

**Global Elections and Political Transitions (GEPT) Sub-grant
Program**

**Increasing Participation of Traditionally Marginalized Populations
in Electoral Processes**

Request for Statements of Interest (RSOI)

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INTRODUCTION: GEPT SUB-GRANT PROGRAM

The Consortium for Elections and Political Processes Strengthening (CEPPS) is a joint venture of three partners— the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the National Democratic Institute (NDI). Since 1995, the CEPPS partners have worked to support the development of democratic institutions, processes, and practices in over 140 countries around the world.

CEPPS is currently implementing the Global Elections and Political Transitions (GEPT) Leader with Associates award, a program made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The GEPT program supports elections and political transitions during a period of tremendous social change, marked by the challenges of increased connectivity, the youth bulge, urbanization, migration, and globalization. CEPPS empowers local partners, including traditionally marginalized groups, to build resilient government institutions, political parties, and support credible and participatory electoral processes in fragile states and developing democracies.

Through the GEPT Leader Award, CEPPS will develop and manage a sub-grants program aimed at strengthening the capacity and role of local and regional organizations in countries engaged in support of elections and political transitions. Sub-grants will be used to strengthen local and regional organizations and their support networks. CEPPS has found that regional and global networks provide a vital tool for building sustainable peer-to-peer support, and can offer an additional point of leverage for country-level Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) reforms.

The initiatives to be supported will align with the GEPT Leader Award Program Objectives as follows:

1. Promoting meaningful participation of all citizens in their political systems, including women, youth and other traditionally marginalized groups
2. Harnessing the comparative advantages of media and technology to promote citizen understanding and engagement and transparent political competition
3. Supporting meaningful transition process that establish positive precedents for effective democratic governance
4. Promoting the integrity of elections as a sustainable vehicle for peacefully and democratically choosing leaders
5. Facilitating the ability of elected political actors to fulfill their responsibilities to citizens through better governance practices
6. Promoting competitive and representative multiparty political systems
7. Ensuring respect for the application of impartial legal frameworks and compliance by political actors

Capacity development will be integrated into the sub-grant process through tailored technical assistance. Initial diagnostics will help groups determine priorities and corresponding interventions, recognizing that capacity strengthening is context-specific and requires local ownership. Depending on these needs, sub-grants will strengthen organizational capacity for

learning, adaptation, innovation, inclusion, and evaluation, as well as technical capacity to advance EPT objectives. CEPPS' approach to sub-granting as a capacity-building intervention helps local and regional organizations improve their ability to implement programs, interact with donors, report programmatic results, and manage money. As a result, sub-recipients can develop sustainable operational capacity and democratic organizational cultures built on fundamental principles of ethics, accountability, inclusion, and responsibility.

Equal emphasis in the sub-grants program is placed on: 1) achieving results consistent with one or more of the Program Objectives, 2) building the technical capability of partner organizations to support inclusive elections and advance political transitions independently, and 3) strengthening the organizational capacities of regional and local partners.

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Democracy is more likely to develop and endure when all members of a society are free to participate in political processes and influence political outcomes without suffering discrimination or reprisal. However, in many countries, large portions of the population are restricted or excluded from political participation because of their gender, age, ethnicity, ability, or sexual orientation. There is increased recognition that the full and equal political participation of all segments of society is both a human right and a measure of democratic integrity. Additionally, there is growing evidence that increased participation by traditionally marginalized populations in political processes results in concrete democratic gains, including greater responsiveness to citizen needs, economic progress, increased cooperation across party and ethnic lines, and more sustainable peace.

Despite this, discrimination and political marginalization persist. Discrimination against marginalized populations is deeply embedded within cultural attitudes and are often codified by a country's political, legal, and financial institutions. This creates barriers and limits opportunities for meaningful participation in public life by women, youth, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals, ethnic and religious minorities, and indigenous peoples. It is therefore critical that democracy and governance efforts fully consider the ways in which different groups of people are impacted differently by policies, practices, and proposed interventions and take steps to eliminate the discriminatory attitudes, policies, and practices that constrain participation at the socio-cultural, institutional, and individual levels in order to ensure that inequality is not perpetuated and that inclusion and equality are advanced.

Building upon its experience in partnering with a broad range of organizations, CEPPS will support activities that *increase participation of traditionally marginalized populations in electoral processes by providing* sub-grants to targeted local and/or regional organizations. CEPPS seeks projects which will:

1. Decrease barriers and increase access to electoral processes for traditionally marginalized communities, including women, persons with disabilities, youth, ethnic and religious minorities, LGBTI individuals, and indigenous populations.
2. Inform and empower all members of society to become more active participants in electoral processes.

3. Strengthen the capacity of local and regional organizations and/or networks engaged in promoting the inclusion of traditionally marginalized groups in political life.
4. Support organizations/networks in becoming centers for information sharing, technical assistance, and training to other local organizations on more effectively engaging traditionally marginalized populations in electoral processes.

