



International Foundation  
for Electoral Systems

**International Foundation for Electoral Systems**

**(IFES)**

**Request for Proposal (RFP) for Provision of Global Elections and Political  
Transitions (GEPT) Diagnostic Retrospective and Review**

**Issued by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) on behalf of  
Consortium for Electoral and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS)**

**Solicitation # RFP-21-066**

**October 12, 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 **Conducting a Retrospective Review of Operational Effectiveness, Coordination and Efficiency of the Global Elections and Political Transitions (GEPT) award, funded through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The review will also identify lessons learned and best practices for future programming related to building capacity of local partners and enhancing inclusion of marginalized groups in democratic institutions and processes under GEPT award.** The solicitation provides Bidders with the relevant operational and performance requirements.

### 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](mailto:compliance@ifes.org) or at +1 202-350-6791.

## 2 GENERAL INFORMATION

### 2.1 The Organization

The Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) is comprised of three core nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organizations dedicated to advancing and supporting democratic practices and institutions around the globe: the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute.

CEPPS has a 25-year track record of collaboration and leadership in democracy, human rights and governance support. CEPPS operates as a consortium (under a joint venture) to provide USAID and other donors with the capacity to deliver complex democracy, rights and governance (DRG) programming at scale across the entire spectrum of political contexts and geographic regions.

CEPPS is currently implementing the Global Electoral and Political Transitions (GEPT) award, which supports elections and political transitions during a period of tremendous social change, exemplified by the challenges of increased connectivity, the youth bulge, urbanization, migration, and globalization. CEPPS empowers local partners, including traditionally marginalized groups, to build resilient government institutions, political parties, and electoral processes in fragile states and developing democracies.

Under the GEPT mechanism, CEPPS implements Associate Awards that are issued by specific USAID missions. These awards can be implemented by all three CEPPS partners or by one or two. In cases where more than one partner is implementing an award, a Lead Coordinating Partner (LCP) is designated to foster streamlined communications and engagement with the USAID mission. The LCP model is also designed to ensure enhanced coordination between CEPPS partners in the implementation of the award.

Programming under GEPT is focused on two foundational objectives and seven functional objectives. In this retrospective study, focus will be placed on lessons learned and best practices identified for the two foundational objectives (Political empowerment of women, youth and other marginalized groups; Capacity building of local and regional organizations to provide technical assistance on elections and political transitions).

For more information on CEPPS, bidders can visit [www.cepps.org](http://www.cepps.org).

## 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                   | October 12, 2021                                  |
| • Technical Questions/Inquiries Due | October 17, 2021, by 17:00<br>Washington DC (EST) |
| • Answers/Addenda from IFES         | October 18, 2021                                  |
| • RFP Closes                        | October 26, 2021, by 17:00<br>Washington DC (EST) |

## 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.

**Abdullah Abdullah**  
[abdullah@ifes.org](mailto:abdullah@ifes.org)

**and**

**Khurram Naz**  
[knaz@ifes.org](mailto:knaz@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-notice](http://www.ifes.org/procurement-notice), and [www.devex.com](http://www.devex.com).

### 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. Overall Methodological Approach **(30%)**  
*The offer must outline a cohesive, robust methodological approach that will enable CEPPS to meet the goals of the diagnostic exercise, and derive robust conclusion about best practices and lessons learned through GEPT implementation.*
2. Primary Data Collection **(15%)**  
*The bidder must describe in detail the data collection procedures for primary data collection with GEPT stakeholders. Considerations of operating in COVID-impacted environments should be addressed in outlining primary data collection approach.*

3. Approach to Secondary Data Collection **(15%)**  
*The bidder must describe in detail the secondary data collection approach, including demonstrating understanding of USAID-mandated reports and deliverables that can be used for secondary data.*
  
4. Organizational Experience and Qualifications of Key Personnel **(20%)**  
*The bidder should demonstrate its experience as well as that of its key personnel in the implementation of similar projects in the past.*
  
