



TE TANGO  
AKARANGATIRA  
ORA'ANGA



**INTERNAL  
AFFAIRS**

**GOVERNMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS  
MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

[Cook Islands Social Impact Fund Criteria  
& Guideline]

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**Administered by  
the Ministry of Internal Affairs**

**Introduction:**

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (INTAFF) administers the Cook Islands Social Impact Fund (SIF), which receives full funding from the Cook Islands Government. SIF operates as a contestable grant and initiative aimed at offering crucial assistance to Civil Society Organizations (CSO's) across the Cook Islands. Its primary goal is to facilitate the execution of projects and programme addressing urgent social issues, fostering community development, and contributing to national development objectives, with a specific emphasis on empowering the most vulnerable members of society. SIF provides support to registered CSO's, Charitable Group, Sports and Faith-based Organizations, and Community Groups.

This policy outlines the criteria, guidelines, procedures and evaluation governing the allocation and management of funds administered by INTAFF under SIF.

**Objectives:**

SIF operates with the following key objectives:

- Provision of financial support to CSO's for executing projects and programme aimed at addressing social challenges and enhancing the well-being of Cook Islanders;
- Promotion of collaboration and partnership among CSO's, various stakeholders to effectively tackle social issues; and
- Assurance of transparency, accountability, compliance and efficiency in the allocation and utilization of SIF funds.

SIF managed by INTAFF, aligns its initiatives with the National Sustainable Development Agenda, Te Ara Akapapa'anga (NSDA2020+) goals and operates within the framework of national social policies developed by the INTAFF.

**Purpose:**

The SIF serves as a platform for CSO's to deliver high-quality services, including projects and programme, tailored to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of society.

**Priority Area:**

Focused area primarily on NSDA2020+ goals and SIF priorities are as follows:

**NSDA2020+:**

- Goal 1. Wellbeing for all;
- Goal 7. Health and Healthy Lifestyles;
- Goal 9. Our Inclusiveness (Gender, Equity and Social Inclusion);
- Goal 13. Cultural Heritage, History, Identity and language; *and*
- Goal 15. Our Security, a Peaceful and Just Society

**SIF priorities:**

- Gender - Equality & Empowerment;
- Youth - Development & Empowerment;
- Children – Development & Protection;
- Person with Disability – Inclusion & Participation;
- The Elderly – Positive Ageing & Care;
- Domestic Violence – Elimination & Provision; *and*
- Mental Health - Improve Mental Health & Care.

Calls for proposals are issued at least annually, once (1) a year for Project Funding, and once every three (3) years for Programme Funding.

Proposals that meet the needs of one or more of the above priorities may be considered, provided that clear links can be shown.

| Priority Areas                    | Outcomes   | Outputs  |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Gender - Equality & Empowerment.  | <p>Participation of women and girls, men and boys, transgender in economic development; and</p> <p>Equitable participation of women and men in decision making, governance and political representation.</p> | <p>CSO Partnership Policy 2014</p> <p>National Social Policies (Administer by the Ministry of Internal Affairs);</p> <p>Social Impact Fund Administration Processes and Documents; and</p> |
| Youth – Development & Empowerment | <p>Participation of youth in economic, education &amp; lifelong opportunities; and</p> <p>Strengthening strong family values, cultural and support systems;</p>  | <p>Training and support to Cook Islands CSO's.</p>   |

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| <p>Children –<br/>Development &amp;<br/>Protection</p>         | <p>Improved living conditions, health and welfare of children; and</p> <p>The care and protection of children and young people at risk.</p>  |  |
| <p>Person with Disability – Inclusion &amp; participation.</p> | <p>Inclusion &amp; participation of person with disabilities in economic and employment, education, cultural, spiritual and recreation at all levels of family, community, island and national life; and</p> <p>Provision and support services to improve living conditions, health and welfare to all persons with disabilities and their families.</p> |  |
| <p>The Elderly – Positive Ageing &amp; Care.</p>               | <p>Participation of older persons in economic and employment, education, cultural, spiritual, and recreation at all levels of family, community, island and national life; and</p> <p>Provision and support services to improve living conditions, health and welfare of older persons.</p>  |  |
| <p>Domestic Violence – Elimination &amp; Provision</p>         | <p>Elimination of violence against women and children; and</p> <p>Provision of support services to survivors, perpetrators and families of domestic violence.</p>  |  |

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|---|---|--|
| Mental Health<br>- Improve<br>Mental Health<br>Care | Participation of people with<br>mental disorders in all levels<br>of family, community,<br>island and national life; and<br><br>Provision of social care<br>services in community<br>based such as Suicide and<br>Respite care. |  |
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### Social Impact Fund Structure

The SIF has three components – a programme component, project component and support & awareness component. Proposals that involve activities in the Pa Enuu are also assessed.

