

**Civil Society Regional Forum 2018**

**Suva, Fiji**

**Application Guidelines**

1. **Introduction**

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat will be hosting the annual Regional CSO Forum from the 20th – 22nd March 2018 in Suva, Fiji. The event is a preparatory workshop for the CSO engagement with Forum Economic Ministers in Palau, and Pacific Islands Forum Leaders and in Nauru in September 2018. In the lead up to the Regional CSO Forum, some support will be available for participants to conduct national consultations to order to inform the regional dialogue and the prioritisation process on issues to take Economic Ministers and to Forum Leaders. The series of events are as follows:

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| 1. Support for National policy dialogue and consultations | Each Forum Island Country  February/March 2018 |
| 1. NSA Capacity Building Alumni | Suva, Fiji- 19 March 2018 |
| 1. Regional CSO Forum & Preparatory workshop for engagement with Forum Leaders and Forum Economic Ministers. | Suva, Fiji  20-22 March |
| 1. CSO Engagement with Forum Economic Ministers | Palau 25-27 April 2018 |
| 1. CSO Engagement with Forum Leaders | Nauru 6 September 2018 |

The Regional CSO Forum is funded through the EU funded Programme for “Strengthening Non-State Actors Engagement in Regional Policy Development and Implementation”. It is proposed that around 40 participants representing Civil Society Organisations in the Pacific will be funded through the programme to attend this regional forum. This document provides some guidance for applicants on how to apply to participate in the regional CSO Forum.

1. **About the Regional CSO Forum**

The event will take place from 20 22 March in Suva, Fiji.

**Purpose**

The annual Regional CSO Forum is a key event for civil society engagement in regional policy dialogue. The event will be held in Fiji in March as a prelude to the Forum Leaders Meeting in Nauru in September and the upcoming FEMM in April in Palau. The topics for discussion will be agreed by the participants but should have some relevance to the Forum Leaders Agenda, and the FEMM theme.

The aims of the event are to:

* provide representatives from civil society from across the region an opportunity to meet and exchange their views on regional matters pertinent to the constituents they represent;
* provide a forum for civil society to explore options to develop collective positions and advice on issues to present to Forum Leaders in September, and FEMM in April;
* select and prepare a group of representatives to attend the CSO Engagement with FEMM in Palau and Forum Leaders in Nauru.

**Participation**

Two representatives will be sought from each Forum member country and up to 10 regional CSOs (including INGOs with Pacific Programs). CSOs may also nominate or support a CSO expert within the regional CSO grouping, with proficiency in any relevant area of regional policy. Full funding is available for 2 participants from each of the following Forum Island Countries: Cook Islands, FSM, Niue, RMI, Nauru, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tuvalu and Kiribati. This will cover:

* return travel from home base to Fiji
* accommodation in Fiji for the duration of the event
* Inclusive of all meals during the event, with perdiem allocations for travel days\*
* Transfers to and from the airport and shuttle bus between event venues (if required)

\*Note that in the interest of responsible budgeting, per diems will not be issued for days where all meals and accommodation are provided.

1. **Selection of Participants for the Regional Civil Society Forum**

A competitive selection process will be used to strategically identify participants based on the objectives of the regional CSO Forum. Selection of participants will be based on merits of: applicants’ understanding of regional level issues and how these align to national level interests; ability to truly represent a constituent group that is impacted by / or interested in regional policy; and, demonstrated commitment to maximize the opportunity to participate in this event for the benefit of the region / Pacific peoples.

A joint PIFS-CSO selection panel will conduct the selection based on the following criteria:

* Understanding of, and advocacy and implementation of work around regional level issues and how these align to national level interests
* Ability to truly represent a constituent group that is impacted by / or interested in regional policy
* Demonstrated commitment to maximize the opportunity to participate in this event for the benefit of the region / Pacific peoples

1. **Evaluation and Selection Process**

The evaluation and selection of participants for the regional Civil Society Forum will be conducted by a joint selection committee.

The selection committee will consist of

* 3 evaluators (1 evaluator from the NSA programme, an independent consultant, and 1 CSO representative;

The following evaluation matrix will be used by the selection committee to evaluate the applications received.

***Table 1. – Evaluation Matrix***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CRITERIA** | **Maximum Score** |
| **REGIONAL CIVOL SOCIETY FORUM** | |
| * **Registration** – Ability to demonstrate certification of legal entity and representation. This is mandatory and failing this application will not be further assessed or considered. | 10 |
| * **Strategic Issue**- Ability to clearly identify a strategic issue**,** to present to Leaders and Economic Ministers, andinformed through consultations with broader national civil societies and constituencies**.** | 10 |
| * **Advocacy** - Clarity and purpose behind rationale and methodology around advocating your position. | 10 |
| * **Feedback** - Reporting back to partners and constituents – clear strategies and approaches for feedback learnings and observations with your membership/ networks/ **OR** (as a former participant) practical lessons and experiences shared with members and partners/networks from previous CSO Forums **-** learnings and observations. | 10 |

Each application will be assessed and evaluated by the selection panel. Responses to each question (as in Application Form) will be given a score out of a possible 10. Each applicant will be given a total score out of a possible 40 using the attached ‘Assessment Rubric’ (Annex 2). Only those applicants who score above 50% will be shortlisted and ranked accordingly. The highest ranking applicants will be selected for participation, ensuring the following requirements are met:

1. 2 participants per country
2. Gender balance
3. Disability representation
4. Relevant thematic expertise
5. Balance of national, and regional representation
6. **Instructions to applicants**

Please submit only one application per organisation. To apply, please fill out the attached Application Form. Applications should be submitted by email to [info.cso@forumsec.org](mailto:info.cso@forumsec.org) no later than **Friday 2nd February 2018**.

