International Foundation for Electoral Systems

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS (IFES)

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) for
People Against Violence in Elections (PAVE) in Sri Lanka

RFA-24-010

February 23, 2024

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 the **People Against Violence in Elections (PAVE)** program in Sri Lanka. The objective of this program is to help diverse youth leaders to promote political pluralism and citizen engagement at the subnational level, including through advocacy to local decision makers for governance policies that address priorities as related to youth's electoral participation in Sri Lanka. The RFA provides prospective organizations with the relevant operational and performance requirements. IFES anticipates issuing one award 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 23, 2024
Questions Due	March 1, 2024, by 17:00 Colombo (IST)
Response from IFES	March 06, 2024
RFA Closes—All Applications Due	March 15, 2024; by 17:00 Colombo (IST)
Anticipated Implementation Period	April 2024 – January 2026

2. **General Informational**

   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.

IFES Sri Lanka   **Cayla Vega**
srilanka@ifes.org   **cvega@ifes.org**

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.

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 anticipated ceiling for this RFA is LKR 9,500,000.00**
- 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 **LKR,** 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 "Notes" column in the budget template).

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

- Organizations should demonstrate prior experience working with diverse groups, particularly young people from a wide range of regions within Sri Lanka, particularly rural areas, facilitating training programs in both Sinhala and Tamil, 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

- CVs of key personnel including the organization's Director and anticipated program manager

- Any other supporting documentation or information that may strengthen the application (e.g., links to organizational website and/or social media accounts, documentation or examples of past work).

3.6. Application Submission

Applicants must send final applications in electronic copy via e-mail to the point of contact identified in *3.3.1* on or prior to the closing date and time shown in *1.2 RFA Schedule*.

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   30 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.
   - Budget accounts for all relevant costs in relation to the program. For example, the budget should account for remunerations and travel costs for trainers; should account for anticipated costs related to printing and translating program materials; should

ensure sufficient resources are allocated for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), which may include budgeting for a part- or full-time staff member to oversee M&E; and should account for all costs related to making sure activities and materials are accessible to any participants with disabilities.

- Budget ceiling should not be higher than LKR 9,500,000.00

3. **Past Performance and Organizational Capacity**   **40 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 past experience, presence and/or networks in the project districts or provinces
- Demonstrated experience to reach ethnically diverse urban and rural youth and conduct training in <u>both Sinhala and Tamil</u>
- Demonstrated experience conducting similar trainings funded under USG or other international donor(s) programming.

3.8. 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

Under the People Against Violence in Elections (PAVE) program, IFES will work with the selected partner to train and continue to engage young people (aged 18-29) who have the potential to become future community leaders – at least 50 percent of whom will be women – to promote political pluralism, citizen engagement and community-based violence mitigation, including through advocacy to local decision makers for policies that address youth priorities around elections and their electoral participation. The training program is intended to equip emerging Sri Lankan community leaders with the skills needed to engage constructively in pluralistic spaces and foster greater community resilience and peaceful electoral engagement, especially at the local level. Trained participants will go on to implement initiatives that mitigate drivers of conflict stemming from election tensions and work with government leaders to advocate for governance priorities. The training program will not entail developing new training curricula; it will utilize and build upon the existing PAVE curricula that IFES has developed and used in Sri Lanka and other countries around the world. The selected organization will not be expected to substantially work on PAVE curricula, although IFES may request targeted inputs or information from the organization in the event that IFES needs to make any revisions to the curricula.

IFES anticipates delivering core PAVE modules (Module 1 and Module 2) to at least two cohorts of PAVE participants (25 per cohort) in two districts. Each cohort will participate in two trainings – with each training lasting 2-3 days. Thus, the selected partner will deliver a total of four trainings. Following each training, the selected partner will work with participants to develop and implement advocacy projects, known as action projects, in their districts. In total, the action projects should collectively reach at least 500 people. Applicants' proposals should identify the two districts in which they would

implement PAVE and explain why these districts were selected. To avoid overlapping with existing PAVE programming, applicants <u>should not</u> propose the districts of Jaffna and Hambantota.

