved for confidential information. For a list of these, see the latest version of Annex B of the Information Management Security SOP, which is updated regularly.

All supplementary and additional documents submitted after the original applications, must be sent via Signal or SecureMail and saved in the folder set up for this initiative on G:/. ***All downloaded documents automatically saved on the receiving laptop must be deleted immediately after being saved on the G:/folder.***

Changing Open initiatives to Confidential

In some cases, it may become necessary to change the classification of ongoing initiatives from open to confidential. This should then follow the same steps for assessing the classification of applications. After that, the following steps should be taken:

- Request that a new folder be set up for this initiative on G:/ and move all documents from Civis to this folder. Delete all data in Civis except the name of the initiative, country of implementation, total budget amount, and name of the Swedish organisation. The Programme Officer also deletes (or moves to the G:/ folder) any other documents related to the initiative, on Outlook and in other places.
- In handling information regarding this initiative going forward, the relevant steps under Application and Ongoing Confidential initiatives (above) must be followed.

Reports

All organisations are required to submit reports by uploading them to Civis. No hard copies should be submitted to ForumCiv.

To avoid delays in reporting, remind the organisations that their report is due in a few months by send the Report to prepare-email. The template is found in the SPP Email template document in Civis.

Reporting confidential initiatives

When an initiative has been classified as confidential, the following routines must be maintained at all times:

Important

NOTE #1: **No information may be shared** with individuals outside of ForumCiv or staff who are not included in the group that has access to the confidential initiative folder on G:/. This includes sharing information verbally.

NOTE #2: **All communication** during the implementation of the initiative **must be handled** using only the means approved for confidential information. For a list of these, see the latest version of Annex B of the Information Management Security SOP, which is updated regularly.

All reports from partner organisations must also be sent via Signal or SecureMail and saved in the set folder for this initiative on G:/. ***And, again, all downloaded documents automatically saved on the receiving laptop must be deleted immediately after being saved on the G:/folder.***

When a report is approved, there should be a blank decision memo saved in Civis and the initiative locked. The final financial outcome is also entered into the system. (And the completed report decision memo is saved in the G:/folder.)

- If any additional follow-up to the report is needed, this should be handled using the same methods as outlined in the sections above.
- NOTE: There are reports submitted to Sida which are produced with Civis information. That means the confidential initiatives that have been entered into Civis are included in these reports. However, the confidential initiatives are not included in those that are added to (and visible on) the CSO website.

Managing report windows

Initiative reports is a precondition for us and our partners to be able to do our work, not only because of compliance and agreement conditions but to develop our capacity and increase our understanding. We therefore require a reporting window where we can focus on reporting assessments. The reporting window is aligned with the standard report date 1/5 for annual monitoring and final reports from MPFs and LPFs, which is when we receive the majority of reports. PPFs are handled continuously throughout the year when they are submitted.

The Deputy Head of the SPP Unit is responsible for managing reporting windows. This includes:

- Creating a workplan for the reporting window.

- Establishing lists of annual monitoring and final reports to be assessed.
- Setting up group discussion meetings.
- Evaluating the process.

A folder is set up on the SPP intranet for each reporting window which includes the workplan, the list of reports and the evaluation documents.

Creating the workplan

The workplan should outline all the steps of the reporting window with deadlines and actions. Deadlines should be booked in everyone's calendars. If needed, the workplan must be clear to separate what concerns annual monitoring reports and what concerns final reports. The workplan must be synchronized with application windows and the programme's reporting to Sida. This usually means that it is effective to start the reporting window with a compliance phase and ending with a memo writing phase.

The workplan should also include any key principles or points that apply for the specific window, (e.g. prioritisations, available support staff), as well as clarifications based on learnings and evaluations from previous windows. The workplan and its content must be clearly communicated, understood by everyone and easily accessible.

Establishing lists of annual and final reports to be assessed

Reports does not have to be distributed to Programme Officers unless the workload within the team is skewed. If there are many re-distributions within the team, the Programme Officers should be given a deadline (2-3 days) for input on potential changes before the final distribution is determined. Dialogue partners are not required for report assessments.

It is preferred to have two separate lists for annual and final reports since the processes differ a bit regarding deadlines, routines and in the reporting to Sida. Lists can be created in Civis by using the analyse function or by filtering initiatives under the Initaitive-tab.

The lists of reports are key documents for monitoring each report at different steps throughout the reporting window process and to be able to make continuous prognosis and priorities. This monitoring is very important for the audit of the programme and the reporting to Sida.

The lists must therefore include information for each report in the following areas:

- Initiative number
- Initiative type
- Country
- Organisation
- Responsible Programme Officer
- Compliance ready
- Compliance checked
- Memo ready
- Grant Committee decision
- Memo checked
- Reported to Sida

- Comment

Setting up group discussion meetings

The group discussion meetings are for Programme Officers to raise and discuss questions and problems together. These meetings are very important not only for solving problems, but also for our internal learning in the programme and for establishing best practices and common approaches to how we deal with different issues.

Evaluating the process

The last step of the reporting window process is evaluation. This can be done in different ways (surveys, end discussion, etc.) and with different focus areas. It is important to decide early on what areas should be followed-up across several windows and to do the evaluation soon after the Programme Officers are done with assessments.

Remember to save the evaluation documents in the reporting window folder of the SPP intranet.

Assessing reports

SPP's Assessment Support document is not yet updated in detailed guidance on assessing reports.