This sub-grants program seeks to address these challenges by providing support to organizations working to empower traditionally marginalized groups and create more inclusive electoral and political transitions processes. Applicants to the sub-grants program will be asked to undertake activities designed to increase their technical as well as organizational capacity to increase access to high-quality research, information, training, technology, and technical assistance. Examples of illustrative activities in the development of inclusive electoral processes may include, but are not limited to:

1. Public outreach, education, and/or media campaigns
2. Legislative and/or legal advocacy around electoral law, policies, and practices
3. Training, sensitizing, and capacity building for election management bodies (EMBs)
4. Provision of professional development and/or academic courses that provide training on increasing participation of marginalized groups in electoral processes
5. Civic organizing

Activities that typically are **not** considered competitive include:

- The provision of humanitarian assistance
- English language instruction
- Development of high-tech computer or communications software and/or hardware
- Purely academic exchanges or fellowships
- External exchanges or fellowships
- Theoretical explorations of human rights or democracy issues, including projects aimed primarily at research and evaluation that do not incorporate training or capacity-building for local civil society
- Micro-loans or similar small business development initiatives
- Activities that go beyond an organization's demonstrated competence, or fail to provide clear evidence of the ability of the applicant to achieve the stated impact
- Initiatives directed towards a diaspora community rather than current residents of targeted countries

The program also seeks to strengthen local organizations' ability to compete for, administer, and account for resources from foundations, U.S. nonprofits, international organizations, international financial institutions and bilateral donors. In addition to issuing sub-grants, CEPPS will also provide tailored technical assistance to the sub-grantees based on their identified areas of need, which may include but are not limited to site visits, award and financial management training, networking and peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

Through this Request for Statements of Interest (RSOI), CEPPS is seeking applications from eligible institutions, as described in Section III, that respond to the program description. These grants will be made pursuant to the authority contained in the Global Elections and Political

Transitions Leader with Associates cooperative agreement number AID-OAA-L-15-00007 issued by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to CEPPS.

II. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Qualified applicants may be non-U.S.-based regional and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or private, non-profit organizations, professional associations, and relevant special interest associations or coalitions. Awards shall not be made to organizations or individuals whose name appears on the "Lists of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Nonprocurement Programs" or any U.S. government or United Nations lists of terrorists.

III. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARATION & SUBMISSION OF STATEMENTS OF INTEREST

CEPPS invites statements of interest (SOIs) for participation in its sub-grant program focused on *Increasing Participation of Traditionally Marginalized Populations in Electoral Processes*. The submission of a SOI is the first step in a two-part process. Applicants must first submit a SOI, which is a concise concept note designed to clearly communicate a program idea and its objectives before the development of a full proposal application. Statements should be no longer than five (5) pages. Upon review of eligible SOIs, CEPPS will invite selected applicants to expand their ideas into full proposals and budgets for submission.

CEPPS plans to award up to six (6) organizations to receive sub-grants ranging between \$20,000 and \$40,000. CEPPS reserves the right to make multiple awards or partial awards if, after considering administrative burden, it is in the best interest of the program to do so. However, there is no guarantee regarding the number or amount of awards. Awards are contingent on availability of funding from USAID. CEPPS reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

Applications must be submitted by email no later than 6:00pm EST, August 31, 2017.

Applications should be sent via email to:
David Sands
CEPPS EPT Capacity Building Specialist
dsands@cepps.org

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Statement of Interest

The statement of interest should respond directly the program description found at Section I. Applications should be kept as concise as possible. The SOI shall be submitted in English. A corresponding sample format has been included to provide guidance on SOI formatting (see Annex 1).

Budget

A summary cost category budget must be submitted illustrating the total amount requested for the SOI. This budget does not count toward the two-page limit and should be submitted in the sample format found in Annex 2.

IV. SELECTION CRITERIA

SOI submissions will be evaluated on the quality of the project idea, the approach to program planning, achievability of program objectives, and the degree to which its approach to inclusion of traditionally marginalized populations. SOIs will be scored based on the following review criteria:

Quality of Project Idea (45%):

SOIs should be responsive to the solicitation and should exhibit relevance to one of the seven GEPT program objectives. CEPPS prefers creative approaches that do not duplicate efforts by other entities.

Program Planning (25%):

A competitive SOI will clearly articulate how the proposed program activities and expected results (both outputs and outcomes) contribute to specific program objectives and the overall program goal. Objectives should be measurable, results-focused, and achievable in a reasonable time frame and with the proposed budget amount.

Ability to Achieve Objectives (15%):

SOIs should address how the program will engage relevant stakeholders and should identify local partners as appropriate. If more than one partner is submitting a joint concept, applicants should describe the division of labor among partners. This division should also be represented in the summary cost category budget. SOIs should demonstrate the organization's previous experience in administering programs, preferably similar programs targeting the requested program area or similarly challenging environments.

