



**International Foundation
for Electoral Systems**

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS (IFES)

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

RFA-24-024

Issued August 15, 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 multiple awards under this RFA.

1.2. RFA Schedule

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

Issuance of RFA	August 15, 2024
Questions Due	August 22, 2024; by 17:00 Washington DC (EST)
Response from IFES	August 29, 2024
RFA Closes—All Applications Due	September 12, 2024; by 17:00 Washington DC (EST)
Anticipated Implementation Period	October 2024-September 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.

Name: Cayla Vega
cvega@ifes.org

and

Name:
asiapacificprocurement@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 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.

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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

IFES is implementing its ACCOUNT – The Active Citizens Organize & Unit for Inclusion and Transparency – Program with funding support from the United States Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL). The main purpose of this initiative is to enhance the power of Pakistani civil society to promote democratic principles and governmental accountability throughout the electoral process. This goal of the project will be achieved through four components: advocating legislative reforms, capacity building initiatives, strengthening public demand for democratic rights and addressing barriers to full and equitable democratic participation.

IFES will engage local partners to implement one of its flagships program, *She Leads*, fostering women’s transformative leadership for 400 elected women representatives. This program will help them to navigate their new roles with enhanced knowledge and skills in governance, constituent outreach and engagement, inclusive budgeting, public speaking, and anti-corruption, as well as themes tailored to the emerging Pakistani contexts, such as managing disaster recovery funds in flood-affected districts, addressing political polarization and building diverse coalitions. This *She Leads* modular program consists of Beginner (3-day), Advanced (2-day), seven Add-ons (1-day each) over a period of several months (refer below activities for details). Based on these skills, *She Leads* alumnae will implement a series of assignments that focus on soliciting information from constituents on community priorities and developing community action plans to address identified issues (each participant will be engaging with 10-15 additional local women be part of *She Leads* Network, to run joint advocacy campaigns and other community-based initiatives).

A core complementary component of the *She Leads* program is building networks of 200 MALE Allies (Male Allies for Leadership Equalities). MALE Allies are local men who volunteer to help *She Leads* participants implement their action plans. MALE Allies are instrumental in tackling the lack of family support for *She Leads* alumnae which is one of the leading reasons discouraging women from pursuing leadership roles. Selected men are trained as MALE Allies through Beginner (1-day) and Advanced (1-day) and several Add-on (1-day) 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.

IFES is looking for local CSO partners for implementation of the *She Leads* project in the selected districts of Sindh and Punjab as detailed in the following table:

Geographical Location	Punjab (Sialkot, Hafizabad)	Sindh (Khairpur, Larkana)	Total
She Leads target	200	200	400
MALE Allies target	100	100	200

*Please note that bids must be for one province only, however organizations interested in working in more than one province should submit a proposal for each province separately. The planned intervention will be implemented in two years.

Following are the details of activities for implementation.

- Develop criteria for the selection of participants from the selected districts including but not limited to the interest/experience in doing community work, willingness to engage with a long term (two years) training and advocacy program etc.

- Engage Mentors/trainers throughout the project life. A cadre of Mentors will be responsible to conduct trainings, facilitate implementation of action plans, provide mentoring and guidance support, and tracking and verifying participants' progress.
 - Mentors are responsible to identify, train and guide the participants to implement their community-based assignments
- Ensure mentors' participation in Training of Trainers (ToT) – IFES will be responsible to develop the training curriculums and bear all related costs
- Arrange and conduct three-day beginner, two-day advanced, and two one-day add-on sessions for 200 *She Leads* elected women representatives per province. At the end of the modular trainings, participants will develop and implement post-training assignments
 - *Beginner training assignments*: advancing climate resilience, NIC registration of women, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups, voter and civic education, education, health, community-led disaster response preparatory arrangements etc.
 - *Advance Training assignments*: development of inclusive disaster recovery plans - one at each district, action plans for the improvements of local-level early recovery response
 - *Add-on*: development of roadmap – identifying community-led response and monitor progress against set goals for DDMA's
- Provide seed grants to the *She Leads* participants for the implementation of post-training assignments which may include, but are not limited to the above-mentioned areas
- Arrange and conduct one-day beginner, one-day advanced, and two one-day add-on sessions for MALE Allies participants.
- Develop a mechanism to select the *She Leads* and MALE Allies top performers based on their community-based assignments results
- Establish District Coordination Committee (DCC) at district level to build coalitions of *She Leads*, MALE Allies, government and institutional leaders to inclusively address disaster recovery and build resilience to environmental threats.
- Arrange for experience sharing and exposure visits of *She Leads* and MALE Allies.
- Adhere IFES' Do-no-Harm approach ensuring safety of project staff, direct and indirect beneficiaries.
- Arrange lessons learned workshop for *She Leads* and Male Allies for showcasing and knowledge sharing
- Design, print and disseminate relevant IEC materials for the general public awareness online & community-based campaigns- Each material should be linked with the program theme as well as converted into braille and sign language to make it more inclusive.

Reporting and Monitoring

- Submit program progress, event reports, project documentary, M&E reports and final report - on weekly, monthly and quarterly basis or as and when required by IFES
- Conduct monitoring and evaluation in formats agreed to with IFES – throughout the program to measure progress and impact
- 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 September 1, 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 the relevant field.*
- 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.