![International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) logo]

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS (IFES)

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) for
Election Disinformation and Hate Speech Monitoring in BiH**

RFA-22-061

June 27, 2022

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 a project that will build resilience to electoral disinformation and hate speech by investigating, analyzing, and reporting on the 2022 electoral process in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The objective of this project is to monitor electoral disinformation and hate speech during the 2022 elections and share findings with the broader public, but also with the election administration, key electoral stakeholders, and social media content moderators. The RFA provides prospective organizations with the relevant operational and performance requirements. IFES anticipates issuing one award under this RFA, for a total value of USD 12,000.

1.2. RFA Schedule

IFES will conduct a competitive process to identify grantees per the tentative timeline below:

Issuance of RFA	June 27, 2022
Questions Due	July 1, 2022 by 17:00 Washington DC (EST)
Response from IFES	July 5, 2022
RFA Closes—All Applications Due	July 10, 2022; by 17:00 Washington DC (EST)
Anticipated Implementation Period	August – November, 2022

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.

Hend Ghobrial		**Khurram Naz**
hghobrial@ifes.org	**and**	knaz@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 G 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
- 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
   - Geographical reach across BiH regions

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

Project: Monitoring Electoral Disinformation and Hate Speech in the BiH 2022 General Elections

Anticipated Period of Performance: August 1, 2022 – November 30, 2022

Budget: USD 12,000

Objective:

Public opinion research conducted by IFES in 2020 indicated voters had a high perception of disinformation and foreign influence in elections in BiH. While participants generally had confidence in their own ability to recognize disinformation, there was agreement in believing that falsified information has an effect on overall voter confidence in the election process. Television dominates the information scene in regards to election coverage, but is also seen as the source of both the most disinformation and the most trustworthy information. There is also little public confidence in the CEC's ability to navigate the complex disinformation environment while also managing the electoral process. To better protect information integrity ahead of the October 2022 elections, IFES invites civil society organizations in BiH to submit proposals for project activities designed to monitor, investigate, analyze, and report on election-related disinformation and hate speech. Projects should include innovative and unique approaches and tools to collect data and information to inform the public in engaging and dynamic ways, including through the use of citizen-centered analysis and tracking mechanisms. Activities should consider the work and behavior of state institutions, electoral officials, political subjects, campaigns, and other relevant election stakeholders, to focus on the spread of disinformation and hate speech related to the election process.

More specifically, this project activity aims to achieve the following:

1. Develop a methodology of tracking and reporting on electoral disinformation and hate speech in BiH;

2. Utilize innovative and citizen-centered approaches and tech tools to monitor and report on disinformation and hate speech during the election period;

3. Establish coordination procedures with key stakeholders, including the Central Election Commission (CEC), to develop messaging that responds to instances of electoral disinformation and hate speech;

4. Empower voters, especially women, vulnerable ethnic communities, and other marginalized groups, to combat hate speech and ensure protections to cast their vote on Election Day.

Description of Activities:

Applicants will provide a detailed description of activities in the submitted Technical Application. The final description of anticipated activities will be decided in consultation with IFES. An illustrative list of activities is provided below, but is by no means an exhaustive list.

- Utilize the online Disinformation Guide[1] to inform methodology, which will be designed to monitor the information environment and help the CEC and other stakeholders identify and counter disinformation and hate speech;

- Investigative and/or analytical monitoring and reporting on specific cases of election-related disinformation and hate speech across all regions in BiH;

- Utilization of civic tech or online platforms to track and analyze electoral disinformation and hate speech, such as CorwdTangle, and report violations to social media content moderators;

- Develop media-based initiatives that inform voters of monitoring findings, identify vulnerabilities in the information environment, and hold bad actors accountable ahead of the elections;

- Expert interview series or stakeholder roundtables/town halls structured to gather and/or disseminate correct information, data, and other findings;

- Collection of disinformation throughout the election cycle alongside the development of a user-friendly coordination mechanism to alert the CEC and relevant stakeholders of when such instances occur.

Note: Activities must be completed in advance of election day. Post-election activities should only relate to evaluating efforts.

IFES encourages unique, **innovative** technical approaches to activities proposed, as noted in 3.7.

Anticipated Results:

- Broad distribution of monitoring findings for voters to analyze cases of electoral disinformation and hate speech;

- The CEC and other relevant stakeholders are more quickly able to counter false or violent/hate-charged narratives during the election period;

- BiH voters have information on and a greater understanding of how disinformation and hate speech is spread and how to counter it;

- BiH voters are empowered to vote and to encourage others to vote, in a safe and accurate information environment.

Anticipated Milestones:

The accomplishment of each objective will be based on the completion of the tasks/deliverables defined in the proposal. Illustrative deliverables include, but are not limited to:

- Developed monitoring and reporting methodology;

- Informative matereials, such as videos, infographics, PSAs, and social media posts;

- Online websites/dashboards;

- Press releases, announcements, and media articles;

- Coordination mechanism to alert stakeholders of critical disinformation and hate speech cases.

5. Functional Requirements

---

[1] https://counteringdisinformation.org/

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 November 30, 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, 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

_____
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 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

.

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.