Inclusion of Traditionally Marginalized Populations (15%):

CEPPS strives to ensure that its programs are inclusive of all citizens and increase the participation in public life of the most marginalized populations, including women, youth, people with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) persons, and indigenous populations. Regardless of a proposed program's target population, applicants should: identify particular barriers to access for a range of marginalized groups; address how the perspectives of these various groups will be integrated into all proposed program activities and objectives; and describe how all aspects of the proposed program will be inclusive of traditionally marginalized populations and will work to decrease barriers to meaningful participation in public life for a variety of marginalized groups.

V. STANDARD PROVISIONS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

MANDATORY STANDARD PROVISIONS FOR NON-U.S., NON-GOVERNMENTAL RECIPIENTS

The Mandatory Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental Recipients and Required as Applicable Standard Provisions will be incorporated in the award by reference and can be found at <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303mab.pdf>. Grantees will be expected to comply with all mandatory and required as applicable provisions.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grantees will adhere to all reporting requirements listed below. The exact format for preparation of and timing for submission of all reports will be determined in collaboration with the sponsoring CEPPS Partner organization and will be included in the terms and conditions of the award.

Progress Reports: The grantee will be required to submit periodic narrative performance reports depending on the program objective and the terms and condition of each individual award. Reports will include reporting on an established performance management plan (PMP), in which the results expected to be achieved by the sub-grantee are informed by appropriate indicators and data collection methods.

Financial Reports: The grantee will be required to submit periodic financial reports depending on the program objective and the terms and condition of each individual award.

Final Report: The Recipient will be required to submit final narrative and financial reports. The final narrative report should consolidate activities and analyze progress towards results.

Annex 1: Sample Statement of Interest Form

Increasing Participation of Traditionally Marginalized Populations in Electoral Processes.

Section 1: The Applicant *(This section does not count towards the five (5) page application limit)*

Full Name of Applicant	
Address	
Office Telephone Number(s)	
E-mail Address	
Contact Person, Title	
Contact Person, E-mail address	
Contact Person, Phone number	
Organization's mission and statement/purpose	
Primary sectors of the organization's operation	

We/I hereby certify that the information contained herein and attached hereto is complete and accurate to the best of our/my knowledge.

Head of Organization/Institution

Signature

Date

Section 2 – Statement of Interest (SOI)

1. Proposed Grant Activity Summary

Organization: *[Insert Organization Name]*
Project Duration: *[Insert Project Period (months)]*
Budget: *[Insert Budget Amount]*

2. Introduction to the Project Idea

Please provide an overview of the project. This section should also include a description of: the overall programmatic approach (i.e. partnerships, networks); your beneficiaries; and a how the project design will minimize barriers and increase access to political participation for traditionally marginalized groups.

3. Goal

What is the long-term, widespread improvement the project is seeking to achieve?

4. Project Objectives

Please state the specific project objective(s) and anticipated results. It should be made clear how achieving the project activity's goal and objectives will contribute to addressing the issues/problems listed in Section 2 above and how it will do so in an inclusive way.

Project Objective(s):

Project Result(s):

5. Project Activities

*Under the project objective(s) describe/link the activities to be conducted that will lead to the accomplishments of the stated project objectives and impact on the action-forcing event, including a description of how each activity will be conducted in an inclusive manner.
[use bullets]*

Activities (Project Objective 1):

Activities (Project Objective 2):

6. Past Experience

Please describe your organization's past experience implementing similar activities. Please be sure to include a description of how members of marginalized groups participate in your organization and how your organizations has worked on issues affecting marginalized groups.

7. Capacity Building

CEPPS seeks to develop the capacity of local organizations to more deeply engage in elections and political transitions. CEPPS will offer tailored capacity building and technical assistance to sub-grantees to strengthen organizational and technical capacities. While not part of the selection criteria, applicants are invited to list up to three aspects of organizational or technical capacity building that your organization would benefit from during a partnership with CEPPS.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3

Formatting notes (*remember to delete this section and the italicized guidance above*):

1. Use one inch margins (top/bottom/right/left).
2. Use Times New Roman 12 point font.
3. Section headers should be in bold.
4. Use a space between paragraphs; full justify text (both left and right margins).

Annex 2: Sample Summary Budget

Submissions should include the following costs in a summary format (sample found below)

- *Personnel* – In general, employees receiving benefits from the applicant organization are considered staff. Consultants hired to assist with the program, who do not receive benefits, should be included under contractual.
- *Travel* – Staff and any participant travel
- *Supplies*
- *Contractual* – Estimate the direct costs for items such as translation, interpretation, legal fees, accounting services, and any other contractual work that will be needed as part of the project.
- *Other Direct Costs* – these will vary depending on the nature of the project but generally include direct activities costs not contained in the other budget categories (i.e. venue rental or coffee breaks).
- *Indirect/Overhead Costs* – applicants can choose to budget directly for costs such as rent, utilities, technology, human resources and other general operating costs, or a *de minimis* rate of 10% can be applied to the total amount of direct expenses budgeted.

Sample Template

Summary Budget Category	TOTAL COST USD
Personnel	\$0
Travel	\$0
Equipment	\$0
Supplies	\$0
Contractual	\$0
Other Direct Costs	\$0
Indirect Costs	\$0
Total	\$0