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## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Ref: RFA-20-043

### 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.

Since 1994, IFES has conducted a range of assistance activities to support the development of democratic elections and political processes in Ukraine. IFES supported the country's institutions and citizenry in building democracy through improvements in election law and administration, civil society development, rule of law and good governance. IFES continues to work closely with election officials, political parties, media, educational institutions, and the non-governmental sector through each election cycle.

#### Invitation for Grant Competition

IFES invites non-governmental, not-for-profit organizations meeting the relevant operational and performance requirements to submit applications for the 8-month monitoring project. The purpose of this project will be promoting transparent political party and campaign finance in Ukraine through independent monitoring and outreach campaign, with a focus on the 2020 local elections.

The maximum grant amount cannot exceed **USD 50,000.00**

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 grant competition.

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

#### Background Information

The Political Finance Reform Law adopted in 2015 introduced comprehensive regulation of political party and campaign finance in Ukraine and provided then to-be-created National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption (NAPC) with the oversight mandate in this area. Since then, transparency of political finance in Ukraine has notably increased, but numerous challenges remain. Key challenges included weak compliance with disclosure rules by many political parties, lackluster state oversight, and lack of public interest in the issues of party and campaign finance.

The reboot of the NAPC in early 2020 paved the way for better enforcement of political finance rules, while the changes to the political finance law in December 2019 simplified donation procedures and envisaged creation of the electronic reporting system for political parties. These promising developments point to the need of reinforced engagement of different stakeholders in the implementation of the political finance reform. Ukrainian CSOs have played an important role in monitoring and scrutinizing both financial reports of political parties and performance of the regulator and are well positioned to step up their efforts to improve transparency and integrity of political finance in Ukraine.

On the other hand, the further progress of the political finance reform in Ukraine should be grounded in comprehensive assessment of how the new political finance rules have been implemented so far. While only several years have passed since the adoption of the Political Finance Reform Law, its impact on transparency and integrity of political finance in Ukraine should be carefully evaluated and lessons learned should be drawn, including through consultations with all relevant stakeholders. Specific attention should be given to the potential of the new political finance regulation to facilitate better participation of women and other underrepresented groups and eliminate obstacles to their participation. Such findings should guide further efforts in improving regulation of money in politics in Ukraine and facilitating better enforcement of existing rules.

In addition, the new political finance regulation will face another test during October 2020 local elections. In 2019 presidential and parliamentary elections, several Ukrainian CSOs significantly expanded their efforts aimed at monitoring parties' and candidates' income and raising awareness about campaign finance among voters so that they could make an informed electoral choice. It is important to keep and build upon this momentum during the upcoming local elections, especially given much bigger number of electoral contestants and very limited mandate and capacities of territorial election commissions to perform oversight and analysis of parties' and candidates' financial reports.

## 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. This subaward will be part of IFES' broader effort to support effective implementation of the political finance reform in Ukraine.

Implementation of the project is expected to result in several **outcomes**:

- First, a comprehensive assessment of political finance reform efforts to date will help to identify existing gaps and challenges and build consensus among key stakeholders around the needed steps to further improve transparency, integrity, and inclusiveness of the current political finance regime.
- Second, continued monitoring of ongoing and campaign finance reports and performance of the state regulators should raise awareness about political finance issues among media and public and hold oversight agencies and political parties accountable.
- Third, implementation of the recommendations developed over the course of the project should lead to improved oversight of and compliance with the political finance regulations.

Applicants must demonstrate how their plan of action will lead to less political corruption; a more-equal playing field; strengthened electoral justice; and greater public confidence and trust in Ukraine's electoral processes. Applicants must clearly state their key performance indicators and how these will be measured. Applicants must also consider the important role that civil society plays not only as a provider of oversight and public information, but also, at times, as a partner to government institutions' pursuit of common objectives.

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

Each application must include information at least on (1) the methodology to be used for the monitoring of ongoing party finance and campaign finance and political finance oversight activities by the NAPC and election commissions, (2) the scope of the proposed work by providing information on how many targeted parties or regions will be covered, (3) how applicant will engage in legal reform process.

Illustrative activities may include but are not limited to:

1. Developing or updating methodology for the monitoring of political parties' and campaign finances, that will include:

- mechanism to track the compliance of legal requirements on reporting by political parties and candidates;
  - tools to compare parties' and candidates' factual income and expenditures at national, regional and local level with submitted reports to NAPC and election commissions;
  - monitoring parties' media outreach to evaluate the average cost of political advertising on TV channels and in social media, as well as other public outreach activities.
2. Using the developed methodology to conduct on-going monitoring of political parties' and candidates' activities at regional/local level at least in 5 regions of Ukraine ahead of and during the 2020 local elections.
  3. Monitoring political finance oversight activities of NAPC and election commissions before and during the local elections to identify performance gaps and avenues for improvement;
  4. Conducting an evaluation of the progress made and obstacles faced during the implementation of the political finance reform in terms of transparency, integrity, and inclusiveness of money in politics in Ukraine;
  5. Organizing a series of discussions with key stakeholders and experts to analyze monitoring and evaluation results;
  6. Developing and promoting public policy recommendations for different stakeholders on legal and behavioral reforms to improve transparency of political finance, strengthen enforcement of the rules, and facilitate gender equality in politics;
  7. Developing relevant formats for presenting the findings of the project to the public in the most comprehensive and user-friendly manner;
  8. Organizing wide outreach and awareness campaign by using both the traditional communication channels and innovative practices;
  9. Other impactful activities applicable to reach the main goals of the project.