5. Cost Proposal Effectiveness and Reasonableness **(20%)**  
*The total cost must be reasonable and show efficient use of resources, and additional costs, if any, must be clearly identified. Offers will be compared amongst bidders meeting technical requirements. Please use the enclosed budget template to prepare a cost proposal.*

### **3.6 Selection and Notification**

IFES will evaluate Responses to identify responsible Bidders and responsive offers. Finalists 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**

### **Background**

CEPPS plans to conduct a retrospective review of its GEPT award, focusing on:

(1) Operational effectiveness, coordination and efficiency of the GEPT award, to assess implementation and coordination structures and processes among CEPPS partners in HQ and the field. To deliver results across GEPT objectives, CEPPS relies on its Lead Coordinating Partner (LCP) structure aimed at streamlining communication and coordination: for any multi-partner project, one CEPPS partner is chosen to be LCP and ensures program integration, unified reporting, and streamlined communication with USAID and overall coordination among the CEPPS Team at headquarters and in the field. CEPPS is specifically interested in examining ways to improve or replicate successful strategies in operationalizing the LCP model during GEPT.

(2) Lessons learned, challenges and best practices related to building capacity of local partners and enhancing inclusion of marginalized groups in democratic institutions and processes under the GEPT award.

The study will rely on a review of existing data from baseline and midline evaluations, quarterly reports and other data collected for a sample of projects, as well as primary data collected from a sample of CEPPS staff, partners and USAID representatives. Findings from this review will be used to inform CEPPS DRG programming in the future, and will be shared with USAID to be considered in broader DRG programming.

## **GEPT Diagnostic Retrospective and Review**

Preliminarily, CEPPS has identified six associate awards which can form an initial list of programs to be sampled for this study. The bidders can suggest adding additional programs to this list for the study in coordination with CEPPS. The six programs are Armenia, Burma, Ethiopia, Nepal, Tunisia, Ukraine.

**Responsibilities of Contractor (In close consultation at every stage with CEPPS):**

1. Develop overarching methodology, including evaluation questions, sampling and desk review strategy, in consultation with CEPPS.
2. Conduct desk review of a select sample of baseline and midline evaluations, quarterly reports, indicator data and other secondary data collected throughout GEPT implementation.
3. Develop data collection tools for collecting primary data from CEPPS partners and USAID representatives in the field and HQ.
4. Conduct data collection.
5. Develop coding and analysis; enter, clean and code data.
6. Draft initial findings to inform a validation session with CEPPS staff.
7. Conduct a validation session with CEPPS staff.
8. Draft an initial report for CEPPS review.
9. Develop a PPT slidedeck and conduct a presentation of initial findings for CEPPS staff.
10. Conduct a presentation of initial findings for USAID staff.
11. Address CEPPS and USAID comments on draft report and submit final report.

**Materials Delivered by Contractor to CEPPS:**

1. Full methodology, including detailed timeline, evaluation questions, desk review and sampling approach.
2. Data collection tools for primary data collection.
3. Initial findings, shared at least one week in advance of validation session with CEPPS staff.
4. Draft report for CEPPS review.
5. PPT presentation to be shared with USAID and CEPPS staff.
6. Final report that includes findings, conclusions and recommendations (and outlines methodology and limitations) addressing CEPPS feedback on draft report, to be submitted by January 31, 2022.

**Methodological Specifications**

The Bidder should address the following issues as they outline their methodological approach in their response. Responses on these issues will form the basis for evaluation of the proposal for criteria 1 to 3 identified above in Evaluation Criteria.

**1. Overall Research Methodology:** This retrospective study will address the key overarching questions outlined below.

- **Question 1.** What positive aspects of coordination and collaboration between CEPPS partners on associate program design and implementation should be carried forward in GEPT implementations? What challenges in coordination and collaboration should be addressed to improve efficiency of program implementation?

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- **Question 2.** What practices/initiatives/tools used in GEPT program implementations should be identified as model approaches that should be replicated in future programming to advance the inclusion of marginalized populations in the political process? What are the critical challenges for which programming approaches should still be further refined?
- **Question 3.** What practices/initiatives/tools used in GEPT program implementations should be identified as model approaches that should be replicated in future programming to advance sustainable capacity-building of local partners in GEPT programming? What challenges to sustainable capacity-building need further examination and refinement of approaches?

