



International Foundation
for Electoral Systems

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

Request for Proposal (RFP) for Website and Brand Developer in Albania

Solicitation # RFP-21-047

May 28, 2021

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to invite prospective contractors (“Bidders”) to submit a written response (“Response”) for the procurement of the US-Albania Transparency Academy (USATA)’s website and brand design, development, publishing and maintenance services in Albania. See more on USATA under section 4.

1.2 Coverage & Participation

IFES reserves the right to reject any and all offers, to add, delete or modify any element of the solicitation at any time without prior notification and without any liability or obligation of any kind. This RFP does not obligate IFES to enter into a contract nor does it obligate IFES to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of submission of any Response.

1.3 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.

2 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 The Organization

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 the political process
- Applying field-based research to improve the electoral cycle

Since 1987, IFES has worked in over 145 countries – from developing democracies, to mature democracies.

2.2 Schedule of Events

The following, tentative schedule will apply to this solicitation. The dates may change in accordance with IFES’ needs or unforeseen circumstances. IFES will communicate changes to the schedule.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Issuance of RFP | May 28, 2021 |
| • Technical Questions/Inquiries Due | June 18, 2021, 5:00 PM Albania time |
| • Answers/Addenda from IFES | June 23, 2021 |
| • RFP Closes | July 8, 2021, 5:00 PM Albania time |

3 PROPOSAL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

3.1 Bidders' Understanding of the Solicitation

Bidders are responsible for understanding the solicitation in its entirety and each of its elements, and should make inquiries to IFES as necessary to ensure such understanding. IFES reserves the right to disqualify any Bidder that it determines, at its sole discretion, does not understand the solicitation or any of its elements. Such disqualification shall be at no fault, cost, or liability whatsoever to IFES.

3.2 Information from IFES

All information provided by IFES in this solicitation is subject to change at any time. IFES makes no certification as to the accuracy of any item, and is not responsible or liable for any use of or reliance on the information or for any claims asserted therefrom.

3.3 Communication

All communications related to the RFP must be in writing. Verbal communication shall not be effective unless formally confirmed in writing by the procurement official listed in 3.3.1. In no case shall verbal communication govern over written communication.

3.3.1 Point of Contact: The sole point of contact for all communication related to this solicitation is listed below.

Ian Swank
Contracts and Grants
Manger and
iswank@ifes.org

Sajia Tokhi
Sr. Contracts and Grants
Administrator
stokhi@ifes.org

3.3.2 Formal Communications shall include, but are not limited to the following:

- Questions concerning this solicitation must be submitted in writing to the point of contact identified in 3.3.1.
- Errors and omissions in this solicitation, as well as enhancements. Bidders should notify IFES of any discrepancies, errors, or omissions that may exist within this solicitation. Bidders should recommend to IFES any enhancements to the work described in the solicitation which might be in IFES' best interests.
- Inquiries about technical interpretations must be submitted in writing to the point of contact identified in 3.3.1.

3.3.3 Addenda: IFES will make a good-faith effort to provide a written response to the questions or requests for clarifications in the form of written responses or addenda in accordance with the *Schedule of Events*.

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

3.4 Submission

It is mandatory for Bidders to send proposals 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*.

3.5 Criteria for Selection

The evaluation of each Response to this solicitation will be based on the criteria outlined below. The purpose of this solicitation is to identify responsible Bidders that have the interest, capability, and financial strength to supply IFES with the product and/or service identified in the Scope of Work.

Evaluation Criteria:

IFES will evaluate responsive offers based on the following criteria:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL | 60% |
| Includes: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The work presented through the vendor portfolio, which will be evaluated to assess the quality of the vendor's work. The portfolio should include at least four (4) previous works, including at least one in compliance with USAID guidelines.• Timeline and work plan to deliver the objectives of the assignment based on the timeline provided in this document under section 4.• Creative board/sampling of visual identity and website design.• Experience and qualifications of the team proposed to deliver the work by the company. This part of the evaluation will be based in the CVs of the individuals comprising the team that need to be share by the firm in their proposal. Sample qualifications include: A solid understanding of brand development and brand positioning; At least one member of the vendor team who has prior experience with graphic design and websites with a solid portfolio of at least 3 years of experience; Adequate knowledge and progressive experience with web design proven through portfolio of designed products; A solid understanding of user experience, user-interface design principles, and conceptual design; Expert knowledge of HTML, Java script and CSS; and excellent attention to detail. | |
| 2. FINANCIAL PROPOSAL | 40% |
| The financial proposal must be reasonable and show efficient use of resources, and additional costs, if any, must be clearly identified. The offer must be provided in ALL and USD and without VAT. Offers will be compared amongst responsive bidders meeting technical requirements. Bidders must agree to keep these prices valid for a minimum of 90 calendar days. Please see table under section 7 for a pricing template. | |

