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REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Ref: RFA-20-047

Grant Competition: Abuse of State Resources Monitoring Project

Organizational Background

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is an independent, non-governmental organization providing professional support to electoral democracy. Through field work, applied research and advocacy, IFES strives to promote citizen participation, transparency and accountability in political life and civil society.

Since 1994, IFES has conducted a range of assistance activities to support the development of democratic elections and political processes in Ukraine. IFES supported the country's institutions and citizenry in building democracy through improvements in election law and administration, civil society development, rule of law and good governance. IFES continues to work closely with election officials, political parties, media, educational institutions, and the non-governmental sector through each election cycle.

Invitation for Grant Competition

IFES invites non-governmental, not-for-profit organizations meeting the relevant operational and performance requirements to submit applications for the 8-month monitoring project. The purpose of this project will be strengthening the ability of public institutions and civil society to identify and prevent abuse of state resources ahead of and during the 2020 local elections in Ukraine.

The maximum grant amount cannot exceed **USD 80,000.00**

Grant funds may be used only for activities that are directly related to the implementation of the grant project, which will be funded under this grant competition.

IFES reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

Background Information

Abuse of the state resources at national, regional and local levels has long plagued Ukrainian elections, distorting level playing field and undermining public trust in electoral process and state institutions. While after Euromaidan the scale of the state resources abuse has notably decreased, incumbent political actors of different kind continue to use public institutions and resources to gain unfair advantage over their electoral competitors. This is confirmed by the results of the two national electoral surveys held by IFES in 2019 and was highlighted in reports of international and Ukrainian election monitors following the 2019 presidential and parliamentary elections.

Significant legislative gaps and weak enforcement of existing norms create breeding ground for abuse of the state resources in Ukraine. Furthermore, high tolerance towards employing the state resources for political and electoral ends is entrenched in the fabric of Ukrainian political system. The misuse of state resources for political gains could become especially pervasive during the 2020 local elections, thus undermining its nature as a democratic representation tool.

Thus, there is a need for increased efforts of civil society actors interested in promoting free and fair elections in Ukraine to raise awareness about and help prevent and report abuse of the state resources before and during the upcoming local elections. To be productive, these efforts should focus on the so-called "politically exposed

institutions”, i.e. public institutions particularly likely to be targeted with pressure to use their resources for election campaigning. Importantly, such interactions should employ both “sticks” and “carrots” to maximize overall effect.

Project Description

Implementation of the project is expected to result in improved ability of the public institutions to protect themselves from abuse of state resources ahead of and during the election period through identification, reporting, and prevention mechanisms. In addition, the project should have a strong monitoring component to detect how the public institutional and other resources are used both before and after the official start of local election campaign of 2020. The monitoring and awareness raising should be complemented by wide media outreach campaign and specific policy recommendations, developed as a result of the analysis and consultations with key stakeholders.

IFES continues to support the efforts aimed at promoting fairness and integrity of electoral processes and neutrality of public administration in Ukraine and invites CSOs to participate in this grant competition.

IFES encourages innovative approaches in designing monitoring and raising awareness campaign with a strong analytical and informative component to reach the main stakeholders and the public.

Illustrative activities may include but are not limited to:

1. Developing the methodology for the on-going monitoring of using the public resources before and during campaigning periods with a focus on local elections.
2. Using the developed methodology to conduct on-going monitoring activities at regional and local level in at least 10 regions of Ukraine.
3. Organizing a series of expert discussion of the obtained monitoring results by gathering the key stakeholders followed by development of public policy recommendations on how to combat abuse of state resources more effectively.
4. Developing a Code of Conduct for selected public institution(-s) with clear guidelines on how to identify, prevent, and report abuse of state resources before and during elections.
5. Administering trainings and other learning tools on the implementation of the Code of Conduct among officials of the selected public institution(-s) from at least 10 regions of Ukraine.
6. Developing policy recommendations and implementing advocacy campaign to promote legal and other changes to combat abuse of state resources for electoral purposes.
7. Developing and disseminating easily-accessible materials for presenting the key findings of the project to the public.
8. Organizing wide media outreach and awareness campaign by using both the traditional communication channels and innovative practices.
9. Other impactful activities could be applicable to reach the main goals of the project.

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and related quarantine measures, applicants might consider replacing direct engagement with the project target audiences with online communication tools. Applicants should explain what contingencies they will put in place and what precautions they will use to ensure programming is done in a responsible and safe manner and does not jeopardize public health.

Duration of the Project

Project activities are expected to start on/around July 1, 2020 and finish no later than March 31, 2021. All project activities should conclude by February 28, 2021. Only project reporting and project close out costs will be allowed after this period.

Technical Proposal (Proposal Goals, Objectives, Activities and Results)

Applicants should follow the Project Proposal Format guidelines (Attachment 1) carefully to ensure they meet the criteria below. Application form and budget template can be downloaded as the attachments to this announcement.

Eligibility

- Eligible organization include registered Ukrainian non-governmental organizations with established financial management and reporting systems, and not affiliated with any political parties or engaged in any political activities.
- Applicants should have a proven experience in successful implementation of similar projects.
- Proposals can be also submitted by a national Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with its own all-Ukrainian network, or by a coalition of Ukrainian NGOs, but one organization should be identified as a lead organization.