The Bidder should consider these overarching research questions as it proposes an overall methodology for the study, and propose subsidiary specific research questions that can enable effective addressing of the overarching questions. The Bidder should also outline the types of research instruments it expects to utilize to collect data that addresses the research questions. It should be understood that all subsidiary research questions will be developed jointly between CEPPS and the chosen Bidder during the design phase of the diagnostic retrospective, and that the choice of research instruments will also be reviewed by CEPPS.

A fieldwork schedule should be outlined for the data collection and analysis process.

**2. Data Sources and Data Management:** The Bidder should outline both the primary and secondary data sources it expects to use for data collection. The Bidder should consider the reporting requirements and stakeholder configuration of a typical USAID-funded implementation in the DRG sector as it considers both primary and secondary data sources that can be used to address the research questions. Availability and utility of data from the specified data sources, and particularly concerning the time constraints under which this diagnostic retrospective will be implemented, will be primary evaluation considerations of the Bidder's approach. The Bidder should outline how primary and secondary data will be managed for efficient analysis. Some examples of these data sources are listed below.

- Primary Data Sources: Interviews with program staff; USAID mission representatives; local partners
- Secondary Data Sources: Quarterlies, Assessment reports

Bidders should consider contextual environment of programming, mix of programming in terms of service lines, and local partner makeup as factors in developing a sampling strategy for the data sources.

**3. Analysis and Reporting:** The Bidder should detail the process for analysis and reporting that addresses the key overarching questions listed above, as well as subsidiary questions developed in collaboration with CEPPS. This description should include the key personnel involved, timelines, and aspects in which CEPPS personnel will need to be engaged.

CEPPS expects that the analysis and reporting process will include three key events:

- Validation of initial findings with CEPPS personnel (in-person or virtual session)
- Presentation of findings to CEPPS personnel (in-person or virtual session)

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- Presentation of findings to USAID (in-person or virtual session)

In addition to a final report that is delivered at the end of the performance period, the Bidder should also outline other materials that may be provided to CEPPS at the end of the performance period.

- 4 **Limitations and Constraints:** The Bidder should outline any limitations and constraints, whether methodological or contextual, that may impact the implementation of the retrospective study. The Bidder should also outline, as much as possible, possible mitigation measures that may be taken to address the limitation or constraint.

## 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.

Bidders should note that GEPT performance period ends on January 31, 2022, and all reporting for this study should be finalized and submitted to CEPPS by that date. CEPPS anticipates expediting contracting for this opportunity, and substantive work beginning in early October.

### 5.2 Geographic Code (applicable to USAID funding only)

IFES' project in the **United States** 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 for their Response to be considered:

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



- U.S. companies must indicate if they are a registered Small Business (Woman owned, veteran-owned, Minority-owned, Disabled, Service Disabled Veteran-owned)
- 2. Evidence of successful completion of a project of a similar size and complexity.
- 3. Demonstrated experience evaluating democracy, rights and governance (DRG) projects preferred.
- 4. Experience working with consortia preferred.
- 5. Ability to provide both written documents and presentations, evidenced through a track-record of similar tasks provided on successful evaluations; this includes information research and synthesis from multiple sources, into a cohesive, easy-to-read final product.
- 6. 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.
- 7. 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 Scope of Work.

## **7 PRICING**

Bidders must complete/submit a 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 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.

## **8 ADDITIONAL TERMS & CONDITIONS**

### **8.1 Non-Disclosure Agreement**

IFES will require the successful 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**

The Bidder must disclose in writing with its Response any subcontracting that will take place under an award. Failure to disclose subcontracting relationships will result in the Bidder's offer being removed from consideration. (if permitted by the 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 Consortium for Electoral and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) and its partners (International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), The National Democratic Institute (NDI), International Republican Institute and any other partners) including, but not limited to, all logos, trademarks, or trade names of CEPPS and its partners, at any time without the prior written approval of CEPPS.

#### **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]**