



## **International Foundation for Electoral Systems**

### **Request for Application**

Date: 08/14/2017

Ref.: RFA-012-001-001

#### **Subject: Request for Applications: Campaign Finance Monitoring by Civil Society Organization**

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), invites your organization to participate in this competitive solicitation for pricing, delivery, and terms of potential sale of the following services for the IFES office in Nepal. 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 RFA 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.

#### **BACKGROUND**

IFES is an independent, international non-governmental organization (INGO) with headquarters registered in the United States of America. 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.

#### **Organizational Background**

Since 1999, IFES has conducted a range of assistance activities to support the development of democratic elections and political processes in Nepal. IFES provides support to strengthen the electoral management capacity of the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN), promote inclusive electoral reform, strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) and mobilize citizens to participate in democratic politics. IFES continues to work closely with the ECN and CSOs through each election cycle.

IFES is currently working in support of the upcoming elections in Nepal through the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) mechanism, funded by USAID. Under this mechanism, IFES is co-implementing the project titled Policy Dialogue (or Niti Sambad) which aims to promote dialogue and accountability mechanisms for, within and among political parties, government entities, and civil society organizations in support of more transparent and inclusive political processes in Nepal. IFES provides technical support to engage and enfranchise the most marginalized groups in Nepal through partnerships with the Election Commission, Nepal and other electoral stakeholders including media organizations, disabled person's organizations, and civil society organizations.

#### **Project Description**

IFES is planning to issue a sub-award to a legally registered, non- governmental, non-partisan Nepali organization to develop and implement a methodology for monitoring campaign expenditures. This invitation is for an organization that will work in close coordination with IFES local and international experts to adapt IFES' existing monitoring methodology to the Nepali context and implement a pilot monitoring mission in the Kathmandu Valley during the upcoming State Assembly and/or Parliamentary elections. The awarded organization will be required to design, plan and implement a comprehensive campaign finance monitoring program with the support provided by IFES. The activities undertaken within the project will contribute to the main objectives of the project:

- To develop a methodology for monitoring campaign expenditure in Nepal
- To monitor use of resources by election contesters such as candidate or party posters, flags, t-shirts; political advertisements on television, social media or radio broadcasts; and transportation, food, and other allowances in attempt to buy votes including the use of administrative and state resources;
- To raise awareness among the public about campaign finance regulations and the abuse of state resources during election campaigns;
- To promote fair competition among all electoral stakeholders by highlighting the role of money in the election campaign

The organization should have a strong presence in the Kathmandu Valley for completion of this project, though a wider national presence is preferred to support monitoring efforts outside of the Kathmandu Valley that may be conducted in the future.

IFES will consider initiatives up to \$15,000 in value. Sub-award funds may be used only for the activities directly related to the implementation of a sub-award project. IFES reserves the right to fund one, several, or none of the applications submitted. The first sub-award will be for a pilot for 5-8 months focused on campaign spending monitoring in Kathmandu for the next elections.

The awarded organization will be required to produce a comprehensive report on the main findings of the monitoring activities in Nepali and English language, and to present it to the public and a wide range of stakeholders, such as government, political parties, civil society, election management bodies and the media both at the national and local level. The report will contain at a minimum a description of the methodology used, main findings, references to legal provisions that were violated and recommendations for improvements. In addition, the selected organization will be expected to develop an outreach plan to help raise public awareness and advocacy for reform. Additional activity reports will also be required after major trainings and awareness events.

The awarded organization should have a strong presence in Kathmandu where monitoring will be conducted but wider coverage in the districts is preferred in case of future project expansion. While previous experience in election-related monitoring activities is preferable, it is NOT required that the selected organization has previous experience in campaign finance monitoring.

In support of the above, IFES' responsibilities will be to provide a minimum of three trainings to the core team at the sub-awardee on campaign finance. The core team could include:

- Project Manager
- IT/data focal person(s) who could adapt IFES' existing database on campaign finance for Nepal
- Report Writing Officer
- Media Outreach Officer

- Legal/elections consultant (does not require a legal background but someone who comes from a research-background and will be able to look into the regulations and support development of the methodology)

During the pre-election phase, the core team will be expected to adapt IFES' existing campaign finance methodology for the Nepali context in close coordination with IFES' field team and International Political Finance Consultant. The core group will be expected to train a group of 15-20 monitors in Kathmandu, who will be contracted for the entirety of the pre-campaign and campaign period to go out and identify campaign expenditures based on the adopted methodology.

### **Duration of the Project**

The sub-award will start in August 2017 and end after the completion of the next election in Nepal (5-8 months).

### **Eligibility**

Eligible organizations will:

- Be local non-governmental/not-for-profit organizations registered with the Social Welfare Council (SWC);
- Have a strong, established financial management, database management and reporting system;
- Not be affiliated with any political party or engaged in any political activities;
- Be firmly rooted in Kathmandu having a strong presence and experience;
- Have capacity to monitor election-related activities;
- Have prior experience and demonstrated expertise in implementation of similar projects and prior history of successful implementation of election-related projects is a plus;

### **Application Submission Procedures**

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

- Applicants must submit in English:
  - A detailed project narrative including background, objectives, and proposed methodology (3 pages maximum)
  - A detailed implementation plan;
  - A detailed itemized budget and explanatory budget notes;
  - A copy of the applicant's SWC registration certificate and DUNS registration information
  - CVs of proposed core team members (see list above);
  - Outline of a monitoring and evaluation plan.
  - Any other supporting document that will strengthen the application such as links to relevant articles or reports produced for other projects

All the materials and documents submitted as part of this competition becomes property of IFES and will not be returned to the applicant. IFES guarantees the confidentiality of applications. If applicable, applicant should submit additional information about other projects (project summary and budget) on similar topics, submitted or already funded by other donors.