3.6 Selection and Notification

IFES will evaluate Responses to identify responsible Bidders and responsive offers. The winning Bidder will be selected to move into the negotiation phase of this process. Written notification will be sent to finalists via email.

4 SCOPE OF WORK/GOODS/SERVICES

The US-Albania Transparency Academy is a project of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and its partners the National Democratic Institute (NDI), International Republican Institute (IRI), and Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE).

The program's objectives are to establish USATA as an independent, sustainable, and effective institution; improve public transparency and accountability for all citizens; improve engagement between government institutions, citizens, and the private sector; and promote the implementation of effective legal and regulatory frameworks that foster ethical behavior in the public and private sectors. These objectives will support Albania on its Journey to Self-Reliance by establishing USATA as a center for innovation that spurs efforts to improve transparency and accountability in Albanian governance.

The establishment of USATA will require public messaging and citizen engagement, including through the development of new website. The primary users of the site will be the general public, government actors, and interested stakeholders and donors engaged in transparency and accountability strengthening in Albania. IFES will work with a vendor to create a new modern, user-friendly, and interactive web page, unique branding identity, and external-facing materials. The selected service provider will be responsible to design, develop and maintain a new website and visual identity for the program.

Website Design and Maintenance

The selected vendor will be required to create (design, develop, test and implement) a web platform within the designated timeline which meets the following criteria:

1. A website with a valid registered domain and secured certificate.
2. A user-friendly, interactive, appealing, highly usable and responsive web design.
 - i. Web designs are very subjective, we expect the hired company to showcase their best elements in delivering suitable intranet design options. The design and solution must be easy to use by authorized users for prompt upload and update of project activities.
 - ii. The web design must be adapted for use by people with disabilities, including sensibilization in color and font (Note: IFES will provide guidance on disability inclusive website design).
3. Daily Flexible Updating for which the site does not need to be taken down.
4. Able to function appropriately on standard browsers (Chrome and Safari at a minimum) and fluid presentation across different mobile devices.
5. Easily navigable and search engine friendly.
6. Contain appropriate fonts, colors, and other design elements in line with USAID marking and branding guidelines.
7. Contain project logo, other logo and information about partners we work with.
8. URL redirection to MIS database.
9. Content management.
 - i. The web site will provide content/screen areas containing calendar, upcoming events, latest news/site news, trending topics, etc. It will also incorporate all social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) with live update options.

- ii. The solution should allow authorized project staff (or appointed personnel) to edit and update the website including the ability to create, remove, edit and publish content without the need to manipulate the website code.
 - iii. The website will be in Albanian and English languages, with a Google Translate plug-in option for translation to other languages. The vendor will be expected to provide translations for webpage structure and feature pages, but content will be provided in both languages by IFES.
10. Secured Platform
- i. The design of the website should adhere to security best practices, for example: passwords should not be stored in plain text, all form data should be validated, all user input should be sanitized, user interactions and activities should be logged etc.
 - ii. Themes and plugins used in the site should be properly licensed, ensuring updates.
 - iii. Secure server, SSL and Firewall, DDoS Prevention & Malware Detection, Password and User Access, Security Plug-ins, Backups (up to discretion and agreement).

Brand Design and Strategy

The selected vendor will be required to create USATA's brand design and style guide within the designated timeline which meets the following criteria:

- Development of unique visual identity, in line with consumer research and IFES guidance, to include:
 - i. Logo.
 - ii. Color palette and guide.
 - iii. Professional typography.
 - iv. Icon key and graphic elements.
 - v. Letterhead and related documentation templates, in A4 and Letter.
 - vi. Social media graphic templates, specifically for Facebook.
 - vii. Presentation templates, including for PowerPoint and publications/reports.

