International Foundation for Electoral Systems

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS (IFES)

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) for
She Leads Women's Leadership Program in Pakistan

RFA-23-007

February 09, 2023

1. **Request for Application (RFA)**

    1.1. Purpose
    The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to invite civil society organization(s) to submit applications to implement She Leads – a modular women's transformative leadership training program. The objective of this project is to build women's capacity to promote sustainable community development in a peaceful social environment. The RFA provides prospective organizations with the relevant operational and performance requirements. IFES anticipates issuing multiple awards under this RFA.

    1.2. RFA Schedule
    IFES will conduct a competitive process to identify grantees per the tentative timeline below:

Issuance of RFA	February 9, 2023
Questions Due	February 14, 2023; by 17:00 Washington DC (EST)
Response from IFES	February 16, 2023
RFA Closes—All Applications Due	February 28, 2023; by 17:00 Washington DC (EST)
Anticipated Implementation Period	April 2023 – December 2026

2. **General Information**

    2.1. Background
    IFES is an independent, non-governmental organization providing professional support to electoral democracy. IFES supports citizens' rights to participate in free and fair elections. Our independent expertise strengthens electoral systems and builds local capacity to deliver sustainable solutions.

    As the global leader in democracy promotion, we advance good governance and democratic rights by Providing technical assistance to election officials, Empowering the underrepresented to participate in electoral and political processes, and Applying field-based research to improve the electoral cycle.

    Since 1987, IFES has worked in over 145 countries – from developing democracies, to mature democracies.

3. **Application Preparation Instructions**

    3.1. Applicant's Understanding of the RFA
    In responding to this RFA, the applicant accepts full responsibility to understand the RFA in its entirety, and in detail, including making any inquiries to IFES as necessary to gain such understanding. IFES reserves the right to disqualify any applicant who demonstrates less than such understanding. Further, IFES reserves the right to determine, at its sole discretion, whether the applicant has demonstrated such understanding. Such disqualification and/or cancellation shall be at no fault, cost, or liability whatsoever to IFES.

    3.2. Good Faith Statement
    All information provided by IFES in this RFA is offered in good faith. Individual items are subject to change at any time. IFES makes no certification that any item is without error. IFES is not responsible or liable for any use of the information or for any claims asserted there from.

    3.3. Communication
    Verbal communication shall not be effective unless formally confirmed in writing by the IFES officials identified in Section 3.5 of this RFA. In no case shall verbal communication govern over

written communication.

3.3.1. Applicant Inquiries

Inquiries, questions, and requests for clarification related to this RFA should be submitted in writing to the representative listed below by the deadline listed in 1.2. RFA Schedule.

Sayed Ali Asghar
sasghar@ifes.org

Maryam Raufi
mraufi@ifes.org

Questions/Answers and Addenda(s) related to this RFA can be found on IFES Procurement Notices.

3.3.2. Formal Communications shall include, but are not limited to:

- Questions concerning this RFA
- Expressions of Interest
- Pre-award negotiations under this RFA
- Addenda to this RFA

3.3.3.   Addenda

IFES will make a good-faith effort to provide written responses to the questions or requests for clarifications that require addenda by the date set in the RFA Schedule above. All questions, answers, and addenda will be shared with all interested organizations.

3.4. Eligibility

Locally registered Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Non-Political Party Organizations or other similar not-for-profit institutions are invited to apply. If a DPO, CSO, or NGO is not locally registered, a signed letter stating the reason why must be included as part of the application.

Individuals and the following organizations are not eligible to access funding:
- Governmental and semi-governmental institutions
- International organizations
- Political parties or organizations affiliated with or engaging in partisan activities
- Organizations running on a for-profit basis

3.5. Application Instructions

All applications should include the following, in order for their application to be considered:

3.5.1. Technical Application

The Technical Application must include a written application in English describing in detail the applicant's (a) Technical Approach, (b) implementation timeline, and (c) results framework to implement the Program Description as described in Article 4 of this RFA. The evaluation criteria can be found in Article 3.6. Applicants should use the technical narrative template in Attachment A.

3.5.2. Cost Application – Budget & Budget Narrative

- The Budget should reflect costs associated with the technical activities and deliverables. All applicants must use the budget template provided in Attachment B and submit it in Excel format as part of their application. The Budget should be presented in **[USD],** with applicable taxes/charges clearly identified. Unit costs are required and, in the case of discrepancies

between unit costs and total costs, the unit cost will be taken as the reference basis in the evaluation.