You will be informed of the outcome of your application within 2 weeks.

1. **About the support for National Policy Dialogue/Consultations**

Individuals participating in the Regional CSO Forum in August 2017 are expected to have undertaken some level of national policy consultations prior to the event. A small fund is available to CSO Forum participants to conduct a national level dialogue or consultation round. The consultation is intended to bring together local NGOs to discuss issues and build positions around regional priorities that can then be used to inform the regional dialogue. Topics may align with (i) the Forum Leaders priorities stated in the 2017 Communique, or (ii) relevant issues raised by CSOs at the FEMM 2017. You can access the following links for relevant information.

1. <http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/embeds/file/Final_48%20PIF%20Communique_2017_14Sep17.pdf>
2. <http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/2017_FEMM_Action_Plan.pdf>

As an outcome of each National dialogue/consultation, participants may also wish to develop an advocacy strategy around their positions on national (as well as regional) policy priorities.

The national policy consultations and dialogue should be designed to:

* Provide an opportunity for representatives of local CSOs to discuss their views on regional priorities/issues impacting national level policies and their constituencies
* Provide a platform to raise issues and explore options to develop positions around advocacy strategies both at country and regional level
* Strengthen coordination mechanisms and encourage collective and collaborative actions on common issues
* ensure participation of a diverse group of local CSOs representing a range of thematic areas, issues, community groups and networks

Applicants for national consultation funds should be **national** umbrella or coordinating bodies for their national CSOs. Where national umbrellas do not exist or are weak, a coalition or network of local CSOs representing a diverse range of communities/ constituencies may collaborate to undertake a national level policy consultation. Conveners of National Dialogues would be prioritized to participate in the Regional CSO Forum in August, so that they can bring a consulted and informed national position to the discussion.

**Funding**

Funding for this series is limited and intended to supplement existing resources to mobilize national CSOs. An allocation of up to FJD5000 per country will be available for this activity for the following Forum Island Countries. Cook Islands, FSM, Niue, RMI, Nauru, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tuvalu and Kiribati. Note that the funding is only available to cover a single payment ‘event package’ that PIFS will pay directly to the preferred vendor.

*Please note that funding is only available for one dialogue/consultation per country, where multiple applications from one country are received, applicants will be encouraged to take a collaborative approach.*

**Process to apply for funding support to conduct national consultations**

Applicants for funding to support national consultations should prepare a short concept note (2 pages max) covering the following:

* Purpose of the event
* Intended participants
* Clear concise consultation agenda
* Collaboration with other CSOs (list partners)
* Potential linkages with the Regional CSO Forum and intended outcomes

Include details of any endorsement from intended participants or partner organisations by means of a ‘letter of support’.

**Funding applicants must also provide three quotes for an ‘event package’.** Applicants are to source and provide three quotes for an ‘event package’ from three different venues, the event package can cover venue hire, equipment hire, and catering. Note that payment will be made directly to the preferred vendor by PIFS.

**The deadline for funding applications is 2nd February 2018**. Your application should include:

1. Regional CSO Forum Application Form
2. Concept Note for national consultation/dialogue (2 pagers)
3. Any letters/note of support/endorsement from your constituent group/partners
4. Three quotes from event package providers

Applications are to be submitted to [info.cso@forumsec.org](mailto:info.cso@forumsec.org)

**Further information**

Should you require any further guidance please contact [penisonin@forumsec.org](mailto:penisonin@forumsec.org)

**See Annex 1: *Regional CSO Forum Application Form***

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CRITERIA** | **Descriptors for Excellent** | **Descriptors for average** | **Descriptors for poor** | **Total Score** |
| **Regional CSO Forum QUESTION 1** | | | | **10** |
| Identification of Issue | * Identifies one regional issue to take to Leaders and FEMM. | * Identifies a number of issues * Unclear on priority issue for Leaders and FEMM | * Identifies irrelevant (national level) issues | 4 |
| Rationale | * Clear articulation and justification on issues for Forum Leaders and Economic Minister’s | * Provides some background without evidence and lacking a position on the issue. | * Weak justification and evidence. Not thought through well | 4 |
| Methods for advocating issue | * Articulates clearly his/her strategies for advocacy | * Unclear between issues and best advocacy strategy (ies) | * Lacks clarity on strategy | 2 |
| **Regional CSO Forum QUESTION 2** | | | | **10** |
| Describe plans on reporting back meeting outcomes to constituents and partners | * States a clear plan for reporting back on the Regional CSO Forum | * Report back plan unclear | * No plan for report back | 4 |
| Identify strategy (ies) for information sharing with constituents & networks | * Lists 3 or more strategies | * States 2 strategies | * Lists only one strategy | 6 |
| **National Policy Dialogues/ Consultations QUESTION 4** | | | | **10** |
| Concept Note | * Includes intended participants, agenda, linkages to regional CSO Forum, clear outcomes | * Details vague and unclear and rushed application | * Irrelevant information | 5 |
| 3 Quotes provided | * 3 quotes | * 2 quotes | * 1 or no quotes | 5 |

**ANNEX 2: ASSESSMENT RUBRIC**