



Date: 12/12/2017

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Ref: RFA-18-012

Grant Competition: Political Finance Monitoring Project

Organizational Background

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is an independent, non-governmental organization providing professional support to electoral democracy. Through field work, applied research and advocacy, IFES strives to promote citizen participation, transparency and accountability in political life and civil society.

Currently, IFES is implementing Electoral and Legal Enhancements through Civic Engagement and Technical Assistance (ELECT) program - the long-term initiative funded by UK aid from the UK government. The project is aimed at increasing trust in the electoral process among the public and political participants; to foster discussion on electoral law reform; to combat political corruption; to strengthen of the election administration; and to build the capacity of civil society to analyze and advocate on electoral reform issues. IFES support has focused on both the process and content of the reform by promoting inclusive dialogue among stakeholders and providing technical assistance in the development of legislation consistent with international and European standards.

Invitation for Grant Competition

IFES invites non-governmental, not-for-profit organizations meeting the relevant operational and performance requirements as indicated below under eligibility criteria to submit grant applications. The purpose of this project will be promoting transparent political party finance in Ukraine through independent monitoring and outreach campaign.

The maximum grant amount should not exceed **USD 100,000.00**. Grant funds may be used only for activities that are directly related to the implementation of the grant project, which will be funded under this competition.

IFES reserves the right to fund any or none of the grant applications submitted.

Background information

The introduction of quarterly reporting requirements administered by the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption (NAPC) has given new opportunities for Ukrainians to access information about how the political parties raise, receive and spend funds.

Since 2016, the NAPC has been regularly publishing quarterly reports of political parties on its website and analyzing them according to developed methodology. Yet, NAPC efforts have been so far constrained by lack of experience of NAPC staff in the political finance matters, shortage of resources and precarious political environment characterized by periodic attempts to undermine its independence. Furthermore, there is a lack of public interest in reviewing and analyzing parties' financial reports, due to low visibility of NAPC in the field of political finance and the lack of information published in accessible format.

In addition to NAPC, several Ukrainian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are analyzing financial reports submitted by political parties to NAPC and presenting findings on their websites in a user-friendly manner. However, there is still need for more compressive analysis of parties' compliance with the new political finance regulations, by means of both deeper scrutiny of party quarterly financial reports and juxtaposition of data presented in the reports with available information on parties' real income and spending. Similarly, while analyzing parties' reports, more attention should be devoted to party activities at regional and local levels, as this information is often overlooked by the NAPC.

Project Description

IFES continues to support the efforts aimed at increasing transparency and integrity of political finance in Ukraine and invites CSOs to participate in this grant competition.

Implementation of the project is expected to result in comprehensive analysis of political parties' compliance with the new rules on political finance and reporting requirements. The main focus of the monitoring should be on the extent to which the information in the submitted reports accurately reflects reality and fully covers all financial expenditures of the parties, based both on the analysis of the reports submitted to NAPC and on other available external information. In addition, IFES' political finance monitoring program seeks to increase public awareness about political finance reform process in Ukraine. The project findings should be complemented by wide media outreach campaign and specific policy recommendations, developed as a result of the analysis and consultations with key stakeholders of the political finance reform process.

IFES encourages innovative approaches in designing outreach campaign with strong analytical and informative components to reach to main stakeholders and the general public.

Illustrative activities may include but are not limited to:

1. Developing methodology for the on-going monitoring of political parties' finances, that will include:
 - mechanism(s) to track the compliance of legal requirements on reporting to the NAPC by political parties;
 - tools to compare a party's factual income and expenditures at national, regional and local level vs submitted quarterly reports to NAPC;
 - monitoring parties' media outreach to evaluate the average cost of political advertising on main TV channels, as well as other public outreach activities;
2. Using the developed methodology to conduct on-going monitoring of political parties' activities (events, public meetings, etc.) at regional/local level at least in four pilot regions of Ukraine
3. Organizing a series of discussion with key stakeholders and experts to analyze interim and final monitoring results;
4. Developing public policy recommendations on how to improve the current legislation and practices to bring them in accordance with international standards in terms of transparency and accountability of political finances;
5. Developing relevant formats for presenting the findings of the project to the public in the most comprehensive and user-friendly manner;
6. Organizing wide outreach and awareness campaign by using both the traditional communication channels and innovative practices;
7. Other impactful activities applicable to reach the main goals of the project.

Duration of the Project

Project activities are expected to start on/around February 15, 2018, and finish no later than June 30, 2019.