Specifications and Requirements:

Site Design

1. Basic website design. Home page and up to 10 interior pages, plus one email template design, based on final approved website design. HTML / CSS / JavaScript Programming.
2. Converting the site design into search engine friendly and standard compliant HTML / CSS, as well as any JavaScript required for animations, hover effects, drop-downs, etc.

The Web design and hosting company will ensure the search engine optimization (SEO) work will include:

1. Keyword research & analysis
2. Site analysis
3. Competitive analysis
4. Site content optimization
5. HTML code optimization
6. Search Engine submission (free search engines)
7. Link exchange
8. Web ranking report

3. Installation of Content Management System

4. Installing the content management system on a development server, implementing the template(s) into the CMS, and creating the barebones navigation structure & layout.

5. Installing & Configuration of CMS Modules & Plugins. This would include the configuration of all database driven sections of the site such as products, videos, lead capture forms, reviews, etc.

6. Content Development with social network integration, search engine optimization and RSS socket

7. Spam Control: The website should provide an automated challenge system that reduces the number of spam comments/posts that either need moderation or slip through filtering mechanisms.

8. Continuing hosting and maintenance of the site, which would include applying security patches, clearing out log files, enlarging disk space before it runs out, sorting out security certificates and fixing bugs in the code.

Website Hosting

1. The website must be hosted on a platform / server with Zero down time experience / incidence.

2. The web site will be having a 100GB storage capacity to accommodate email storage and web content with scalability to increase over time.

3. The host server for the website should support the use of PHP and MySQL for possible integration

4. The Website should be optimized for low bandwidth users.

5. The website should be flexible for the development of an open APIs to other database.

6. The web design and hosting company will perform three comprehensive maintenance annually in coordination with Project Focal person and emergency maintenance in event of security vulnerability, throughout the duration of the contract.

7. The web design and hosting company will provide remote support to Project focal person(s) throughout the duration of the contract.

Mobile Device Optimization

1. HTML / CSS / JavaScript Programming.

2. Updates to the desktop version of the site design to account for various mobile device widths (320px / 768px / [other]).

Deliverables:

Website Design and Maintenance

- An interactive website with user-friendly, visually engaging design with enhanced functionalities aiming to provide a comprehensive experience to users, published in both English and Albanian;
 - User manual to advise on content upload, system maintenance, and administration (configure documentation and guidelines that clearly state how to manage the website, details on environment and its configuration provided);
- Following successful User Acceptance Test (UAT), support and maintenance: Administrative and technical support, quality control for a period of minimum 12 months;

- Source code handover: Full source code including all developed libraries shall be handed over;
- Add features to support assistive technologies, for people with disabilities to experience the content.

Brand Design and Strategy

- Visual identity package with logo and branding style guide, including templates for documents, presentations, and other external-facing materials, as advised by IFES.

The selected vendor will work in close coordination with IFES’ point of contact and IT team to ensure compliance with IFES requirements, including on hosting or domain issues and security and privacy protections. The selected vendor must also agree to abide by IFES style and branding requirements.

Financial Proposal:

Please provide unit costs per service/feature in ALL and USD. A template is provided in section 7 of this RFP.

Sample Timeline:

The period of performance will be from July 15, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

Testing and Pre-Hosting Phase

1. The vendor would demonstrate the first phase design with details of all functions as requested.
2. Testing phase / first phase should validate if the site is operational and ready for a launch.
3. Second phase would be to access site security, certificate and encryption layers. If the second phase is validated, we move to the third phase.
4. Third phase will be the launch of the website.

Hand Over and Training

The vendor, after completing the design and hosting of the website, should deliver a comprehensive handover to the project focal person and conduct a training for all relevant staff involved in day-to-day upload and editing of the website. The backup code and source code files will be delivered in full to IFES during handover.

Training Deliverables for Project Focal point (at most two persons)

The vendor shall train project focal person (at most two persons) to be able to perform the following functions:

1. Manage comprehensive update of the website and management of website's current functionality, with adding and customizing online modules
2. Project focal person(s) should be able to carry out full backup of the web site.
3. Should have an automated system that checks for broken hyperlinks on site
4. Socket to verify if site is up and running
5. Should be able to generate web site activity report.

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Research												

Visual Identity Design												
Website Development												
Testing and Pre-Hosting Phase												
Hand Over and Training												
Maintenance												

5 FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Timeline

Bidders must submit a timeline in the Response showing the time required to produce and consolidate the products and/or deliver services.

