OPEN CALL FOR INTEREST

Med Dialogue

"**Young Civil Society Leadership Program**"

Do you want to boost your civic engagement leadership skills? Are you involved with AI challenges and trends in the Mediterranean? Do you have a common action idea for a civic engament action that can be implemented in the Southern Mediterranean?

Apply now!

Deadline: 26st September 2023 @ 23:59 PM CET

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Contents

List of abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EU	European Union
TA	Technical Assistance
CSF	Civil Society Facility

Timetable (tentative)

Call published	27 August 2023
Deadline for requesting clarification	14 September 2023
Deadline for applications	26 September 2023
Selection results announced	31 September 2023

About The Civil Society Facility for the Mediterranean

The Civil Society Facility for the Mediterranean is an initiative launched by the European Commission, aiming at establishing a series of Partnerships with key Civil Society actors with a view to support a Regional Structured Dialogue between Civil Society in the Mediterranean and the EU, as well as supporting Capacity Development actions targeting Civil Society in the Mediterranean. This aims at fostering and promoting a functioning, pluralistic and participatory democracy in the EU Southern Neighbourhood countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, and Syria). This is to be achieved through increasing participation of Civil Society Organisations in policy making process and policy dialogue as well as by promoting the public accountability and advocacy roles of civil society.

The Med Dialogue for Rights and Equality II is the Technical Assistance initiative supporting the Civil Society Facility for the Mediterranean mentioned above. This Technical Assistance represents the continued committment of the European Union in supporting the civil society in Southern Neighbourhood countries. It recalls the importance of civil society as an agent for change and an essential component for democracy, whose participation in public processes and in policy dialogues will inevitably lead to more inclusive and effective policies, sustainable development, and public accountability. It is also a strong reminder of the centrality of the civil society in EU's various development policy frameworks, regional, thematic, and bi-lateral cooperation programs.

Within the framework of the Med Dialogue for Rights and Equality II, a scheme supporting the capacity development of a new generation of Civil Society Young leaders in the Mediterranean has been established: **the Young Civil Society Leadership Program.** This program will aim at creating a community of practice composed by young leaders from the Southern Mediterranean around skills and topics of relevance for the region. Throughout its three-year duration, a total of 75 leaders will benefit from training, mentoring and joint development of common actions, that will be deployed in their countries. Furthermore, synergies will be sought between the Young Civil Society Leadership Program and the Structured Dialogue process put in place between Civil Society in the Southern Mediterranean and the European Union.

What is a CSO?

Our Program adopts the EU definition of civil society organisations, which considers CSOs to include all non-State, not-for-profit structures, non-partisan and nonviolent, through which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic. Operating from the local to the national, regional and international levels, they comprise urban and rural, formal and informal organisations.

About Supporting Young Leaders & CSO Networks

T**he Civil Society Facility for the Mediterranean** is looking for civil society's young female and male actors, who are committed to addressing Mediterranean policy challenges beyond national borders with the aim of strengthening their leqdership and capacity to strategise, cooperate together, advocate for rights and equality in the region and engage in a regular structured dialogue in order to promote the culture and values of democratic governance.

CALL 1: Good governance and AI deployment challenges and opportunities in the Euro-Mediterranean space

BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS AND PROGRAM RATIONALE:

Civil society plays a pivotal role in promoting good governance, as it ensures transparency, accountability, and citizen participation. By acting as a watchdog, civil society bridges the gap between citizens and the government, offering platforms for engagement and valuable insights into policymaking. This check-and-balance mechanism complements government efforts, amplifies citizen voices, and strengthens overall government effectiveness and accountability. Civil society advocates for transparency, making data and information accessible to the public to ensure decision-makers are accountable for their actions. Accountability ensures that individuals and institutions are responsible for their decisions and actions. Civil society fosters responsibility and openness among government officials, making them more responsive to the public's needs. Moreover, civil society actively involves stakeholders, promoting inclusivity and diverse perspectives in decision-making. In return, good governance creates an enabling environment for civil society to flourish and fulfil its vital societal roles. When civil society and good governance work together, a more transparent, participatory, and responsive governance system benefits society at large, contributing to the overall well-being of a community.