### **Duration of the Project**

Project activities are expected to start on/around June 1, 2020 and finish no later than February 28, 2021. All project activities, should conclude by January 30, 2021. Only project reporting and project close out costs will be allowed after this period.

### **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 a proven experience in successful implementation of similar projects.
- Proposals can be also submitted by a national Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with its own all-Ukrainian network, or by a coalition of Ukrainian NGOs, 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:

### 1. **Technical Proposal (Project Goals, Objectives, Activities and Results) – 50 points**

- Does the project aim to reach the set IFES' outcomes?
- Does the project target relevant key stakeholders?
- Are the proposed 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?
- Is proposed methodology for monitoring of political finance efficient and feasible?
- 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 points**

- 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 points**

- 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?

## Application Submission Procedures

Applicants must submit:

- A completed IFES *application form* (Attachment 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	March 30, 2020
Deadline for submission of questions	April 10, 2020
Answers from IFES	April 14, 2020
RFA Closes – All Bids Due	April 30, 2020 till 6.00 PM Kyiv time

## 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 therefrom.

## Contact for submission

Applications must be submitted via email **before 6.00 p.m. Kyiv time on April 30, 2020**. Late proposals will not be considered. IFES will consider applications **in English**.

All questions and submission of proposals must adhere to the abovementioned schedule and shall be addressed to Ian Swank [iswank@ifes.org](mailto:iswank@ifes.org) and Sajia Tokhi at [stokhi@ifes.org](mailto:stokhi@ifes.org) with "Political Finance Monitoring Project" in the subject line for all e-mail communication.

Copy of this solicitation, Amendments and or Q&A will be available online at: [www.ifes.org/procurement-notices](http://www.ifes.org/procurement-notices)

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***

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

Grant Competition: Name of project

Application Form and Guideline

### **Organization**

Complete Legal Name of Applicant Organization

**Office Address /Офісна адреса**

**Legal Mailing Address (if different),** including zip code

**Office Telephone Number(s),** including area code

**Fax Number**

**E-Mail Address(es)**

**Director of Organization**

**Project Director**

**Project Dates**

## PROJECT TITLE

**A. Project Summary:** (please describe your project in one paragraph, including objectives, issue, target audience, and geographic coverage)

**Amount requested in USD**

### **B. Project Description**

#### **1. Need for the project**

Please identify the problem your project would help to solve. Why is this project important?

#### **2. Project's Goal and Objectives:**

What is the specific goal of your effort? Does it comply with the goals and objectives of the competition?

#### **3. Target Audience and Stakeholders**

What is your main target audience? What groups of stakeholders will the project primarily serve?

The key target groups of the project are:

Final beneficiaries of the project are:

#### **4. Activities**

Please identify and describe in detail each activity (or work package) to be undertaken to produce results, justifying the choice of activities.

#### **5. Expected Results**

Please identify specific results that you expect to realize upon completion of your project.

#### **6. Expected Deliverables**

Please identify specific deliverables that you expect to develop within your project (research/analytical reports; specific strategies; public policy recommendations; PSAs, etc.)

#### **7. Organization's Capacity**

Please briefly present your organization's mission, its core activity and main current sources of funding. Explain what makes it the best organization to successfully implement the proposed project.

#### **8. Project Evaluation**

Please describe what are the quantity and qualitative criteria for the project's success. How will you determine that the project goals have been accomplished?

#### **9. Project Monitoring Methodology and Plan**

Please provide performance monitoring methodology and plan, which should have clear indicators, results, and measurement criteria. using the format provided in **ATTACHMENT 2 (Performance Monitoring Plan)**

### C. Implementation Plan

Please use the following format to provide a detailed work plan

Month	Activity	Location	Expected Result	Responsible Person	Verifiable Criteria of Completion

### D. Budget

Complete the budget by line-item for each category of budget expenditure that you are requesting in this grant application. The budget should only include items that are appropriate for the proposed initiative. Indicate costs in USD. If awarded funding, NGOs will receive funding in USD, transferred from the IFES account. Budget notes must accompany the budget and explain, in detail, each budget item.

#### **ATTACHMENT 3 Budget**

Please see attached budget template in Excel format



**ATTACHMENT 2**

**Performance Monitoring Plan**

Performance Indicator	Detailed Definition of the performance indicator	Source, method, frequency, schedule of data collection	Staff responsible for collecting data	How data will be reviewed, analyzed and reported	Target