



International Foundation
for Electoral Systems

**INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS
(IFES)**

**Request for Proposal (RFP) for
Strategic Communication Advisory Services
in Albania**

Solicitation # RFP-22-039

February 16, 2022

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 strategic communications advisory services in Albania. 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 or at +1 202-350-6791.

2 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 The Organization

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 the political process
- Applying field-based research to improve the electoral cycle

Since 1987, IFES has worked in over 145 countries – from developing democracies, to mature democracies.

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 | February 16, 2022 |
| • Technical Questions/Inquiries Due | February 23, 2022 |
| • Answers/Addenda from IFES | February 28, 2022 |
| • RFP Closes | March 9, 2022 |

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.

Ragheed Al-Ameen
ralameen@ifes.org

and

Hend Ghobrial
hghobrial@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-notices.

3.4 Submission

It is mandatory for Bidders to send proposals in English 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. EXPERIENCE 35 points
 - Minimum 10 years of delivering high quality services on strategic communications, public relations and outreach, or civic advocacy support in international development, preferably related to democracy and governance.
 - Demonstrated ability to perform varied communications functions, including strategic engagement, public outreach, media relations, and/or content development.
 - Proven ability to coordinate and communicate across stakeholder groups, donors, and intercultural contexts.
 - Experience advising on strategic communication outcomes in complex management and operational structures.
 - Designated project staff with capacity to communicate and deliver in native English language proficiency is required. The Bidder may also provide selection criteria for the recruitment of staff with native English language proficiency.
 - Capacity to operate in Albanian language is a plus.
 - Understanding of the Albanian political and socio-economic context will be considered an asset.
2. QUALITY 35 points
 - The technical proposal will be evaluated based on the quality and demonstrated knowledge and skills in preparing the proposed approach and/or services offered.
 - Samples of past projects should be included to demonstrate quality of work performed.
 - The level of expertise and experience of the bidder's proposed project team will be considered to ensure sufficient capacities.
 - The bidder should provide details on its quality control mechanisms.
3. PRICE 30 points
 - The total cost must be reasonable and show efficient use of resources.
 - Costs should reflect fair market value.
 - Additional costs, if any, must be clearly identified.
 - Offers will be compared amongst responsive bidders meeting technical requirements.

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

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in Albania, is seeking to contract a **Strategic Communications Advisory Firm** for its United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded project in Albania. The project is implemented by the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS), which includes IFES and other organizations.

The project is an initiative to empower citizens, improve government performance, and strengthen public and private sector integrity. The project will work to establish an Independent Public Legal Entity (IPLÉ) designed to strengthen evidence-based learning, empower citizens and the private sector, and improve public institutions' performance for transparency, accountability, and integrity in Albanian society. The IPLÉ will develop and collect informed resources and practices for use by change-minded leaders across society to identify common challenges and develop joint targeted solutions that incentivizes behavior to reject corruption and embrace integrity. To establish the IPLÉ, CEPPS will conduct a strategic communications and advocacy campaign to build support for its enabling legislation. This legislation must be introduced into the formal parliamentary process no later than December 31, 2022.

The awarded contractor will provide high quality strategic communication advisory services and technical expertise to the CEPPS team in order to achieve the project's communication goals and build broad-based support for the IPLÉ's establishment through its enabling legislation.

Tasks and Responsibilities

- Supports development of a research-driven Strategic Communications and Outreach Plan, in line with project goals and activities.
- Provides assistance to CEPPS on high level advocacy, for the establishment of the IPLÉ and its enabling legislation.
- Advises on approaches to social media content development and analysis.
- Offers technical expertise on delivering multi-stakeholder and multi-channel engaging content and monitors its execution.
- Provides quality control over effective project communications, public, government and media relations, and donor outreach.
- Works closely with IFES' Communications Officer to achieve communication objectives in the Albanian context.
- Works closely with CEPPS leadership to organize project communication materials, mechanisms, and processes.
- Review and adhere to project branding strategy and marking plan and other donor requirements.

5 Note: IFES prefers Bidders based in the United States, Albania, and/or other countries under Geographic Code 937 (see section 5.2). Bidders from other countries are invited to apply, but will be

subject to a waiver request process with USAID.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.

5.2 Geographic Code (applicable to USAID funding only)

IFES' project in Albania 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)
 - No subcontracting is allowed under this solicitation.
2. Evidence of successful completion of a project of a similar size and complexity.
3. 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.¹
4. 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 work. Scope of Work.

¹ At this point, IFES only requests names of references. If needed, IFES will contact selected Bidders and request recommendation letters.

5. A certification signed by an officer or authorized representative that the Bidder has sufficient financial, technical and managerial resources and facilities to complete the Scope of Work.

7 PRICING

Bidders must provide 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. Administrative and equipment costs should be no more than 10 percent of the budget.

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. Prices shown in the cost proposal should exclude VAT as the project is funded by USG. Please provide estimated VAT amount separately at a summary level.

Note: This is a sample unit-price financial proposal. Bidders may use their own format to explain and list costs in their financial proposal.

No.	Item Description	Technical Specifications	QTY	Unit	Unit Price USD	Total Price USD
Group 1 (Ex. Products and Deliverables)						
1.	<i>Ex. Strategic Communications and Outreach Plan</i>	<i>Ex. Includes context analysis, key themes and messages, advocacy plan, and plain language guide</i>	<i>Ex. 1</i>	<i>Ex. Per plan</i>		
2.						
Subtotal Group 1						
Group 2 (Ex. Labor)						
3.	<i>Ex. Project Manager</i>	<i>Ex. Supervises project support; participates in meetings and discussions</i>	<i>Ex. 10</i>	<i>Ex. Hours per week</i>		
4.						
Subtotal Group 2						
Group 3 (Ex. Other Costs)						
5.	<i>Ex. Travel Expenses</i>	<i>Ex. Airfare, accommodations, per diem</i>	<i>Ex. 2</i>	<i>Ex. Trips</i>		
6.						
Subtotal Group 3						
Total					USD	
Taxes (VAT, if applicable)					USD	

Grand Total	USD
--------------------	------------

8 ADDITIONAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

8.1 Non-Disclosure Agreement

IFES reserves the right to require the 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

No subcontracting is allowed under this 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 IFES including, but not limited to, all logos, trademarks, or trade names of IFES, at any time without the prior written approval of IFES.

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]