The participation of young people in civic activities brings fresh perspectives, energy, and innovative ideas that enhance governance practices and encourage inclusivity and diversity. They advocate for issues that matter to their generation, ensuring that policies cater to the diverse needs of society**. One such issue is the rapid development and application of advanced technologies including Artificial Intelligence (AI)** (which is the simulation of human intelligence in machines, enabling them to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, in and for the public sector) . On the one hand, using AI can improve the functioning of the machinery of governments in various ways. For instance, advanced technologies including AI can help design policies and make better decisions, improve communication and engagement with citizens and residents, and enhance the speed and quality of public services, therefore enhancing efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness. On the other hand, civil society can utilise the capabilities of advanced technologies to advance improved and all-encompassing governance. This can be achieved by ensuring that ethical factors are considered during advanced technology development and implementation, incorporating technologies, specifically

AI, to encourage inclusivity in local and regional governance methods, and striving to improve governance practices while promoting collective decision-making that upholds cultural diversity and human rights.

The link between good governance, civil society, and AI is twofold: 1) on the on hand, civil society can use AI to enhance its capacity to influence/contribute to good governance (AI as a tool); 2) on the other hand, civil society can contribute to ensure that governments use AI in a transparent, accountable, ethical manner (AI as policy and regulatory subject).

As part of this joint action, we encourage young civil society actors to apply and join a capacity and leadership program as well as to propose common action that leverage advanced technologies including Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance good governance and/or enrich the debate and contribute to strengthening the role of young leaders from civil society and their contribution to building good governance frameworks for advanced technologies use in the Southern Mediterranean.

The selected participants **will benefit from:**

- A tailor-made empowerment program that will run over 12 months and include online and physical meetings.
- Build and connect to a network and a community of young leaders from the Southern Mediterranean region
- Appropriate assistance to Implement concrete actions or a common action
- The best participants will be recommended and supported to participate at high level policy dialogues within the Euro-Med space.
- Best participants will be invited with all expenses covered to attend the ALF Forum in 2025.

Participants **will commit to:**

- Attend the full skills development program including online training, working groups; physical meeting in a bootcamp;
- Develop and implement a common action related to the program topic
- Contribute to the conversations, networking and peer to peer learning of the Alumni network.

Program thematic focus:

Applicants are encouraged to think creatively and pursue **objectives that promote the responsible use of AI in governance. Examples of such objectives include** (but are not limited to):

- Ensure transparent, ethical, and accountable use of advanced technologies including AI in government practices.
- Empower civil society to use advanced technologies including AI in influencing and contributing to good governance effectively.
- Enrich the debate and strengthen the role of young leaders from civil society in building responsible AI governance frameworks in the Euromed space.

Good governance includes **several crucial aspects necessary for governments' ethical and efficient operation. We encourage applicants to pay attention to the following key dimensions when designing your common action:**

- Transparency: This aspect concerns information transparency, availability, and comprehensibility. Transparent governance guarantees that decisions, procedures, and actions are visible and clear to the general public. This involves revealing pertinent information, providing access to data, and being responsible for decisions.

- Accountability: Being accountable means taking responsibility for your actions and decisions, and being open to scrutiny. Good governance requires clear mechanisms to hold individuals and institutions accountable for their performance and use of resources.

- Participation involves stakeholders, citizens, and affected parties in the decision-making process. This helps to promote inclusivity, diversity of perspectives, and a sense of ownership among those involved.

- Rule of Law: To achieve good governance, it is essential to follow the law, which mandates that laws be implemented equally for everyone without bias or partiality. This principle guarantees impartiality, consistency, and reliability in governance.

- Effectiveness and Efficiency: For governance to succeed, it must achieve its goals effectively and utilize resources efficiently. This means that policies and programs should generate the intended results, while resources should be utilized optimally.

- Responsiveness: A key aspect of good governance is being responsive to the needs and concerns of citizens and stakeholders. It's important for decision-makers to pay close attention to feedback and changing circumstances, and be willing to adjust policies and strategies accordingly. By doing so, they can better serve and support the people they represent.

- Equity and Inclusiveness: Promoting fairness and inclusivity, good governance ensures that everyone has equal access to opportunities and benefits. Its objective is to reduce disparities and address the needs of marginalized groups.

- Integrity: This dimension highlights the importance of honesty, ethical conduct, and the lack of corruption. Maintaining integrity ensures that government officials prioritize the public's well-being over their gain.

- Sustainability: When making decisions and policies, those in charge need to consider the long-term effects on society, the economy, and the environment to ensure sustainability.

To promote the responsible use of AI in governance and tackle relevant dimensions of good governance, applicants should propose common action focusing on specific actions. These could include (but, again, not being limited to):

- Data Analysis and Insights: Gather local evidence and analyse data to inform policy and advocacy efforts, promoting evidence-based decision-making for good governance.