- The applicant must agree to keep these costs valid for a minimum of 90 calendar days.
- The Cost Application should include a Budget Narrative that describes each cost element of the Budget (see column H of Attachment B).

3.5.3. A brief outline of the applicant's organization and experience.

Organizations should demonstrate prior experience working with young people from a wide range of states and regions, particularly rural areas, facilitating training programs, and working on programming such as youth leadership, civic education, and/or elections.

3.5.4. Additional documentation

- When available, a copy of the organization's most recent final, signed audits/financial statements
- Proof of organization's registration or a signed letter indicating why the organization is not registered.
- CVs of key personnel including the organization's Director and anticipated program manager
- Any other supporting document that will strengthen the application

3.6. Application Submission

Applicants must send final applications in electronic copy ia e-mail to the point of contact identified in *3.3.1* on or prior to the closing date and time shown in the *Schedule of Events*.

3.7. Criteria for Selection

The evaluation of each response to this RFA will be based on its demonstrated competence, compliance, format, and organization. The purpose of this RFA is to identify those organizations that have the interest, capability, and financial strength to implement the project as described in Article 4 of this RFA.

1. **Technical Approach, Implementation Timeline, Results Framework**   **40 points**
   - Demonstrated understanding of the RFA and of IFES' requirements
   - Soundness and feasibility of technical approach
   - Reasonable implementation timeline and results framework

2. **Competitive Budget with efficient and reasonable cost structure**   **30 points**
   - Cost realism in response to RFA requirements
   - Clear budget presentation of necessary, allocable and reasonable costs
   - Appropriate balance of budget between operational/personnel costs and activity costs

3. **Past Performance and Organizational Capacity**   **30 points**
   - Extent to which proposed personnel have relevant qualifications and experience
   - Demonstrated capacity to organize, manage and implement full range of activities required to achieve program goals and objectives
   - Demonstrated flexibility to adjust implementation in response to changing environments
   - Demonstrated strong past performance in implementing programs of similar size, scope and complexity
   - Demonstrated presence and/or networks in the proposed target districts

Selection and Notification

Applicants determined by IFES that possess the capacity to compete for this project will be

selected to move into the negotiation phase of this process. Written notification will be sent to these applicants via e-mail. Those applicants not selected for the negotiation phase will also be notified.

4. Scope of Work

She Leads uses an interactive and modular training approach to build women's leadership skills while also facilitating opportunities to use these skills as agents of change within their communities. Through training and assignments, participants will build knowledge of peace, rights, equality, power dynamics, ethical leadership and good governance. She Leads alumnae will influence policy development and lead efforts that address conflict drivers in their communities. All post-training assignments will be designed from a comprehensive Do No Harm approach to anticipate and minimize potential retaliation against advocates engaging in peacebuilding in their community.

She Leads Trainings:

IFES will work with the selected partner to implement the She Leads training, which consists of three core modules – beginner (three days), intermediate (four days) and advanced (four days). The structured, modular program enables the same women to attend a series of consecutive trainings over a period of several months, with approximately six to eight weeks between the training modules. Core topics will include building self-confidence, teamwork, electoral processes in Pakistan, public speaking, networking and building allies, effective negotiation, ethical and inclusive leadership, public communication, and personal action planning.

Deliverables:

- Identify gaps in women's leadership skills and work with IFES to develop curriculum to meet those gaps
- Translate curriculum materials in local languages as needed
- Identify and select 800 She Leads participants, including 200 young women leaders, using established selection guidelines in consultation with IFES
- Conduct three-day beginner, four-day intermediate, and four-day advanced trainings for She Leads participants
- Conduct monitoring and evaluation – in a format agreed to with IFES – throughout the program to measure progress and impact.
- Provide IFES with participant lists, photographs of trainings, and training reports for each training

Community Action Plans and Alumnae Engagement:

Between and after intermediate and advance modules, women participants will carry out assignments. The selected organization will oversee the assignments, including disseminating small microgrants if needed, and tracking participants' progress in meeting their goals.