#### 1. Programme Funding:

- Programme funding supports the delivery of targeted services to specified priority areas over a period of upto a term of three (3) years; and
- Funding range: **\$20,000.00 to \$100,000.00.**

#### 2. Project Funding:

- Project funding is designated for small-scale initiatives that can be completed within one (1) year; and
- Funding range: **\$5,000.00 to \$20,000.00.**

### Funding Criteria:

**To be eligible for funding, CSO’s must adhere to the following conditions:**

- **Registration and Operation:**  
Be registered as a CSO in the Cook Islands with Ministry of Justice or Cook Islands Civil Society Organisations or Charitable Trust and conduct operations within the Cook Islands.
- **Alignment with Cook Islands Development:**  
Demonstrate that program objectives align with and contribute to National Sustainable Development Agenda, Te Ara Akapapa’anga (NSDA2020+) goals of the Cook Islands.
- **Financial Account:**
- Maintain a local bank account under the CSO's name with a minimum of two authorized signatories.
- **Governance Standards:**  
Uphold high governance standards, ethical conduct, and fulfill reporting and accountability obligations.
- **Government Endorsement:**  
Obtain endorsement from the Island Government and ensure alignment with the Island

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Development Plan if operating in the Pa Enuu.

- **Stakeholder Support:**  
Secure endorsement from relevant stakeholders, umbrella organizations, or affiliated partner CSO's.
- **Employment:**  
Employment within the SIF Programme Fund **ONLY** is exclusively evaluated and facilitated in accordance with the Employment Relations Act 2012. To ensure compliance, proposal must provide supporting documentation including the Job Distribution (JD), Employment Contract Agreement and Performance Appraisal.
- **Tax Compliance:**  
Coordinate with the Revenue Management Division of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management regarding tax obligations for employees, such as PAYE Tax and VAT reimbursement/exemptions.
- **Superannuation Obligations:**  
Engage with the Cook Islands National Superannuation Fund (CINSF) Office regarding superannuation obligations for employees.

**Excluded Activities:**

The following are **NOT** supported nor funded:

- **Prizes, Gifts, and Awards:**  
Funding does not support these types of expenditures.
- **Cash Awards, Donations, and Micro Credit Loans:**  
These financial activities are not eligible for funding.
- **Construction:**  
Funding does not cover general construction, except for cases where it contributes to providing services or other improvements and resources on a case-by-case basis.
- **Social Functions Catering:**  
Excludes catering for social functions except for workshops, conferences, awareness events, and meetings. Purchase of alcohol is prohibited.
- **Scholarships and Internships:**  
Funding does not cover scholarships or internships.
- **Political Activities:**  
Excludes funding for political influence, initiatives & activities, except for educational and voter awareness programs.
- **Government Projects and Humanitarian Aid:**

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Funding does not support government projects or humanitarian aid efforts such as relief supplies after cyclones, natural disaster or pandemic.

- **Reimbursement:**  
The fund does not provide support or funding for expenses incurred in previous years or for expenditures related to proposals that have not yet been submitted or have already been submitted.
- **Beauty Pageants and Projects Benefiting Individuals:**  
Excludes funding for beauty pageants or projects benefiting individual families.
- **Purchase of Motor Vehicles and Agricultural Chemicals:**  
Funding does not cover the purchase of motor vehicles or agricultural chemicals.
- **Religious/Evangelical Activities:**  
Excludes funding for activities promoting specific religious beliefs, establishment of churches, or projects requiring adherence to specific beliefs. Projects must have clearly defined objectives and benefit the local community rather than religious institutions exclusively. Additionally, church groups receiving funding must open their services to other church groups and the community.

### **Operational Guidelines for Civil Society Organizations (CSO's) Funding**

1. **Local Transactions:** All activities and payments for goods and services must occur within the Cook Islands. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis if local products are unavailable.
2. **Equitable Allocation:** The Social Impact Fund (SIF) will be allocated through an equitable and contestable process, in accordance with the standards of accountability and transparency outlined in the following:
  - Cook Islands Government Financial Policies and Procedures Manual 2022 - [Part C, Section 8](#); and
  - Purchase and Sale of Goods and Services Policy 2016.
3. **Capacity Building:** Support and training will be provided SIF recipient in results-based planning, delivery, and reporting for funded projects and programme, enabling organizations to effectively account for outcomes.
4. **Long-Term Partnerships:** Multiyear funding arrangements will be prioritized to foster long-term partnerships with CSO's.