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- Transparency and Accountability: Utilize advanced technologies including AI-driven methods to monitor government activities and results, holding public officials accountable, promoting transparency, and advocating for ethical decision-making.
- Citizen Engagement and Feedback: Experiment with advanced technologies including AI to facilitate citizen engagement, collect feedback on government policies, and promote transparency while enhancing citizen participation in decision-making processes.
- Policy Analysis and Impact Assessment: Use advanced technologies including AI to analyse proposed policies, predict their impact, and identify potential unintended consequences. Nurture public policy dialogue and advocacy efforts to prioritise good governance and public interest.
- Technology for Social Change: Leverage technology, including AI-powered sensors and monitoring systems, to advocate for sustainable policies, overcome language barriers, and ensure inclusivity.
- Smart Decision-Making: Use AI algorithms to analyse complex scenarios, predict outcomes, and recommend optimal courses of action, contributing to more informed decision-making in governance.
- Fighting Disinformation and Stereotypes: Utilize advanced technologies including AI tools to combat disinformation, fake news, and harmful stereotypes, promoting transparency, trust, and social harmony in the community.
- AI Public Policy Dialogue/Policy Making: Engage with policymakers and stakeholders to influence AI-related policies, build coalitions, and support effective policy changes.
- Watchdog Role: Promote transparency and accountability, monitor AI-related human rights violations, and defend civil society space in AI debates.
- Digital Security and Privacy: Protect personal data and ensure digital security when using online platforms, especially those using AI for advocacy or activism.
- Educational/Informational Materials and Awareness Campaigns: Develop materials, data, workshops, and awareness campaigns emphasizing the ethical implications of AI.

PROGRAM PHASING:

The program will be implemented over 4 phases:

1. **SKILLS UPGRADING:** This phase will be conducted online and will provide all participants knowledge and skills in thematic areas, civil society-related skills, and technology literacy. This phase will be conducted through online modules, which will be organized in 4 capsules, each with a duration of approximately 3 hours. Each capsule will consist of:
   o A list of readings, links to online resources and other relevant documentation (which will be distributed to participants prior to the online session) to enhance participants' understanding of the key concepts, challenges, and policy frameworks related to these topics.
   o One master class per topic, to be provided by a thematic expert (1.5 hours).

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   o One session of exchange between the thematic expert and the participants to foster peer-to-peer learning and discussion (1.5 hours).

2. **IDEATION (IDEA FAIR):** This phase will be conducted online to allow young leaders to continue finetuning their common actions or ideas and will also aim at identifying potential synergies and duplication.

3. **COMMUNITY BUILDING BOOTCAMP:** This phase is a face-to-face gathering of three days that focuses on jointly formulating the actions and ideas, with the guidance of project team, mentors and experts. It will consist of:

   o Day 1: Final Development of Actions - Participants will work with their mentors to further develop their action plans, including work plans, calendars, and budgets. Mentors will provide guidance and support to ensure that the ideas are translated into actionable plans.

   o Day 2: Creation of Synergies among Actions - Participants will engage in discussions and workshops to identify and explore potential synergies among the different actions proposed by the participants. The aim is to align and coordinate the actions towards a common cause, and to identify opportunities for non-financial support among the actions. Mentors will facilitate these discussions and provide guidance on how to optimize synergies.

   o Day 3: Bonding among Participants - This day is dedicated to fostering a sense of community and building relationships among the participants. Activities may include team-building exercises, group discussions, and networking sessions. The goal is to promote collaboration, mutual understanding, and trust among the participants, which is essential for community building.

The face-to-face nature of the bootcamp provides an opportunity for participants to interact directly with mentors and their peers, facilitating deeper discussions, exchanges of ideas, and building meaningful connections. It aims to create a cohesive and collaborative community of young Civil Society leaders who are aligned around a common cause and are prepared to work together towards their action plans. The bootcamp also serves as a platform for further refining and strengthening the ideas and action plans before moving on to the next phase of the program. Overall, the Community Building Bootcamp is an important step in nurturing a supportive and dynamic community of Young Civil Society Leadership.

Travel and accommodation expenses, visa fees are coveredby Med Dialogue for Rights and Equality.

The meeting language at the bootcamp is English.