Deliverables:

- Identify community development-related issues, and at the end of each core module have participants develop action plans which can include but is not limited to:
  - Implementing voter and civic education campaigns emphasizing universal rights to electoral and political engagement
  - Advocating for rights-based policies and reforms by launching initiatives to address community-based concerns, such as health or economic issues for women

- o Advocating to candidates and party leaders to adopt rights-based and inclusion commitments in their campaign platforms
- o Peacebuilding by addressing reasons of community conflict and violence, and developing community cohesion and tolerance
- o Responding to environmental and other local development challenges identified through participatory appraisal approaches
- Devise a system to provide micro grants to She Leads graduates to implement action plans starting from intermediate training
- Establish and facilitate a Community of Practice (CoP) forum/community-based group of She Leads Alumnae at the tehsil and district level, where they will be meeting bi-monthly to discuss the progress of their community-based assignments, share challenges, extend support and develop plans for the execution of the mutual initiatives.
- Arrange lessons learned workshop for She Leads graduates for showcasing and experience sharing for She Leads graduates.
- Establish a network of She Leads alumnae, through a network of sub-area coordinators, that shall meet formally twice a year
- Design, print and disseminate relevant IEC materials for the general public awareness online & community-based campaigns. Each material should be converted into braille and sign language to make it more inclusive.
- Organize celebrations of 8-10 National and International days such as International Women's Day and Democracy Day. (List to be finalized in consultation with IFES.)
- Engage a videographer to document the project documentary to be finalized in consultation with IFES
- Conduct monitoring and evaluation and data collection, in formats agreed to with IFES, to measure progress and impact throughout the program;
- Participate regularly in project coordination/progress review meetings arranged by IFES;
- Submit all programmatic, training, photos, event reports, final report - on monthly basis or as requested by IFES and when required.

Male Champions - Male Allies Training Program :

A core complementary component of the She Leads program is building networks of male allies. A lack of family support is a leading reason which dissuades women from pursuing leadership roles, particularly political ones, driven by factors including pressures of traditional household duties and the fear that women who play a strong role will be targeted by violence. To counter this challenge, IDPG will build a network of male champions through gender sensitization training and peer support with a focus on supporting women to enter leadership positions and gender-sensitive voter registration outreach on the importance of women's political participation to male heads of households as gatekeepers where women's political participation depends on men's support.

Duration: 4 Years
Districts:
Target MALE Allies: 400

- Implement a modular MALE Champions training – "MALE Allies" – to strengthen the peer support network of both MALE Allies to help their women to lead a strong role in their communities. The training program will consist of three core modules - beginners, intermediate, advanced (3 days each), and two add-ons (2 days)
- At the end of each core module the participants will develop action plans around peace/community development-related issues identified during the training. The action plans, in order of priority, will target to support their She leads graduates in the implementation of mutual action plans as well as;
- Devise a system to provide micro-grants to MALE Allies graduates for the implementation of action plans starting from intermediate training
- Establish MALE Allies (Tehsil, District forum) that shall meet and implement community-based interventions regularly
- Arrange lessons learned workshop for showcasing and experience sharing for MALE Allies graduates
- Establish a network of MALE Allies through a network of sub-area coordinators that shall meet formally twice a year

- Conduct monitoring and evaluation – in a format agreed to with IFES – throughout the program to measure progress and impact.
- Provide IFES with participant lists, photographs of trainings, and training reports for each training

5. **Functional Requirements**

   5.1. Timeline:
   Applicants must submit a detailed timeline in their Application showing the time required to implement the services requested. IFES requires all deliverables to be completed not later than December 2026.

   5.2. Monitoring & Evaluation
   - As part of its due diligence, IFES conducts pre-award surveys on all potential grantees to assess capacity and inform the appropriate grant mechanism. In addition, applicants expected to expend $750,000 or more in U.S. funded awards during their fiscal year must have an audit conducted in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F—Audit Requirements. If Applicable, applicants must ensure that funds are included in the grant budget for an audit.

   - IFES will issue the appropriate grant mechanism depending on the nature of the work, the capacity of the grantee, the duration of the grant, and the overall value of the grant.

   - IFES will provide continuous mentorship, training and oversight to ensure grant management practices are in line with anti-corruption principles as well as to build capacity of local grantees to fully manage and implement their programs in adherence to donor regulations and with a view towards sustainability.

   5.3. Deliverables:
   Specific deliverables and reporting will be determined based on the grant activities proposed and negotiated during the negotiation phase.

6. **Additional Terms & Conditions**

6.1. Non-Disclosure Agreement
IFES reserves the right to require any applicant to enter into a non-disclosure agreement.

6.2. Zero Tolerance for Fraud

IFES has zero tolerance for fraud. Fraud is any act or omission that intentionally misleads, or attempts to mislead, to obtain a benefit or to avoid an obligation. If you have concerns about potential fraud in any way related to IFES projects, contracts, or activities, please contact IFES' Compliance Hotline at compliance@ifes.org or at +1 202-350-6791.

