



## Enabling and Protecting Civic Spaces (EPCS) – Illuminating New Solutions and Programmatic Innovations for Resilient Spaces (INSPIRES)

### CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: INCREASING CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION (CSO) RESILIENCY IN CHANGING CIVIC SPACES

**Purpose:** PartnersGlobal, in partnership with the CIVICUS Network and other consortium members with support from USAID, is seeking applications from local civil society organizations interested in strengthening their resiliency in the face of potential impacts of growing restrictions on civic freedoms of association, assembly, and expression.

**Goal:** The Resiliency+ Process will take selected organizations through a structured assessment and capacity building process to increase their organizational resilience over a period of 12 months. Participating organizations will have a better understanding of their internal organizational vulnerabilities and will be able to identify and mitigate potential external threats impeding growth, endangering staff and reducing sustainability. Selected organizations will be paired with a Resiliency Coach who will provide ongoing accompaniment. They will co-design a process with the coach's guidance to prioritize their top resiliency threats and will receive targeted technical assistance to increase their resiliency in those factors identified as most critical.

#### APPLICATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESILIENCY+ PLAN

**Application Deadline:** Please email the final application (fillable-PDF attached below) to [resiliencyplus@partnersglobal.org](mailto:resiliencyplus@partnersglobal.org) by 11:59 pm EST on November 1, 2019.

**Requirements:** To be eligible for consideration, an organization must have at least three years of operational experience, since the Resiliency+ Process provides tailored resiliency support and assumes a certain level of general organizational development. Additionally, it is vital for each applicant organization to commit to dedicating staff time to this intensive accompaniment process. The R+ approach involves a small team of staff from different functional teams from your organization who will participate in the assessment and capacity building activities over a period of 12 months.

Selected organizations must demonstrate civic space factors affecting their daily work, such as legal environment restrictions, financial constraints, negative narratives about civil society, and fragmentation of civil society. A diversity of organizations will be considered, including but not limited to rural/urban, male/female-led, and small/large. Finally, organizations seen as having the potential to be a multiplier in the civil society sector (network membership, function as intermediary support organizations, other



roles), will be given preference. Organizations of various types and thematic focus are encouraged to apply.

An initial screening panel will review all the applications to shortlist them based on basic criteria of organizational development and geographic location. Shortlisted candidates will then be interviewed in order to provide more specific information and recommendations to the final technical review committee. A technical review committee will then recommend the final applicants to be selected as target beneficiaries. The entire selection process is anticipated to take approximately four weeks.

## Background on Resiliency+

Freedoms of association, assembly, and expression are cornerstones of a healthy society that enable citizens to be engaged in the civic life of their communities, champion democratic principles and ideals, and promote and advance human rights. Civic space is essential for CSOs to function freely and without threats to operations or security. CSOs fulfill many important roles, including fostering citizen participation, exercising accountability in governance, advocating for policy change, and delivering essential services to otherwise underrepresented and marginalized communities.

In recent years however, civic space has been shifting at a rapid pace, with **restrictions becoming the norm rather than the exception**. There are multiple ways that restrictions on civic space threaten civil society organizations' ability to function and operate. These include financial or legal restrictions, as well as the role of transparency within the sector and its impact on civil society legitimacy in the eyes of their communities. As operating space changes globally, the civil society sector is forced to rethink traditional organizational development models geared towards the ability to manage their affairs successfully and focus not only on the idyllic end state of equilibrium, but on what is necessary to navigate in the short-term twists and turns on the road to reaching that end state. Organizational resiliency enables civil society to adapt to the impacts of quickly changing external conditions in order to prepare and respond effectively.

The **Resiliency+ Framework and Process** was born out of the need for a new organizational model. The first of its kind, the Framework provides a nuanced understanding of how civil society organizations and actors operate, adapt, and thrive in response to multi-faceted and multi-dimensional changes to socio-political-economic dynamics.

Different from traditional models of sustainability, resiliency gives CSOs the capacity to adapt swiftly and purposefully to shocks or impacts in such a way as to not only survive, but also thrive in an uncertain environment.

