**Call for Applications: Spotlight Initiative for Central Asia** **and Afghanistan: Civil Society Regional Reference Group (CS-RRG)**

**Background**

The Spotlight Initiative (SI) for Central Asia and Afghanistan will invest in the development of a Central Asia Alliance on SGBV, comprised of both government and non-governmental stakeholders, including parliamentarians, ministries and government departments, judiciary and police, civil society organisations (CSOs), activists, survivors, youth, men and religious leaders. The role of the Alliance will be to develop action-oriented models, tools and alliances with the sole purpose of contributing towards increased efficacy, inclusion and scope of state and non-state prevention, response and behaviour change strategies and tools to end SGBV and harmful practices including, child, early and forced marriages. Through the SI partnership in Central Asia, key recommendations emerging from the January 2018 Gender Study for Central Asia carried out by the European Commission would be addressed.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Mobilising the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, as well as in partnership with Afghanistan, the SI seeks to fill a vital vacuum in the region, while bolstering the work of the SI Country Programmes. Currently there is a certain lack of consensus and common platform in Central Asia around SGBV prevention, response, and behaviour change to support the on-going national and community efforts in this regard. The SI Regional Programme for Central Asia will ensure that all models, tools, and transformational approaches adopted at the regional level reinforce and support the implementation of the international norms and standards guiding work on SGBV, including the CEDAW, the CRC and the Council of Europe (CoE)’s Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence – also known as the Istanbul Convention. In addition, the models will reflect the importance of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) methodologies – including costing – to ensure prevention and response to SGBV is robust.

**Civil society engagement and participation**

Success of the SI in Central Asia relies on the meaningful engagement of women's rights groups and relevant human rights-based civil society organisations, including those representing young women and groups facing intersecting forms of discrimination (e.g. women and girls living in rural communities, women and girls who are survivors of violence, women and girls living with HIV/AIDS, LBTQI persons, women and girls from ethnic minorities and indigenous communities, women and girls living with disabilities, etc.), and is a key principle of the Spotlight Initiative.

In line with this, a **Civil Society Regional Reference Group (CS-RRG)** will be established as an institutional mechanism to facilitate systematic civil society engagement in the design and implementation of the Spotlight Regional Programme in Central Asia and Afghanistan and draw on its expertise. The CS-RRG will serve a dual function — to advise the Initiative and to advocate and partner for the realization of its objectives.

**Objective**

The United Nations and European Union Delegation in Kazakhstan collectively invites applications from suitably qualified applicants for the **CS-RRG**, a pro bono advisory board to the new Spotlight Initiative on VAWG (Violence against women and girls) for Central Asia and Afghanistan that is planned to start in the 3rd quarter of 2020.

**Composition of the Civil Society Regional Reference Group for Central Asia and Afghanistan**

The CS-RRG is a group of 15 regional experts on eliminating VAWG and harmful practices (HP) as well as on women’s rights more broadly. The CS-RRG will also nominate its members to serve on the Regional Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee[[2]](#footnote-2) of the Spotlight Initiative as non-voting representatives. In addition to advising the Regional Multi-Stakeholder Committee of the Initiative, the CS-RRG will have a close working relationship with the Spotlight programme team in Kazakhstan to ensure its systematic engagement in providing technical advice and informing programming on addressing VAWG, including for the most marginalized groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, which is key to responding to Agenda 2030’s ‘leaving no one behind’ imperative.

**Duration of the mandate**

Members of the CS-RRG will serve in their personal capacity. The initial appointment will be for a period of **two years** and can be extended for a maximum of three years.

**Selection Criteria**

A maximum of 15 members for CS-RRG will be selected. To preserve a balance among members, candidates meeting the following criteria will be given special consideration (each member must meet a minimum of 4 criteria):

* At least 50% of the CS-RRG members should be leaders or members of regional/sub-regional women’s rights organizations/ networks, including women’s funds and those representing local/grassroots communities, with significant experience working on women’s rights and gender equality and have expertise in eliminating VAWG using a human rights-based approach
* Additionally, members should include individuals with knowledge of human rights and feminist frameworks and experience in issues of protection
* In adherence with the *leaving no one behind* (LNOB) principle, intersectionality and diversity of communities/constituencies should be well represented, and survivors of VAWG, sexual and reproductive health and rights activists, leaders of indigenous groups, LBTQI leaders, representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities, grassroots organizations, community-based organizations, networks and movements, labour/trade unions and activists living with HIV, migrant, domestic, informal and sex workers will be considered for inclusion
* Geographic balance will be a key consideration to ensure fair representation of all states/regions/districts on the CS-RRG
* The Group should include representatives from important constituencies such as youth networks, faith-based groups and networks of men and boys working on eliminating VAWG using a human rights-based approach
* CS-RRG members will not have any formal affiliations with governments or political parties
* CS-RRG members join the group in their individual capacity and not as representatives of their organizations

Additionally, members assume their roles on the CS-RRG in their individual capacity, and not as representatives of their organisations or as individual contractors. All decisions and actions undertaken by the CS-RRG shall therefore be guided solely by the best interests of the Spotlight Initiative’s country programme, goals and objectives.

In line with the criteria outlined above a longlist of applicants will be put together for further selection. A selection committee consisting of UN Agencies and a regional representative of CSOs, will review the long-list of candidates and offer the most qualified 12-15 candidates to become formal members of the Spotlight Initiative CS-RRG in Central Asia and Afghanistan. The selection committee will make decisions by consensus.

**Application requirements**

All interested persons must submit their application package (below) to the following emails: abylaikhan.dauletalin@one.un.org and sagida.yerkinbay@one.un.org with the title ‘Spotlight Initiative - application to CS-RRG for Central Asia and Afghanistan’:

1. Filled-in application form (the template is provided in Annex I below)

2. A curriculum vitae (CV) of no more than 3 pages, including your professional training and work experience, including of the women's/feminist movement

3. A motivation letter of no more than 1 page expressing the reasons for the application and the contributions you would bring to the CS-RRG

4. Please get familiarized with attached Annex II (Terms of Reference CS-RRG) and Annex III (Code of Conduct) that each member is expected to sign upon selection

5. Please submit your applications by **07 August 2020**.

**Annex I**: **Application form for Spotlight Initiative’s Civil Society Regional Reference Group in Central Asia and Afghanistan**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of representative** | **Areas of experience and expertise**  | **Experience working with marginalized groups**  | **Experience working primarily at national, local, grassroots, community-based or international levels** | **Email of representative**  |
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1. EuroPlus Consulting, for the European Commission (2018). “Regional Overview Final Report: Gender Study for Central Asia”, January 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Governing Body of the Spotlight Initiative is responsible for providing strategic direction and leadership on the Initiative. Representation on the Governing Body is as follows: High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Josep Borrell, UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Jutta Urpilainen, Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, eminent women’s rights and civil society leader with experience on eliminating VAWG [↑](#footnote-ref-2)