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.

## **OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

Prospective applicants must submit the following information in the Response:

1. A contact name, email address, and telephone number to facilitate communication between IFES and the prospective applicant.
2. General information about the applicant's history and experience.
3. If a government, its agents, or agencies, have an ownership or managerial interest in the organization, the prospective applicant must indicate this when submitting its offer. Failure to do so will result in the prospective applicant's offer being removed from consideration.
4. A brief outline of the organization, including:
  - a. Full legal name and address of the organization or individual;
  - b. A copy of the applicant's SWC registration certificate and tax registration documents;
  - c. Full name of the legal representative (president or managing director) of the organization (not applicable for individuals);
  - d. Name of any individuals or entities that own 50% of more of the organization; and
  - e. Year NGO was started or established
5. The prospective applicant 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 prospective applicant's offer being removed from consideration.
6. IFES requests quotations for the above listed services on a fixed unit price basis.
7. Contain detailed cost with all applicable taxes/charges clearly identified, and provided against each of the categories of services described in this request.
8. Detailed description of past experiences providing similar services to international NGOs.
9. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three organizational references, and approval to contact the listed references. IFES reserves the right to request and check additional references.
10. Prospective applicants must be legally registered under the laws of the Nepal and possess all licenses, permits and government approvals necessary for performance of the work.

## **EVALUATION**

IFES will evaluate applications based on the following criteria:

### **1. Quality**

**20%**

The proposal will be evaluated based on its overall cohesiveness and alignment with the goals of the project. While IFES will work with the selected organization to develop the methodology, the project narrative should demonstrate an understanding of the importance of transparency in money in politics and a framework for executing a project that would lead to improvement in awareness of political finance issues in Nepal. The implementation plan must be clear, reasonable and specific, and all project activities must lead to accomplishing the project goals.

**2. Proposed Timeframe and Results**

**20%**

The proposed timeframe must be reasonable and comprehensive. The expected results must be concrete and appropriate to the project goals and objectives, and the expected results must be meaningful, practical, reasonable and attainable. Additionally, the goal(s) and objective(s) must be achievable within the allocated timeframe and there must be a clear outline of a monitoring and evaluation plan for measuring to what extent those goals and objectives have been met.

**3. Technical Capacity**

**20%**

Consideration will be given to the following: the applicant organization’s proven experience in election-related projects with preference for political finance experience, demonstrated knowledge of financial monitoring or investigative reporting practices, and evidence of success in reaching high level stakeholders to influence change through media or advocacy campaigns.

**4. Organizational Capacity**

**20%**

Consideration will be given to the following: history of handling similar types of awards, experience complying with international donor regulations especially USAID, documentation of internal institutional and financial processes, and demonstrated management, research and data analysis experience of key staff.

**5. Price**

**20%**

The total cost must be reasonable and show efficient use of resources, and additional costs, if any, must be clearly identified. The budget and budget narrative should distinguish between costs to be incurred in the planning and trainings stage versus the election period when actual monitoring will occur. Offers will be compared amongst applicants who met the technical requirements.

**Evaluation Criteria Grading for Each Criterion:**

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

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

Release of RFA	August 14, 2017
Meeting with Interested Applicants*	August 18, 2017
Questions Due	August 18, 2017
Answers from IFES	August 22, 2017
RFA Closes- Response Due	August 28, 2017

\* Applicants interested in attending the meeting must notify IFES of their intent to attend via email by **August 17, 2017**. Interested vendors must email Ram Maharjan at the **ifesnepal.procurement@gmail.com** in order to receive the meeting location and time information.

The schedule noted above may be changed at any time in the sole discretion of IFES. All communication must adhere to this schedule and shall be in writing to the attention of Ram Maharjan.

#### **GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

1. IFES will only consider responses from responsible applicants for award.
2. 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.
3. Prices quoted must be valid for entire length of contract (up to 5 months).
4. Unit prices are required and in the case of discrepancies between unit price and total price, the unit price will be taken as reference basis in the evaluation.
5. All procurement will be subject to IFES contractual terms and conditions, and contingent on the availability of donor funding.
6. IFES reserves the right to accept or reject any application or stop the procurement process at any time, without assigning any reason or liability.
7. IFES reserves the right to accept all or part of the application when awarding the contract.
8. All information provided by IFES in this RFA 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 reliance on or use of the information or for any claims asserted therefrom.
9. IFES reserves the right to require any prospective applicant to enter into an on-disclosure agreement.
10. The RFA does not obligate IFES to pay for any costs, of any kind whatsoever, which may be incurred by the prospective applicant or any third parties, in connection with the Response. All Responses and supporting documentation shall become the property of IFES.

**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 Ram Maharjan.**