Besides the reporting documents, the following can support you in your assessment:

- The application and decision memo.
- Previously submitted reports in the ongoing initiative and prior initiatives.
- Previous applications and reports from the Swedish organisation.
- Decision memos generated for the Swedish organisation's other initiatives.
- Compliance audits or other audits (system audits, project audits) found under the organisations in Civis.

Delayed report

If the report is not submitted on the due date, send the Report delayed formal reminder 1-email to the organisation right away. The template is found in the SPP Email template document in Civis.

This includes a 14-day deadline and request to communicate the status of the report. If the organisation has not submitted the report and not contacted you after 14 days, send the Report delayed formal reminder 2-email. This includes the option of a 10-day deadline to submit a complete report according to agreement or repayment of the grant. What to choose is decided case-by-case. If the repayment claim is issued but the organisation fails to comply, **see detailed routine below for making a formal repayment claim**.

Incomplete report

If the report is incomplete or further information is needed, you need to create a Report to complete-task**.** Aim to include all the completions required in bullet points. Remember to include a strict deadline (this depends on the completion, but standard is 7 days).

Once the Swedish organizations has Completed the task, the completions should be available in Civis and allow you to continue your assessment.

If further completions are required, create a new Report to complete-task and repeat the process.

Audit not following instructions

Programme Officers should reach out to the designated Project Financial Controller if an audit is not following instructions. Besides completions being required, the significance of the non-compliance must be assessed as to quality assure the audit firm. This is especially important if the same audit firm is contracted by several organizations. See the Quality assurance of audit firms routine.

Updates to the financial outcome

Various reasons sometimes require the financial outcome to be updated after the annual or final report has been audited, signed and submitted to ForumCiv. In such cases it is important to remember that all updates to the financial outcome need to be signed by the Swedish organisation and the responsible auditor. Any possible exceptions from this need to be approved beforehand by the Financial Controller.

Concluding the report assessment

1. The SPP report checklist has been reviewed and approved by Financial project controller.
2. The Deputy Head of the SPP Unit reviews the memo and contacts the Programme Officer if there are questions/need for clarification. Once ready, the Deputy Head approves the Report assessment-task and informs the Programme Officer.
3. The Programme Officer communicates the decision to the Swedish organisation by using the Read ForumCiv decision-task.

Repayment Claim

Sometimes the Swedish organisation may have to repay a part of the grant. Usually this is because the grant was not used in full, it was not used according to agreement or supporting documentation for costs are lacking/insufficient. Most of the cases are easily handled by simply asking the Swedish organisation to make a repayment unless they have done so already. However, in some cases we may need to issue a formal repayment claim. This usually happens when the communication with the Swedish organisation is not working well, or if the Swedish organisation and/or local organisation simply disagrees. Formal repayment claims are sent by the Programme Manager to the Swedish organisation's contact person and board. Use the Repayment letter-email for this. The template is found in the SPP Email template document in Civis. Issues such as repayment claims highlight why it is important that we have the latest updated organisation information and documents from the Swedish organisation. The List of composition of the board is crucial in this case and in other events that we need to pursue legal action. Swedish organisations must always submit a signed list of composition of the board with every requisition.

Archiving

Archiving is an inherent part of SPP's management of initiatives and organisations. As such, required and relevant documents must be frequently uploaded, named and have document types added according to the archiving guidelines. This is not only necessary for efficient management of initiatives and organisations but required for internal control purposes and coordination with support functions.

Note that the last step of the Initative workflow cycle is to review the archiving of the initiative.

The SPP unit has a designated focal point for coordinating the archiving in the unit. This person has the responsibility and mandate to hold trainings, adjust routines and do monitoring, spot-checks and follow-up of the archiving in the unit.

Frequently asked questions

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

Confidential initiatives

What do we report to Sida?

Confidential initiative numbers are reported separately together with each annual report.

When is information is published in the CSO database?

Approved non-confidential initiatives end up in the CSO database. Meaning that no confidential initiatives do.

Is there a difference between a confidential organisation and a confidential initiative?

An initiative can be confidential, but the Swedish organisation is usually not confidential. If the Swedish partner has several initiatives and have not explicitly requested confidentiality status, this has been dependent on country as Dira have auto-tagged some countries. Usually the local partner is confidential when the initiative is.

What can we expect from Sida considering public access to information (offentlighetsprincipen)?

Sida's lawyers make an assessment in case confidential information is requested based on the public access to information principles Freedom of information act). Sida always ask ForumCiv beforehand. There has been no case so far where confidential information has been requested, nor should there be any concern that Sida makes an assessment to disclose such information.

From now on we will solve this by ensuring that sensitive information is not shared with ForumCiv by organisations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Do staff costs have to be reported separately?

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

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

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

What about language requirements for audits?

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

When can we make exceptions from the audit instructions?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Local organisations with funding from several Swedish partners or donors

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

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

Use of ForumCiv's logo

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

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

Digital Signatures

Between ForumCiv and Swedish organisations

ForumCiv approves digital signatures under the following conditions:

- Signatures are done using Bank-ID (www.bankid.com).

- ForumCiv can verify authenticity of the certificate and signatures*.
- Usual routines and requirements are followed, e.g. two authorised signatures must sign.

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

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

Between Swedish and local organisations

Digital signatures between Swedish and local organisations need to:

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

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

Between Swedish and local organizations

Digital signatures between Swedish and local organizations need to:

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

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

Extra allowances

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

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

Booking and reservation of costs

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

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

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

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

Why does the pre-study funding no longer exist?

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

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

What is the definition of the PPF requirement "existing partnership"?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Swedish organisation creating the local organisation

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

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

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

One local organisation cooperating with different Swedish organisations/Funders

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

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

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