**INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS (IFES)**

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) for**
**Identifying Barriers to Electoral Participation of Indigenous Peoples,**
**Global**

**RFA-22-030**
**Re-announced**

**March 18, 2022**

## 1. Request for Application (RFA)

### 1.1. Purpose
The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to invite Indigenous Peoples' Organization(s) (IPO) and civil society organization(s) (CSO) from three to four countries to submit applications to collect data on barriers experienced by Indigenous Peoples while participating in elections. Phase 1 of this project, detailed in the RFA, includes developing recommendations for electoral stakeholders to increase inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in elections. The RFA provides prospective organizations with the relevant operational and performance requirements.

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

| | |
|---|---|
| Issuance of RFA | March 18, 2022 |
| Questions Due | March 22, 2022, by 17:00 Washington DC (EST) |
| Response from IFES | March 24, 2022 |
| RFA Closes—All Applications Due | April 10, 2022, by 17:00 Washington DC (EST) |
| Anticipated Implementation Period | April 2022 – October 2022 |

## 2. General Information

### 2.1. Background
IFES is an independent, non-governmental organization providing professional support to electoral democracy. IFES supports the rights of all people to have a voice in decision-making. 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 persons who identify with underrepresented or marginalized groups, such as Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, young people, women and ethnic minorities, 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.

| **Name** | | **Name** |
|---|---|---|
| Abdullah Abdullah | **and** | **Maryam Raufi** |
| aabdullah@ifes.org | | mraufi@ifes.org |

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

### 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 Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Non-Political Party Organizations, or other similar not-for-profit institutions or international organizations are invited to apply. If an IPO, CSO, or NGO is not locally registered, a signed letter stating the reason they are not registered must be included as part of the application.

**Individuals and the following organizations are not eligible** to access funding:
- Governmental and semi-governmental institutions
- 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 dollars 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).
- The budget range for this activity will be USD $20,000 - $25,000 per subaward.

### 3.5.3.  A brief outline of the applicant's organization and experience.
Organizations should demonstrate prior experience working with Indigenous Peoples from diverse communities in a range of countries and regions and conducting research. Experience advocating for the political rights of Indigenous Peoples is an asset.

### 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 via 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

## 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**

Indigenous Peoples have the right under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to participate in political processes, if they so choose, and to free, prior and informed consent on all initiatives that impact them. Nonetheless, despite innovations in some countries, Indigenous Peoples around the world continue to encounter considerable barriers to voting, such as intimidation, lack of materials in Indigenous languages and remote polling places. To inform election management bodies of good practices for countering these barriers, the implementing partner will implement the program through the following activities:

   a. Conduct a desk review, in collaboration with IFES social inclusion experts, on international and national obligations to and good practices for inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in elections.
   b. Develop a focus group discussion and key informant interview guide, in consultation with IFES and project partners, to collect data on the experiences of Indigenous Peoples in elections.
   c. Identify participants of focus group discussions, which may include Indigenous persons experiencing multiple oppressions, such as Indigenous persons with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) Indigenous persons, Indigenous youth and Indigenous women, and contribute to the identification of key informant interviewees.
   d. Lead focus groups discussions with Indigenous Peoples and jointly with IFES social inclusion experts hold key informant interviews with stakeholders such as international donors and election management bodies (EMBs), among others. The selected applicant(s) will be responsible for all costs related to the focus groups, including interpretation, internet costs, etc. Focus groups may be conducted virtually or in person. If held in person, mitigation measures must be taken to reduce risks of contracting or spreading COVID-19 to participants.
   e. Collaborate with IFES and project partners to develop a survey to distribute virtually to EMBs on inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in elections.
   f. Evaluate findings of desk review, focus group discussion, key informant interviews and surveys with IFES social inclusion experts.
   g. Develop recommendations for key electoral stakeholders such as EMBs, settler government ministries, legislatures, Indigenous governance structures and civil society on how to support participation of Indigenous Peoples in elections. The written report should be made available in English.
   h. Co-host a virtual launch event on the research findings with IFES and project partners.
   i. Present findings from collaborative research during at least one global in-person or virtual events and hold joint meetings with global stakeholders, as determined in collaboration with IFES, to socialize the report among EMBs and other stakeholders.