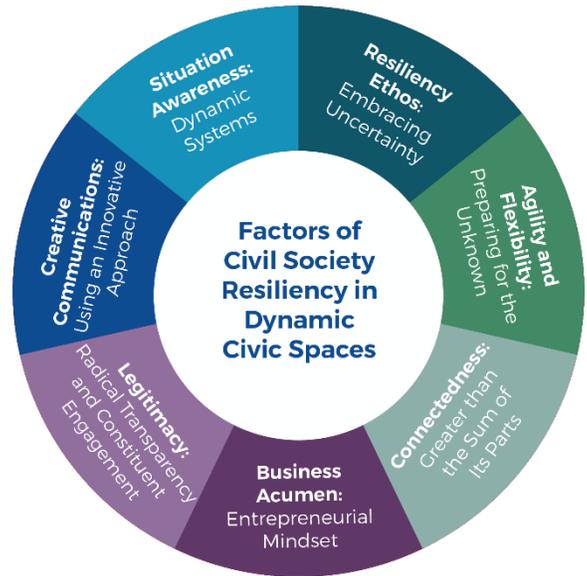
Drawing upon several studies and reports, as well as peer interviews and reputable indices developed by peer organizations, the **Resiliency+ Process** helps CSOs to identify the external threats and internal vulnerabilities impeding them from implementing resilient operations. Using this information, the **Resiliency+ Process** then proposes a menu of strategies, tactics, tools, and peer-to-peer assistance to help

CSOs achieve the seven key drivers needed to adapt quickly in the face of closing civic space (see wheel to the right).

EPCS INSPIRES seeks to increase knowledge and capacity to respond to growing restrictions on democratic freedoms of association, assembly, and expression. With civic space shifting rapidly around the globe, faster and more potent interventions are critical for bolstering local civil societies. Through this process, the consortium expects to identify which interventions and delivery mechanisms are most effective under specific circumstances in order to apply the lessons to a critical mass of CSOs and networks globally, resulting in improved resilience to closing space threats on a sectoral level. More information can be found on the INSPIRES website:

[www.inspiresconsortium.org](http://www.inspiresconsortium.org).

The INSPIRES Consortium is comprised of the following partners:





## THE RESILIENCY+ PROCESS

### PHASE ONE: ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCY

CSOs selected via this solicitation will utilize a self-diagnostic tool devised specifically for this process called the Resilient Organization in Changing Civic Space (ROCCS) Assessment, which analyzes the presence of closing space threats and capacities of the organization.

### PHASE TWO: UNDERSTAND THE ECOSYSTEM

Drawing upon systems mapping and political economy analysis, Resiliency Coaches will guide organizations through the analysis of their “civic space ecosystem” to better understand the context in which they operate, as well as the behaviors and relationships that emerge and interact among various factors and actors that shape the way the context is structured.

### PHASE THREE: DEVELOP A RESILIENCY+ ROADMAP

Using the analysis, CSOs will be guided through a process to devise a customized intervention using the Resiliency+ Matrix, which is comprised of strategies, tools, tactics and approaches that correlate to different threat and resiliency areas, and are intended to increase CSO resiliency.

### PHASE FOUR: LEARN & ADAPT TO EXPLORE NEW ROUTES ALONG THE WAY

Throughout implementation of the customized intervention, organizations will pause and reflect at various points in the process to determine if the planned roadmap is still the most suitable for increasing resiliency based on local conditions, and if not, change direction.



## Enabling and Protecting Civic Spaces (EPCS) – Illuminating New Solutions and Programmatic Innovations for Resilient Spaces (INSPIRES)

### INCREASING CSO RESILIENCY IN CHANGING CIVIC SPACES

#### Application

This process involves a minimum commitment of 12 months of intensive accompaniment. Before completing this application, it is important for your organization to be prepared to engage with a coach and capacity building team that will require time and resources to be prioritized. This application must be completed by an employee authorized to represent the organization for the purposes of this competitive process. Please fill out the requested information and answer the questions below (200 words or less for each question). All responses to this application will remain completely confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside of the selection committee.

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Established: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Registration (Type and Year): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Point of Contact (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_



What is the mission of your organization?

What is the leadership structure of your organization? Please describe in detail.

Please indicate your organization type (check all that apply):

- Advocacy group
- Service provider
- Intermediary support organizations (ISOs) or CSO resource center
- CSO network or coalition
- Development agency
- Policy research
- Professional association
- Community-based organization
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



How many staff does your organization have full-time? Part-time? As consultants? Volunteers?

What does your organization focus on thematically?

Where does your organization work geographically?



Who are the primary beneficiaries/clients of your organization's work?

Do you have any prior experience, either directly or indirectly, receiving funds or support from USAID or other United States Government agencies? If "yes," please describe below.

