



International Foundation  
for Electoral Systems

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

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) for  
Leadership, Empowerment and Skills Development for Women  
with Disabilities in Maldives**

**RFA-21-073**

**October 05, 2021**

## 1. Request for Application (RFA)

### 1.1. Purpose

IFES is currently engaged in implementing “Strong and Inclusive Maldivian Democracy (SIMD)” with funding from USAID. The purpose of this Request for Application (RFA) is to invite disabled people’s organizations to submit applications for a project that will engage women with disabilities to develop a policy platform and design an advocacy plan to advocate for the rights of women with disabilities under IFES Maldives’ *Power to Persuade* program. 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	October 05, 2021
Questions Due	October 11, 2021; by 17:00 Washington DC (EST)
Response from IFES	October 13, 2021
RFA Closes—All Applications Due	October 26, 2021; by 17:00 Washington DC (EST)
Anticipated Implementation Period	December 1, 2021 – October 1, 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.

**Abdullah Abdullah**  
[aabdullah@ifes.org](mailto:aabdullah@ifes.org)

**and**

**Khurram Naz**  
[knaz@ifes.org](mailto:knaz@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 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 **MVR** 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).

### **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 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.

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <b>1. Technical Approach, Implementation Timeline, Results Framework</b>   | <b>30 points</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated understanding of the RFA and of IFES' requirements</li> <li>• Soundness and feasibility of technical approach</li> <li>• Reasonable implementation timeline and results framework</li> </ul>   |                  |
| <b>2. Competitive Budget with efficient and reasonable cost structure</b>  | <b>30 points</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost realism in response to RFA requirements</li> <li>• Clear budget presentation of necessary, allocable and reasonable costs</li> <li>• Appropriate balance of budget between operational/personnel costs and activity costs</li> </ul>   |                  |
| <b>3. Past Performance and Organizational Capacity</b>   | <b>40 points</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extent to which proposed personnel have relevant qualifications and experience</li> <li>• Demonstrated capacity to organize, manage and implement full range of activities required to achieve program goals and objectives</li> <li>• Demonstrated flexibility to adjust implementation in response to changing environments</li> <li>• Demonstrated strong past performance in implementing programs of similar size, scope and complexity</li> <li>• Demonstrated presence and/or networks in the proposed target districts</li> </ul> |                  |

### 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

IFES Maldives is seeking to work with a disabled people's organization (DPO) to implement an advocacy and leadership program for women with disabilities. The DPO partner will work with IFES to adapt its *Power to Persuade* training for women with disabilities in the Maldives and facilitate a Training of Trainers (ToT) for the DPO partner and women with disabilities, who will serve as trainers. The DPO partner will then organize trainings across various islands, reaching approximately 100 women with disabilities. During the training, participants will develop practical skills in how to influence local policy making and will collectively draft advocacy points that will serve as the basis of the larger *Power to Persuade* advocacy campaign. The campaigns will focus on effective implementation of various government plans to ensure they are inclusive of women with disabilities. The DPO will coordinate with IFES and other partners to expand the reach of the advocacy platform and conduct outreach activities with program stakeholders. To support IFES connect the *Power to Persuade* program's advocacy goals with its *Vaane* social media and women's political participation campaign's outreach, the DPO will share the advocacy priorities with a larger audience featuring *Power to Persuade* advocates and local government leaders who work collaboratively with the disability community to increase access and inclusion in their communities.

Applicants must have a presence at the national level and have close ties or a formal network of member organizations across various islands. Applications should specify the islands in which the program will be implemented and **why** they were selected. While IFES will accept proposals from all types of organizations that meet the qualifications detailed below, preference will be given to organizations led by persons with disabilities, particularly those managed by women with disabilities.

The DPO will be expected to:

- Review and support contextualization of training curricula to work with women with disabilities in the Maldives and conduct a ToT for trainers.
- Implement trainings for women with disabilities across various islands (locations to be proposed by the DPO) to reach at least 100 women with disabilities.
- Facilitate a collaborative process to develop advocacy campaign plans with *Power to Persuade* advocates, with a focus on advocacy for the implementation of the Maldivian government's Strategic Action Plan, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan and the Ministry of Gender's Gender Policy Action Plans to be inclusive of women with disabilities.
- Organize outreach activities to expand the reach of the advocacy platform in collaboration with program stakeholders such as elected officials, political party leaders and other government officials.
- After the trainings, facilitate a network of *Power to Persuade* advocates to complete advocacy and outreach activities based on the advocacy priorities identified through the *Power to Persuade* trainings.

**\*\*Applicants do not need to specify the exact policy platform or strategy the project will pursue as this is expected to be the results of a collaborative process with multiple stakeholders.**

**However, the technical application and budget should reflect considerable thought about the theory of change, methodology and scale of the types of activities that may be pursued in order to demonstrate a strong understanding of the project goals and cost-reasonableness.**

#### **Specific Organizational Requirements:**

Applications are limited to locally registered Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Non-Political Party Organizations and religious institutions or other similar not-for-profit institutions.

Preference is for applications from an organization with previous experience conducting activities related to political and electoral participation or good governance at the local level in the Maldives. Prior experience working with government officials and local committees is also a significant advantage.

Locally registered implementing chapters of international or regional (network) organisations are eligible if they meet the following minimum criteria:

- ✓ The majority of Board members are based in the Maldives
- ✓ The organisation is largely financially independent of its international mother body

**Individuals and the following organisations** are not eligible to access funding:

- ✓ Governmental and semi-governmental institutions
- ✓ International organisations
- ✓ Political parties or organizations affiliated with or engaging in partisan activities
- ✓ Organisations running on a for-profit basis

## **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 October 1, 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](mailto: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 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 earthquake affected areas, and districts in Province 5, Karnali Province and Sudurpashchim Province.*
- C. *Please list the organization’s major projects from the past five years in the following format:*

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Project Activities</i>	<i>Donor</i>	<i>Award Amount</i>	<i>Period of Award</i>

**IV. References:**

*If applicable, contact information for three references from donor funded projects similar in scope.*