Note: IFES may continue to work with selected applicants in future to implement Phase 2 of the project (pending funding). Phase 2 will be an opportunity for an IPO or CSO to begin building a community of practice among electoral stakeholders on the electoral rights of Indigenous Peoples.

**Required Expertise and Experience**

The implementing partner must meet the following requirements:

- Be a non-governmental and non-partisan organization or institution.
- Possess in-house institutional expertise in Indigenous Peoples' rights.
- Have experience conducting research.
- Be familiar with international donors' reporting requirements.
- Submit the application in English.

## 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 **August 31, 2022.**

### 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, **the selected applicant(s) will be required to carry out annual audits**. For project support, the projects will be subject to audits reviews conducted in accordance with the ISA 700 or National Standards on auditing if deemed equivalent to international standards on auditing. The audit reporting should include Independent Auditor's Report, Management Letter, Factual Finding Report and the implementing Partner's management response and action plan. The selection of auditor and the terms of the reference shall be approved in writing by IFES.

- 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 support, training and oversight to ensure grant management practices are in line with targeted activities, 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

_____
DUNS 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 a maximum of **5 pages***

I.     **Past Experience**

*Please provide a short summary of your organization's work with Indigenous Peoples, which should include any experience in political participation. Please keep your response between 200-300 words.*

*Please provide a short summary of the proposed research methodology to identify barriers and draft recommendations on participation of Indigenous Peoples in elections. Please keep your response between 200-300 words.*

II.     **Project need**

*In this section, please describe why this project is important, highlighting the need to share lessons learned for electoral inclusion of Indigenous Peoples. Please keep your response between 300-400 words.*

**III.     Goal and Objectives:**

Phase 1 Goal: Develop recommendations to increase engagement of Indigenous Peoples in elections.
- **Objective 1:** Evidence on the barriers to electoral participation of Indigenous Peoples and opportunities to increase engagement collected.

**IV.     Activities:**
*Activity 1: Conduct Desk Review*
The desk review will include international obligations to ensure meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in elections and a literature review of available relevant publications. It will also include relevant contextual information in the applicant's country (or countries), such as relevant national legal frameworks and information on the Indigenous Peoples in that country.

*Output: a) desk review; b) reviewed materials*

*Activity 2: Conduct Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews*
The information from the focus group discussion will inform global recommendations created to ensure that EMBs follow good practice to engage Indigenous Peoples in elections. The partner and IFES will work collaboratively to design the focus group discussion and key information interview guide. The partner organization will lead implementation of the focus groups, and key informant interviews will be conducted in collaboration with IFES.

*Outputs: a) participant list; b) focus group discussion and key informant interview guide; c) enumerated focus group results; d) interview notes*

*Activity 3: Report on Electoral Participation of Indigenous Peoples*

The report with recommendations on electoral participation of Indigenous Peoples, created using the information from Activity 1, will be developed jointly by project partners and IFES. It will be made available in English and may be translated into another language as determined in consultation with IFES. The report will be distributed by the project partners.

*Outputs: a) final report; b) digital translations of report*

*In this section, please summarize how your organization will conduct the research. Please keep your response between 400- 500 words.*

### Activity 4: Launch Event for Report on Electoral Participation of Indigenous Peoples
The project partners and IFES will co-host a virtual event to include global and national stakeholders on elections. One in-person event may take place, if circumstances allow. The budget should include funds for language translation and sign language interpretation.
*Outputs: a) invitation list; b) event summary*

### Activity 5: Socialization Meetings on Report with EMBs and Stakeholders
The partner and IFES will conduct a series of meetings with EMBs and with global stakeholders to raise awareness of the report's findings and recommendations.

*Output: a) meeting notes*

*In this section, please describe how you will conduct the launch event and raise awareness of the research. Please keep your response between 300-400 words.*

### 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

Example results framework:

| Objective 1: *Evidence on the barriers to electoral participation of Indigenous Peoples and opportunities to increase engagement collected.* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Activity** | **Indicator** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Assumptions** |
| *[Include each activity as a separate line item]* | *[Describe what will be measured to determine the activity has achieved its goals]* | *[Include the number or state before the project begins]* | *[Include the expected number or state when the project ends]* | *[Describe any elements that must be in place to collect these data]* |

**ATTACHMENT B**
**Budget Template**

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

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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's 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 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.*