Do you have experience receiving funds from non-US donors? If so, please describe below:

Please check the box for the description that best fits your organization’s operating context (based on the categories defined in the CIVICUS Monitor<sup>1</sup>):

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p><b>Open:</b> The state both enables and safeguards the enjoyment of civic space for all people. Levels of fear are low as citizens are free to form associations, demonstrate in public places and receive and impart information without restrictions in law or practice. The authorities are tolerant of criticism from civil society groups and provide space and platforms for open and robust dialogue with members of the public. As a rule, the police protect public protesters, and laws governing the freedom of peaceful assembly adhere to international law and standards. There is a free media, online content is uncensored, and citizens can access government information easily.</p>  |
|  | <p><b>Narrowed:</b> While the state allows individuals and civil society organizations to exercise their rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression, violations of these rights also take place. People can form associations to pursue a wide range of interests, but full enjoyment of this right is impeded by occasional harassment, arrest or assault of people deemed critical of those in power. Protests are conducted peacefully, although authorities sometimes deny permission, citing security concerns, and excessive force, which may include tear gas and rubber bullets, are sometimes used against peaceful demonstrators. The media is free to disseminate a wide range of information, although the state undermines complete press freedom either through strict regulation or by exerting political pressure on media owners.</p>        |
|  | <p><b>Obstructed:</b> Civic space is heavily contested by power holders, who impose a combination of legal and practical constraints on the full enjoyment of fundamental rights. Although civil society organizations exist, state authorities undermine them, including through the use of illegal surveillance, bureaucratic harassment and demeaning public statements. Citizens can organize and assemble peacefully but they are vulnerable to frequent use of excessive force by law enforcement agencies, including rubber bullets, tear gas and baton charges. There is some space for non-state media and editorial independence, but journalists face the risk of physical attack and criminal defamation charges, which encourage self-censorship.</p>  |
|  | <p><b>Repressed:</b> Civic space is significantly constrained. Active individuals and civil society members who criticize power holders risk surveillance, harassment, intimidation, imprisonment, injury and death. Although some civil society organizations exist, their advocacy work is regularly impeded, and they face threats of de-registration and closure by the authorities. People who organize or take part in peaceful protests are likely to be targeted by the authorities through the use of excessive force, including the use of live ammunition, and risk mass arrests and detention. The media typically reflects the position of the state, and any independent voices are routinely targeted through raids, physical attacks or protracted legal harassment. Websites and social media platforms are blocked, and internet activism is heavily monitored.</p> |
|  | <p><b>Closed:</b> There is complete closure - in law and in practice - of civic space. An atmosphere of fear and violence prevails, where state and powerful non-state actors are routinely allowed to imprison, seriously injure and kill people with impunity for attempting to exercise their rights to associate, peacefully assemble and express themselves. Any criticism of the ruling authorities is severely punished and there is virtually no media freedom. The internet is heavily censored, many websites are blocked, and online criticism of power holders is subject to severe penalties.</p>  |

<sup>1</sup> <https://monitor.civicus.org/Ratings/>

Please describe the operating environment that your organization works in (social, political, economic context that supports or inhibits your ability to function).

Considering your answer above, please select any boxes below that reflect the challenges your organization is currently facing. Select all that apply and mark an “E” for any threat that is emerging and an “X” for any threat that is currently present in your own environment.

| External Threats         |   |  |  |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|
|                          | Financial Constraints                                     |  | Restrictive and Politicized Legal Environment: |
|                          | Disconnect with Citizens                                  |  | Fragmented and Isolated Civil Society Sector   |
|                          | Disrespect of Civil Liberties                             |  | Emerging Conflict Dynamics                     |
|                          | Divisive Narratives and Control of the Media              |  | Harassment and Direct Attacks                  |
| Internal Vulnerabilities |   |  |  |
|                          | Unresponsive Organizational and Leadership Model          |  | Weak Attention to Staff Wellbeing              |
|                          | Inability to Articulate and Communicate Mission and Goals |  | Lack of Inter-Generational Engagement          |
|                          | Conventional Approach to Business Development             |  | Weak Leverage of Networks                      |



Are there any other threats or vulnerabilities not listed above? If so, please describe:

How do the threats and/or vulnerabilities you selected above impact your organization's ability to operate to its optimal potential?

What, if any, processes or mechanisms are in place within the organization to resolve challenges that arise as a result of changing civic space?

Has your organization ever received technical capacity building or organizational development training or consultations? If so, please describe what areas of capacity were targeted and the method and the outcomes (if any) of that exercise?



Why would this process be different for your organization? Why do you want your organization to go through the Resiliency+ process now?

Are there any additional comments you would like to share regarding the potential of your organization to engage in resiliency planning?