Technical Proposal (Proposal Goals, Objectives, Activities and Results)

Applicants should follow the Project Proposal Format guidelines (Attachment 1) carefully to ensure they meet the criteria below. Application form and budget template can be downloaded as the attachments to this announcement.

Eligibility

- Eligible organization include registered Ukrainian non-governmental organizations with established financial management and reporting systems, and not affiliated with any political parties or engaged in any political activities.
- Applicants should have at least 3 years' experience and demonstrated expertise in successful implementation of similar projects.
- Proposals can be submitted by a national NGO with its own all-Ukrainian network, or by a coalition of Ukrainian non-governmental organizations, but one organization should be identified as a lead organization.

Decision-making

To ensure an objective and non-discriminatory selection process, proposals will be reviewed by a board comprised of IFES international and local staff.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of IFES, nor does it commit IFES to pay for costs incurred during the preparation and submission of a proposal.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used for evaluation of applications. The evaluators will score based on the information they find in the Application to answer the questions below.

1. Technical Proposal (Project Goals, Objectives, Activities and Results) - 50%

- Does the project aim to reach the set objectives and the tasks identified?
- Does the project target relevant key stakeholders?
- Are the goal(s) and objective(s) achievable within the allocated timeframe proposed by the project?
- Are the proposed activities realistic and comprehensive to achieve stated goals and objectives?
- Are the expected results specific, meaningful, attainable and relevant to the goals and objectives outlined in the proposal?
- Are the expected deliverables practical, reasonable, and derived from proposed activities?

2. Budget Proposal - 30%

- Does the presented budget follow the guidelines?
- Does budget reflect realistic costs?
- Is the budget adequate to cover project activities?
- Is the budget cost-effective?

3. Organizational Capacity/Past Performance - 20%

- Does the applicant organization demonstrate relevant experience in conducting similar monitoring and outreach activities?
- Has the applicant organization achieved tangible results while implementing similar projects?
- Relevance and experience of proposed project team?

Evaluation Criteria Grading:

Highly Exceeds Expectations	5 Points
Slightly Exceeds Expectations	4 Points
Meets Expectations	3 Points
Meets Most But Not All Expectations	2 Points
Does Not Meet Expectations	1 Point

Application Submission Procedures

Applicants must submit:

- A completed IFES *application form and guideline p.1* (Attachment 1. p 1);
- Project description as outlined in (Attachment 1 section b. *project description*);
- The detailed implementation plan (Attachment 1 section c. *implementation plan*);
- A completed Performance Monitoring Plan (Attachment 2);
- A detailed itemized budget in USD along with the budget notes in the unified IFES format (Attachment 3);
- Scanned copies of the registration documents, including by-laws;
- CVs of the project team identified in the proposal (project director, administrative and finance staff, and all proposed experts);
- If applicable, applicant should submit additional information about other projects (project summary and total amount) on similar topics, submitted to the donor or already funded by the donors.

Proposals submitted to IFES under this competition must be original and the sole work of the applicant organization.

Please note that selected organizations will be subject to a pre-award audit to determine fiscal responsibility and ensure adequacy of financial controls and accounting systems.

Schedule of events

Release of RFA	December 12, 2017
Deadline for submission of questions	December 18, 2017
Answers from IFES	December 22, 2017
RFA Closes – All Bids Due	January 12, 2018 till 6.00 PM Kyiv time

Note: Questions/Answers and Amendment(s) related to this RFA can be found on IFES Procurement Notices Page on the following link: www.ifes.org/procurement-notice

CSOs' Understanding of the Inquiry

In responding to this RFA, the organization 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 organization which demonstrates less than such understanding. Further, IFES reserves the right to determine, at its sole discretion, whether the organization has demonstrated such understanding. Such disqualification shall be at no fault, cost, or liability whatsoever to IFES.

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.

Contact for submission

Applications must be submitted via email **before 6p.m. January 12, 2018**. Late proposals will not be considered. IFES will only accept applications **in English**.

All questions and submission of proposals must adhere to the abovementioned schedule and shall be to the attention of Mr. Ragheed Al Ameen at ralameen@ifes.org and Ms. Sajia Tokhi at stokhi@ifes.org with "Political Finance Monitoring Project" in the subject line for all e-mail communication. IFES will confirm timely receipt of applications within one business day.

All the materials and documents submitted as part of this competition become IFES property and will not be returned to the applicant. IFES guarantees the confidentiality of applications.

End of RFA