It is critical that the program consists of a diverse group of participants, such as individuals from ethnic, religious and gender minority groups as well as people with disabilities. Accordingly, participants should be recruited from youth organizations, universities, women's organizations, disability rights groups, and community-based organizations. Recognizing that youth participation was central to the youth activism and that youth engagement in peacebuilding efforts often results in more sustained impact due to a greater likelihood of mobilizing across political or identity-based divides, young people (aged 18-29) will be the focus of the PAVE program. As mentioned above, alumni from the two training cohorts will form a network and develop action projects, through which they will engage with government officials to advocate for priorities around elections and their democratic participation. Additionally, participants may be selected to join a broader network of PAVE alumni in which they would collaborate with participants from PAVE trainings that were conducted in Jaffna and Hambantota in 2023 and early 2024. Members of this broader network will serve as Peace Ambassadors and will work together to continue to advocate for peaceful political processes.

Conduct PAVE Training:

The selected partner will be responsible for working with IFES to deliver the PAVE trainings in two districts. The partner will work with IFES to identify participants for the program; conduct the trainings; and collect monitoring and evaluation data. The long-term goal of this program is to cultivate approaches to resolving electoral conflict in a constructive and non-violent way, contributing to a more peaceful and inclusive electoral environment. In addition to youth, the program will prioritize the participation of women and minorities. Specific activities include the following:

- Develop a training plan in collaboration with IFES.
- Conduct the PAVE program, to at least two cohorts of PAVE participants (25 per cohort), with each cohort undergoing approximately six days of training. Each PAVE module is roughly 2-3 days long so there would be two trainings per cohort.
  - For participant selection, IFES will rely on the network of the partner for determining potential participants for this training program. However, they should ensure all participants are aged 18-29.
  - The local partner should ensure that at least half of the participants are young women, and that there is representation of youth from minority groups, and young people with disabilities.
- Sign MoUs with universities and colleges, youth groups, civil society organizations, and/or relevant governmental authorities for engagement and training of PAVE participants, as required.
- Provide IFES with participant lists, photographs of trainings, at least two stories of potential changemakers, monitoring and evaluation data, and training reports for each training as requested.

Action Project and PAVE Participant Engagement:

After each training session, participants will carry out action projects focused on constructive and peaceful electoral engagement. Through these action projects, which should focus on advocacy, the 50 PAVE participants are expected to collectively reach an additional 500 people. The selected organization will oversee the action projects, including tracking participants' progress in meeting their goals, and will provide mentorship to the participants. The action projects should be an activity led by the participants with the support of the selected organization. The topics of the action project, therefore, should not be determined by the selected partner but identified by the participants in

consultation with the selected organization. With this in mind, the selected organization will be expected to:

- Establish and facilitate a forum/community-based group of PAVE participants, where they can hold regular meetings to discuss the progress of their action projects, share challenges, extend support and develop plans for the execution of the mutual initiatives.
- Arrange lessons learned workshop(s) for PAVE participants for showcasing and experience sharing.
- Develop a form that the PAVE participants will be responsible for filling out to document activities that take place during the period of performance of this award.
- Provide oversight and mentorship to the PAVE participants. This should include, at a minimum, holding regular check-ins with participants on the progress they were able to make on engaging in these activities and gather data on these initiatives.
- Provide IFES with updates on events and activities, including on social media, through submission of forms and monthly reports as requested.
- Organize outreach activities to expand the reach of the action projects in collaboration with program stakeholders such as elected officials, political party leaders and other government officials.
- Provide IFES with participant lists, photographs of events, at least two success stories, and monitoring and evaluation data.

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 31 January 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

Please use the Excel budget template provided by IFES along with this RFA.

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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 organization training 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.