

ICT funding guidelines

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING PROJECTS

As an overarching principle, OSISA will support programmes where ICT policy, technologies, networking, literacy and development awareness are not an end in themselves, but where the emphasis is on *social action for change*. OSISA will not support 'inward looking' ICT specialist institutions and individuals, but wide-membership *activist* efforts where the emphasis is on *social action* – mobilizing citizens for change.

In addition, OSISA will support programmes that satisfy the following criteria:

- That the project incorporates effective participation of women in the entire project cycle, including that the baseline studies contain, as much as possible, disaggregated information on women and men; that the project design addresses gender related challenges emerging in the baseline; that the implementation teams involve both men and women in equitable roles and responsibilities including leadership; and that monitoring and evaluation indicators are as far as possible disaggregated.
- That, in addition to the above, the project strives to include young people and adults in effective participation and decision making, including through the involvement of young people who are part of progressive youth movements, etc.
- That the implementing organization proposed in the project –
- is a credible, and committed actor in the area of work in question, as could be suggested from peer reports, donor reviews, previous experience and reputation. Where the organisation is new, OSISA will

in place of the above consider the organisation's clarity of vision, contribution of own time, and mobilization of own resources.

- is demonstrably committed to implementing within its own structures and work patterns, the ideals of open society, including gender equitable staff development and other human resource processes, free exercise by staff of labour rights, etc.
- has strong accounting mechanisms to its board, wider stakeholders, and public. This could be demonstrated by the publication of annual reports and plans, the keeping of proper and accessible records of financial accounting and inventories, and platforms for stakeholders and related publics to influence strategic direction and priorities.
- That the project reaches rural and other communities that would not have traditionally been included in similar or related projects.
- That the project is innovative in its methodologies, and seeks to maximize impact through creative multiplier effects, rather than one-off events.
- That it articulates or develops ideas on sustainability beyond OSISA support.

KEY AREAS OF SUPPORT

Advocacy Initiatives in the ICT area for Policy and Regulation

The programme will support initiatives that:

Seek to strengthen civil society's and civic networks participation in the multitude of regional, continental and global policy and institutional forums that shape and decide on ICT policy and regulations and to ensure full and

effective inputs for our civil society formations. OSISA places a particularly high priority on activist initiatives that:

- Organises civil society formations and regional NGO networks which are capacitated to articulate their priority needs as far as ICT policies and regulations are concerned;
- Articulate policy and regulatory options that deepens affordable universal access and service;
- Are SADC wide and enhance close collaboration between countries and NGO networks in the region as well as enhance sub-regional dialogue for Africa and south- south dialogue globally;

Consortia Development in Knowledge Applications and New Content

The programme will support initiatives that:

Seek to support specific ICT consortia development in regional initiatives for new content knowledge applications for organizational learning and development. Examples include OSI's Electronic Information and Library Project (EIFL) evolution to multi-country knowledge consortia in each country in the region. OSISA places a particularly high priority on initiatives that:

- Incorporate and give expression to the development of indigenous local content, use of appropriate technology for knowledge;
- Demonstrate a potential for that knowledge to be applied effectively in the NGO's, civil society formations and civil networking context;
- Can be evaluated.

Civic Networking and Community Information Systems

The OSISA ICT program seeks to develop projects with the potential to strengthen civic networks and community informatics in our region. The overall objective is to contribute to a culture of civic based networking and sharing of information through:

- Developing appropriate resources, tools for community networking;
- Conducting and implementing pilot projects in the area of community informatics;
- Working with other donors, partners and associates to avoid duplication;
- Ensuring technological and managerial transfer and capacity building;
- Enhancing community networking in various areas of social advocacy;
- Strengthening governance regimes and sustainability of these civic networks.

Electronic Governance, E Democracy and Cyber Liberties

This program seeks to support initiatives that develop new interventions in the areas of E Governance from a citizen's perspective. E Governance has emerged in recent years as an important new approach in how governments are being restructured to respond to the Global Information Society (GIS). E Governance is the applications of information and communications technology (ICT) to strengthen and enhance governance. This process has significant implications for citizenship responses. OSISA will support programmes in e Governance that:

- Enhance the area of Citizen's right to information held by governments;

- Strengthen the domain of E Democracy with the appropriate designs and applications for civil society;
- Experiment with alternative tools, technologies and applications which are relevant for NGO's, civil society formations and civic networks;
- Ensure issues such as data rights and privacy are respected in the context of civil liberties;
- Work in a region- focused and country specific manner by incorporating relevant regional and global advocacy initiatives;

WHAT OSISA WILL NOT FUND

- Computers, IT Hardware and Software- except where they are a part of a broader strategy of capacity building;
- Individual Scholarship programs in IT;
- Stand alone workshops;
- Purely academic research in ICT's;
- Start up companies in the Dot.Com sector;

Method of Applying for Support from OSISA

Any organization or individual wanting to get funds or establish partnership with OSISA, should send an initial letter of inquiry that shows how its own initiative relates to the mission, strategies and guidelines of OSISA. This letter should present the executive summary of the proposal and should include the project's goals and objectives, the activities of the project, the rationale and methodology, expected outputs, and a budget summarizing resources needed for the whole project and what is being requested from OSISA. The inquiry letter should not be more than two pages long. OSISA programme staff will review the initial inquiry and engage in further

discussions with the applicant should the proposal show some promise. The applicant will then be asked to submit a full proposal.

Full proposals should contain:

- An explanation of the initiative, including what the problem or need is, and the environment in which it will be implemented;
- The intended impact;
- A description of the activities that will be undertaken;
- How the programme will be implemented and the relationship to stakeholders, government, and/or other funders or implementers;
- Project costs and financing sources;
- A timeframe for the project and measures taken to ensure sustainability; and
- Issues and risks in the project and how these will be addressed.
- An indication of the capacity of the organization to implement the project.

The following information must accompany the full proposal:

- A copy of the organization's constitution or governing rules;
- Description of organization's goals and objectives;
- List of organization's board members, executives, essential programme staff and membership;
- Most recent annual activities and financial report;
- Most recent evaluation, if relevant;
- A detailed explanation of how the organization is addressing sustainability issues as well as a list of current sources of funding;
- Other donors who have been approached to the fund project submitted to OSISA. Provide name of relevant individual at donor agency and their contact information.

Guidelines for proposal writing are available on request.

Application documents should be forwarded to OSISA's office in Johannesburg. Applications are reviewed on an-ongoing basis with continuous interaction between OSISA and the applicant. Although preliminary assessment and interaction regarding a proposal is the responsibility of the Programme Officer, the overall decision lies with the OSISA Board.

For further information on OSISA's ICT Programme contact:

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