



**International Foundation
for Electoral Systems**

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS (IFES)

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) for
She Leads in Pakistan**

RFA-24-020

**Issued June 24, 2024
Amended July 2, 2024**

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 IFES' *She Leads* program in Pakistan. The objective of this project is to empower women to develop and implement community-based action plans around key local issues. The RFA provides prospective organizations with the relevant operational and performance requirements. IFES anticipates issuing one award under this RFA.

1.2. RFA Schedule

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

Issuance of RFA	June 24, 2024
Questions Due	July 8, 2024; by 17:00 Washington DC (EST)
Response from IFES	July 12, 2024
RFA Closes—All Applications Due	July 17, 2024; by 17:00 Washington DC (EST)
Anticipated Implementation Period	August 2024 – July 2025

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.

Cayla Vega
cvega@ifes.org

and

Sarah Bibler
sbibler@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 H of Attachment B).

3.5.3. A brief outline of the applicant's organization and experience.

Organizations should demonstrate prior experience working with women leaders from a wide range of states and regions, particularly rural areas, facilitating training programs, and working on programming such as women's leadership, community development, addressing community challenges, and gender equality.

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.

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| 1. Technical Approach, Implementation Timeline, Results Framework | 40 points |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), with funding support from the Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), will implement the “Pakistan Fair and Inclusive Representation” (PFAIR) program to increase electoral inclusion and participation of women, people with disabilities, and religious minorities as well as young people who crosscut all target groups. Increased inclusion and participation will be accomplished through a series of interventions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

IFES will engage local partner to implement one of its flagship programs, the *She Leads* women’s leadership capacity building program, for two different target groups: (i) **Local Government Women Representatives**, equipping them with the skills to navigate their new roles (i.e. how to effectively engage with constituents in the development of community-informed policies and budgets to advance specific rights-based initiatives through the delivery of inclusion-focused community development programs, etc.) (ii) **Women Community Leaders**, enhancing their leadership skills and understanding of how to effectively plan and implement community assignments by advocating with elected leaders to promote women rights in their area.

Each of the *She Leads* alumnae (local government women and women community leaders) will attend the complete *She Leads* modular program consisting of the following trainings: beginner (three-day), advanced (two-day), two add-ons (one day each) over a period of several months (refer below activities for details). After each training, participants will develop action plans to address a community development issue by engaging at least 10-15 additional local women; run joint advocacy campaigns; and other community-based initiatives.

Additionally, a core component of the *She Leads* program is building networks of 100 MALE (Male Allies for Leadership Equalities) Allies. MALE Allies are local men who volunteer to help *She Leads* participants to implement their action plans and tackle any issues faced thereof. MALE Allies are instrumental in tackling the lack of family support for *She Leads* alumnae which is one of the key obstacles to women pursuing leadership roles. Selected men are trained as MALE Allies through beginner (two-day), advanced (two-day) and two add-on (one day each) training modules. A district level coordination committee is also formed to serve as the key forum for sustainability, regular interaction, experience sharing and working out synergies amongst *She Leads* alumnae and MALE Allies.

IFES is looking for a local CSO partners for implementation of the *She Leads* project in the selected districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as per given target.

Province	Districts	Target	Duration
KP	Lower Dir	Total target - 200 <i>She Leads</i> – 50 Women in each district (25 <i>Community leaders</i> and 25 <i>Local government representatives</i>)	One year

		- 100 MALE Allies – 25 <i>from each district</i>	
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Activities:

- Select villages/local areas for implementation of *She Leads* including selection criterion in the local context, in consultation with IFES.
- Select *She Leads* participants from the selected area/village including but not limited to the interest/experience in doing community work and willingness to engage with a long term training and advocacy program (one year).
- Engage mentors (community mobilizer & trainer) that will be responsible for the selection of suitable participants, conduct trainings, facilitate implementation of action plans, provide mentoring and guidance support, and tracking and verifying participants' progress.
- Ensure mentors' participation in Training of Trainers (TOT) – IFES will manage travel, boarding/lodging, training curriculums, and other logistical arrangements for TOTs.
- Arrange and conduct three-day beginner, two-day advanced, and two one-day add-on sessions for 100 local government women representatives and 100 women community leaders, separately.
- Provide small grants to the *She Leads* participants for the implementation of post-training assignments, which may include but are not limited to the following focus areas: NIC registration of women and other marginalized groups, voter and civic education, education, health, engagement and consultations with government departments at district levels. (Adhere to IFES' do-no-Harm approach to ensure safety of project staff, direct beneficiaries).
- Arrange and conduct two-day beginner, two-day advanced, and two one-day add-on sessions for 100 MALE Allies participants.
- Develop a mechanism to select the *She Leads* and MALE Allies top performers; establish and facilitate a District Coordination Committee (DCC) at district level, where they will be meeting regularly (monthly) to discuss the progress of their action plans, share challenges, extend support, and develop plans for the execution of mutual advocacy-related initiatives.
- Conduct three add-on sessions (one-day each) for the DCC members only on advanced networking and coordination skills to enhance their capacity in addressing community-based issues with relevant departments and managing monthly coordination meetings.
- Design, print and disseminate relevant IEC materials for general public awareness online and through community-based campaigns. Each of the materials should be converted into braille (for printed materials) and sign language (for audio/video materials) to make them more inclusive.
- Arrange lessons learned workshop for *She Leads* participants and MALE Allies to showcase successes and share experiences.
- Arrange for experience sharing and exposure visits for *She Leads* participants and MALE Allies.

Reporting and Monitoring:

- Submit program progress, event reports, project documentary, M&E reports and final report - on weekly, monthly and quarterly basis or as required by IFES
- Provide IFES with participant lists, photographs of trainings, monitoring and evaluation data and training reports for each training.
- Participate regularly in project coordination/progress review meetings arranged by IFES (online or in-person).

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 July 31, 2025.

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

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)¹

PAN Number

¹ Only organizations with Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) are eligible to receive a subaward under this RFA. If your organization does not have a UEI, please visit www.SAM.gov to get a Unique Entity ID only (no entity registration required).

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.