5.2 Geographic Code (applicable to USAID funding only)

IFES’ project in Albania is funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under Source and Nationality (S/N) Geographic Code 937 (please refer to [22 CFR 228.03](#) for more information). A waiver request may apply to certain offers. If IFES determines a waiver would be necessary, the estimated time required to obtain the waiver will be considered within the “Timeline” in the Evaluation Criteria. IFES encourages all Bidders to consider products that fall under S/N Geographic Code 937 whenever possible.

5.3 License, Clearance and Approvals

The Bidders will include in the timeline any time needed to obtain any licenses, clearances, and/or approvals required under local legal requirements to produce or deliver the products and/or services described in the Scope of Work.

6 QUALIFICATIONS & REFERENCES

Bidders must provide the following information in addition to the technical and financial proposal (under section 3.5) for their Response to be considered as a responsive offer:

1. A brief outline of the company and services offered, including:
 - Full legal name and address of the company
 - Corporate and tax registration documents
 - Year business was started or established
 - Full name of the legal representative (president or managing director) of the company
 - Name of any individuals or entities that own 50% or more of the company
 - No subcontracting is allowed under this solicitation.

2. Evidence of successful completion of a project of a similar size and complexity.
3. References: Contact information for no less than three references from projects similar in size, application, and scope and a brief description of their implementation (including location and year). IFES reserves the right to request and check additional references.
4. Bidders must be legally registered under the laws of the country in which they are organized and possess all licenses, permits and government approvals necessary for performance of the work. Scope of Work.
5. A certification signed by an authorized representative that the Bidder has sufficient financial, technical and managerial resources and facilities to complete the Scope of Work.

7 PRICING

Bidders must complete the following cost breakdown for the implementation of their solution for IFES' project as described in this solicitation. Bidders must agree to keep these prices valid for a minimum of 90 calendar days.

Pricing must be in Albanian Lek (ALL) and US dollars (USD). Unit prices are required and in the case of discrepancies between unit prices and the total price, the unit price will be taken as reference basis in the evaluation. Technical specifications must be shown for each item.

All applicable taxes should be included

No.	Item Description	Technical Specifications	QTY	Unit	Unit Price ALL/USD	Total Price ALL/USD
Group 1						
1.						
2.						
	Subtotal Group 1					
Group 2						
3.						
4.						
	Subtotal Group 2					
Group 3						
5.						
6.						
	Subtotal Group 3					
Total					ALL/USD	
VAT (if applicable)					ALL/USD	
Grand Total					ALL/USD	

8 ADDITIONAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

8.1 Non-Disclosure Agreement

IFES reserves the right to require the Bidder to enter into a non-disclosure agreement.

8.2 No Collusion

Collusion is strictly prohibited. Collusion is defined as an agreement or compact, written or oral, between two or more parties with the goal of limiting fair and open competition by deceiving, misleading, or defrauding a third party.

8.3 Companies Owned or Controlled by Government

The Bidder must disclose in writing with its Response if a government, its agents, or agencies, have an ownership or managerial interest in the company. Failure to disclose a government ownership or managerial interest in the company will result in the Bidder's offer being removed from consideration.

8.4 Subcontracting

No subcontracting is allowed under this solicitation.

8.5 Costs

The solicitation does not obligate IFES to pay for any costs, of any kind whatsoever, which may be incurred by a Bidder or third parties, in connection with the Response.

8.6 Intellectual Property

Bidders may not use any intellectual property of IFES including, but not limited to, all logos, trademarks, or trade names of IFES, at any time without the prior written approval of IFES.

8.7 Bidders' Responses

All accepted Responses and supporting documentation shall become the property of IFES, subject to claims of confidentiality in respect of the Response and supporting documentation.

8.8 Partial Awarding

IFES reserves the right to accept all or part of the Response when awarding a contract.

8.9 No Liability

IFES reserve the right to accept or reject any Response or to stop the procurement process at any time, without assigning any reason or liability. IFES shall not be liable to any Bidder, person, or entity for any losses, expenses, costs, claims, or damages of any kind.

8.10 Entire Solicitation

This solicitation, any addenda to it, and any attached schedules, constitute the entire solicitation.

[End of Solicitation]