4. **COMMON ACTION:** One of the end results of the bootcamp is the finalisation of the development of a advocacy action involving all participants, which shall take place

simultaneously in the participants' home towns/regions. Therefore, this phase focuses on implementing common actions formulated during the bootcamp. This phase allows participants to take further the knowledge, skills, and ideas developed during the training and apply them and drive meaningful change. In this, the action initially proposed should be:

a. toned and improved during the bootcamp (topic and activity types), building upon the ideas brought by the participants,

b. Organised within a specific timeframe (from 1 week to 1 month),

c. Given a common focus, a commonly agreed framework and a central operational coordination, while taking place through decentralized activities.

To carry out the activities of the common action, support will be allocated. Objectives, format and timetable of the common action will be incubated and agreed upon during the bootcamp. The common action is expected to encourage networking and cooperation at regional scale. It should be able to produce a multiplier effect through simultaneous trans-national initiatives/ actions.

Who can apply?

Candidates submitting their application through this Call must:

- Be nationals of the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, Syria.
- Be between 18 and 35 years old.

They should meet the following criteria:

- Applicant must have good track record of civic engagement, advocacy and policy dialogue,
- Be actively engaged in their communities and having demonstrated to have an impact on the ground,
- Have an expertise and experience in facing AI challenges and opportunities in the Mediterranean,
- Be able to conceive a proposal for a common action to be discussed at the bootcamp,
- Being part of a formal or informal CSO is not mandatory, although it will be considered an advantage. Whenever an applicant is a member of a CSO, it must be stated clearly in the application.

The following profiles are invited to submit their candidature:

- Activists or planners engaged in addressing governance and advanced technologies including AI challenges
- Journalists investigating on or covering governance and/or advanced technologies related matters and challenges in the region
- Businessmen and experts working in the advanced technologies including AI fields

Through this Open Call, up to 25 candidates will be selected. During the selection, the Program will take into account the following aspects:

- Fulfilment of the criteria listed above,
- Balanced representation of all the target countries,
- Gender balance,
- Indication of the capacity to assume responsibility for the common action proposed.

The Program reserves the right to eventually directly identify up to 5 highly qualified participants.

Application process

Applicants will need to submit the following:
- Online Application Form (Application), including:
- A proposal outline for a common action related to the link between AI, good governance and civil society to be discussed at the bootcamp (EN or FR maximum 2 pages);
- A motivation letter of no more, nor less than two pages (Arial 11, simple space) and a detailed Curriculum vitae of no more than four pages, which has to follow the Europass template (https://europa.eu/europass/en), both in **English only**.

Only complete applications, meeting the eligibility criteria and submitted before the deadline will be considered.

Due to the high volume of requests, responses to individual requests will not be provided.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

In case of technical problems or questions related to the call, please send questions to: ALF YOUNGCS.LEADERSHIP@bibalex.org.

Deadline for submitting applications: 26th September 2023 @23:59 PM CET

- Applications should be submitted via ALF portals (link);
- Only complete applications (including Application Form, CV inline with the template provided and Common action proposal) will be assessed.
- Should you have any **questions** regarding your application, please write to YOUNGCS.LEADERSHIP@bibalex.org before the 15th September 2023 @ 23:00 PM CET.
- **Only selected candidates** will be informed by e-mail.

Alumni Network

An alumni network will be created with the first intake of CS young leaders. It will give the beneficiaries an opportunity to:

- Participate in online social tools and dialogue meetings aimed at building communication channels between leaders from the different countries, exchanges of experiences, ideas and exploring new opportunities together after the end of the Program.

- Receive information on capacity building and other opportunities, through the Program information channels
- Promote his/her profile on the Program website and social media including through video blogs
- Share relevant information on new platforms for communication.

Checklist for applicants

Application Form	
Curriculum Vitae in English using the europass format (https://europa.eu/europass/en)	
Proposal for a common action Form	

Indicative timeline

27/08/23	Launch of the call.
07/09/23	Online information session (details will be published on the ALF' website).
14/09/23	Deadline to receive requests for clarifications.
18/09/23	Deadline to publish answers to requests for clarifications on ALF's website.
26/09/23	Deadline to receive submissions.
31/09/23	Notification of pre-selected applicants.
03/10/23	Tenure of the Guidance Session to provide recommendation to revise the common action ideas and develop them further.
08/10/23	Submission of the revised ideas.
20/10/23	Publication of the final selection results.
20/10-11/23	Skill upgrading program (online).
15/01/24	Ideation camp (online).
15/02/24	Community building Bootcamp.
15/03/24	Common action rollout.
20/06/24	Closure.