6.3. Intellectual Property
Applicants should not use any intellectual property of IFES including, but not limited to, all logos, registered trademarks, or trade names of IFES, at any time, without the prior written approval of IFES, as appropriate.

6.4. Applications
All accepted applications shall become the property of IFES and will not be returned.

6.5. Governing Law
This RFA and the applicants' applications shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, USA.

6.6. Partial Awarding
IFES reserves the right to accept all or part of the application when awarding the grant. IFES also reserves the right to issue multiple awards and procure only items or services from selected applicants.

6.7. No Liability
Issuance of this RFA does not constitute a commitment on the part of IFES to make an award nor does it commit IFES to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of any application in response to this RFA. Further, IFES reserves the right to reject any or all applications received or stop solicitation process at any time, without assigning any reason or liability.

IFES shall not be liable to any applicant, person, or entity for any losses, expenses, costs, claims, or damages of any kind:
- Arising out of, by reason of, or attributable to, the applicant responding to this RFA; or
- As a result of the use of any information, error, or omission contained in this RFA document or provided during the RFA process.

6.8. Entire RFA
This RFA, any addenda to it, and any attached schedules, constitute the entire RFA.

6.9. Attachments
Attachment A: Technical Narrative Template
Attachment B: Budget Template
Attachment C: Organizational Capacity and Past Performance Template

End of RFA

ATTACHMENT A
Technical Narrative Template

I.   General Information

Complete Legal Name of Applicant Organization

Office Address

Legal Mailing Address (if different)

Office Telephone Number(s)

E-Mail Address(es)

Director of Organization

_____

Project Manager/Contact Person

_____

Project Dates (month/year – month/year)

_____

Project Title

_____

UEI Number – If you do not have a DUNS number, please note and leave blank.

_____

PAN Number

II.   Technical Approach:

*Please include the following components in in a maximum of **5 pages***

A. **Project Summary:** describe your project in one paragraph, including objectives, issue, target audience, and geographic coverage.
B. **Need for the project:** identify the problem your project would help to solve. Why is this project important?
C. **Project's Goal and Objectives**: what is the specific goal of your effort? Does it comply with the goals and objectives of the competition?
D. **Target Audience and Stakeholders:** what is your main target audience? What groups of stakeholders will the project primarily serve?
E. **Activities:** identify and describe in detail each activity to be undertaken to produce results, justifying the choice of activities.
F. **Expected Deliverables:** identify specific deliverables that you expect to develop within your project (research/analytical reports; specific strategies; public policy recommendations; etc.).

III.   Implementation Timeline

Please use the following format to provide an implementation timeline

Project Month	Activity	Expected Result	Involved Stakeholders

IV.   Results Framework

Please identify specific results that you expect to realize upon completion of your project and the quantitative and qualitative criteria for the project's success. How will you determine that the project goals have been accomplished? The framework should include:

- A list of results you expect to accomplish throughout the project
- 1-4 performance indicators for each result including a detailed definition for each
- The source, method, frequency and schedule of data collection,
- Staff responsible for collecting data.
- How the performance data will be collected
- How data will be reviewed, analyzed and reported

ATTACHMENT B
Budget Template

CLICK HERE to visit IFES Procurement Notices page and download the budget template

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ATTACHMENT B
Budget Template

ATTACHMENT C
Organizational Capacity and Past Performance Template

I.   Summary
Briefly present your organization's mission, its core activities, and why it is best suited for this project

II.   Human Resources
    A. *Please provide full legal name of organization's Director and / or Chief Executive Officer.*
    B. *Please provide CVs for the core technical members of the team (the director of the organizationtraining or curriculum experts, project manager etc.).*
    C. *Please provide hiring plan for full and part-time positions the organization including a list of positions and recruitment plan or cost-share with existing positions.*

III.   Past Performance
    A. *Briefly describe how your organization's previous experience prepares it to successfully implement the proposed project; highlight the organization's relationship and work experience with lawmakers, political parties or government officials if applicable.*
    B. *Please specify previous work in the relevant field.*
    C. *Please list the organization's major projects from the past five years in the following format:*

Project Name	Project Activities	Donor	Award Amount	Period of Award

IV.   References:
  If applicable, contact information for three references from donor funded projects similar in scope.