Decision-making

To ensure an objective and non-discriminatory selection process, proposals will be reviewed by a board comprised of IFES international and local staff.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of IFES, nor does it commit IFES to pay for costs incurred during the preparation and submission of a proposal.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used for evaluation of applications:

1. **Technical Proposal (Project Goals, Objectives, Activities and Results) – 50 points**

- Does the project aim to reach the set IFES' outcomes?
- Does the project target relevant key stakeholders?
- Are the proposed goal(s) and objective(s) achievable within the allocated timeframe proposed by the project?
- Are the proposed activities realistic and comprehensive to achieve stated goals and objectives?
- Is proposed methodology for monitoring of political finance efficient and feasible?
- Are the expected results specific, meaningful, attainable and relevant to the goals and objectives outlined in the proposal?
- Are the expected deliverables practical, reasonable, and derived from proposed activities?
- Does the proposal outline how the quarantine restrictions will be addressed and how public health considerations will be integrated in programming?

2. **Budget Proposal – 30 points**

- Does the presented budget follow the guidelines?
- Does budget reflect realistic costs?
- Is the budget adequate to cover project activities?
- Is the budget cost-effective?

3. **Organizational Capacity/Past Performance – 20 points**

- Does the applicant organization demonstrate relevant experience in conducting similar monitoring and outreach activities?
- Has the applicant organization achieved tangible results while implementing similar projects?
- Relevance and experience of proposed project team?

Application Submission Procedures

Applicants must submit:

- A completed IFES *application form* (Attachment 1);
 - Project description as outlined in Attachment 1 section b. (*project description*);

- The detailed implementation plan, Attachment 1 section c. (*implementation plan*);
- A completed Performance Monitoring Plan (Attachment 2);
- A detailed itemized budget in USD along with the budget notes in the unified IFES format (Attachment 3);
- Scanned copies of the registration documents, including by-laws;
- CVs of the project team identified in the proposal (project director, administrative and finance staff, and all proposed experts);
- If applicable, applicant should submit additional information about other projects (project summary and total amount) on similar topics, submitted to the donor or already funded by the donors.

Proposals submitted to IFES under this competition must be original and the sole work of the applicant organization.

Please note that selected organizations will be subject to a pre-award audit to determine fiscal responsibility and ensure adequacy of financial controls and accounting systems.

Schedule of events

Release of RFA	May 04, 2020
Deadline for submission of questions	May 12, 2020 till 6.00 PM Kyiv time
Answers from IFES	May 18, 2020
RFA Closes – All Bids Due	May 30, 2020 till 6.00 PM Kyiv time

CSOs' Understanding of the Inquiry

In responding to this RFA, the organization 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 organization which demonstrates less than such understanding. Further, IFES reserves the right to determine, at its sole discretion, whether the organization has demonstrated such understanding. Such disqualification shall be at no fault, cost, or liability whatsoever to IFES.

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 therefrom.

Contact for submission

Applications must be submitted via email **before 6.00 p.m.Kyiv time on May 30, 2020**. Late proposals will not be considered. IFES will consider applications **in English**.

All questions and submission of proposals must adhere to the abovementioned schedule and shall be addressed to Ian Swank iswank@ifes.org and Sajja Tokhi at stokhi@ifes.org with “**RFA-20-047 Abuse of State Resources Monitoring Project**” in the subject line for all e-mail communication.

Copy of this solicitation, Amendments and or Q&A will be available online at: www.ifes.org/procurement-notice

All the materials and documents submitted as part of this competition become IFES property and will not be returned to the applicant. IFES guarantees the confidentiality of applications.

End of RFA

ATTACHMENT 1



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Grant Competition: Name of project

Application Form and Guideline

Organization

Complete Legal Name of Applicant Organization

Office Address

Legal Mailing Address (if different), including zip code

Office Telephone Number(s), including area code

Fax Number

E-Mail Address(es)

Director of Organization

Project Director

Project Dates

PROJECT TITLE

A. Project Summary: (please describe your project in one paragraph, including objectives, issue, target audience, and geographic coverage)

Amount requested in USD

B. Project Description

1. Need for the project

Please identify the problem your project would help to solve. Why is this project important?

2. Project’s Goal and Objectives:

What is the specific goal of your effort? Does it comply with the goals and objectives of the competition?

3. Target Audience and Stakeholders

What is your main target audience? What groups of stakeholders will the project primarily serve?

The key target groups of the project are:

Final beneficiaries of the project are:

4. Activities

Please Identify and describe in detail each activity (or work package) to be undertaken to produce results, justifying the choice of activities.

5. Expected Results

Please identify specific results that you expect to realize upon completion of your project.

6. Expected Deliverables

Please identify specific deliverables that you expect to develop within your project (research/analytical reports; specific strategies; public policy recommendations; PSAs, etc.)

7. Organization’s Capacity

Please briefly present your organization’s mission, its core activity and main current sources of funding. Explain what makes it the best organization to successfully implement the proposed project.

8. Project Evaluation

Please describe what are the quantity and qualitative criteria for the project’s success. How will you determine that the project goals have been accomplished?

9. Project Monitoring Methodology and Plan

Please provide performance monitoring methodology and plan, which should have clear indicators, results, and measurement criteria. using the format provided in **ATTACHMENT 2 (Performance Monitoring Plan)**

C. Implementation Plan

Please use the following format to provide a detailed work plan

Month	Activity	Location	Expected Result	Responsible Person	Verifiable Criteria of Completion

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D. Budget

Complete the budget by line-item for each category of budget expenditure that you are requesting in this grant application. The budget should only include items that are appropriate for the proposed initiative. Indicate costs in USD. If awarded funding, NGOs will receive funding in USD, transferred from the IFES account. Budget notes must accompany the budget and explain, in detail, each budget item.

ATTACHMENT 3 Budget

Please see attached budget template in Excel format

name of organization

ATTACHMENT 2

Performance Monitoring Plan

Performance Indicator	Detailed Definition of the performance indicator	Source, method, frequency, schedule of data collection	Staff responsible for collecting data	How data will be reviewed, analyzed and reported	Target
