



**International Foundation  
for Electoral Systems**

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

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) for  
She Leads Program in Pakistan**

**RFA-24-013**

**April 24, 2024**

## 1. Request for Application (RFA)

### 1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to invite civil society organization(s) to submit applications to implement IFES' She Leads program in Pakistan. The objective of this project is to empower women to develop and implement community-based action plans around key local issues. The RFA provides prospective organizations with the relevant operational and performance requirements. IFES anticipates issuing multiple awards under this RFA.

### 1.2. RFA Schedule

IFES will conduct a competitive process to identify grantees per the tentative timeline below:

Issuance of RFA	April 24, 2024
Questions Due	April 30, 2024 by 17:00 Washington DC (EST)
Response from IFES	May 3, 2024
RFA Closes—All Applications Due	May 15, 2024 by 17:00 Washington DC (EST)
Anticipated Implementation Period	July 2024 – June 2026

## 2. General Information

### 2.1. Background

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 electoral and political processes, and Applying field-based research to improve the electoral cycle.

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

## 3. Application Preparation Instructions

### 3.1. Applicant's Understanding of the RFA

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

### 3.2. 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.

### 3.3. Communication

Verbal communication shall not be effective unless formally confirmed in writing by the IFES officials identified in Section 3.5 of this RFA. In no case shall verbal communication govern over written communication.

### 3.3.1. Applicant Inquiries

Inquiries, questions, and requests for clarification related to this RFA should be submitted in writing to the representative listed below by the deadline listed in 1.2. RFA Schedule.

**Name: Cayla Vega**  
[cvega@ifes.org](mailto:cvega@ifes.org)

**and**

**Name: Sarah Bibler**  
[sbibler@ifes.org](mailto:sbibler@ifes.org)

Questions/Answers and Addenda(s) related to this RFA can be found on [IFES Procurement Notices](#).

**3.3.2. Formal Communications** shall include, but are not limited to:

- Questions concerning this RFA
- Expressions of Interest
- Pre-award negotiations under this RFA
- Addenda to this RFA

### 3.3.3. Addenda

IFES will make a good-faith effort to provide written responses to the questions or requests for clarifications that require addenda by the date set in the RFA Schedule above. All questions, answers, and addenda will be shared with all interested organizations.

### 3.4. Eligibility

Locally registered Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Non-Political Party Organizations or other similar not-for-profit institutions are invited to apply. If a DPO, CSO, or NGO is not locally registered, a signed letter stating the reason why must be included as part of the application.

Individuals and the following organizations are **not eligible** to access funding:

- Governmental and semi-governmental institutions
- International organizations
- Political parties or organizations affiliated with or engaging in partisan activities
- Organizations running on a for-profit basis

### 3.5. Application Instructions

All applications should include the following, in order for their application to be considered:

#### 3.5.1. Technical Application

The Technical Application must include a written application in English describing in detail the applicant's (a) Technical Approach, (b) implementation timeline, and (c) results framework to implement the Program Description as described in Article 4 of this RFA. The evaluation criteria can be found in Article 3.6. Applicants should use the technical narrative template in Attachment A.

#### 3.5.2. Cost Application – Budget & Budget Narrative

- The Budget should reflect costs associated with the technical activities and deliverables. All applicants must use the budget template provided in Attachment B and submit it in Excel format as part of their application. The Budget should be presented in **USD**, with applicable taxes/charges clearly identified. Unit costs are required and, in the case of discrepancies between unit costs and total costs, the unit cost will be taken as the reference basis in the evaluation.
- The applicant must agree to keep these costs valid for a minimum of 90 calendar days.
- The Cost Application should include a Budget Narrative that describes each cost element

of the Budget (see column H of Attachment B).

### **3.5.3. A brief outline of the applicant's organization and experience.**

Organizations should demonstrate prior experience working with young people from a wide range of states and regions, particularly rural areas, facilitating training programs, and working on programming such as youth leadership, civic education, and/or elections.

### **3.5.4. Additional documentation**

- When available, a copy of the organization's most recent final, signed audits/financial statements
- Proof of organization's registration or a signed letter indicating why the organization is not registered.
- CVs of key personnel including the organization's Director and anticipated program manager
- Any other supporting document that will strengthen the application

### **3.6. Application Submission**

Applicants must send final applications 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*.

### **3.7. Criteria for Selection**

The evaluation of each response to this RFA will be based on its demonstrated competence, compliance, format, and organization. The purpose of this RFA is to identify those organizations that have the interest, capability, and financial strength to implement the project as described in Article 4 of this RFA.

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|--|------------------|
| <b>1. Technical Approach, Implementation Timeline, Results Framework</b>   | <b>40 points</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated understanding of the RFA and of IFES' requirements</li> <li>• Soundness and feasibility of technical approach</li> <li>• Reasonable implementation timeline and results framework</li> </ul>   |                  |
| <b>2. Competitive Budget with efficient and reasonable cost structure</b>  | <b>30 points</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost realism in response to RFA requirements</li> <li>• Clear budget presentation of necessary, allocable and reasonable costs</li> <li>• Appropriate balance of budget between operational/personnel costs and activity costs</li> </ul>   |                  |
| <b>3. Past Performance and Organizational Capacity</b>   | <b>30 points</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extent to which proposed personnel have relevant qualifications and experience</li> <li>• Demonstrated capacity to organize, manage and implement full range of activities required to achieve program goals and objectives</li> <li>• Demonstrated flexibility to adjust implementation in response to changing environments</li> <li>• Demonstrated strong past performance in implementing programs of similar size, scope and complexity</li> <li>• Demonstrated presence and/or networks in the proposed target districts</li> </ul> |                  |

### **3.8. Selection and Notification**

Applicants determined by IFES that possess the capacity to compete for this project will be selected to move into the negotiation phase of this process. Written notification will be sent to these applicants via e-mail. Those applicants not selected for the negotiation phase will also be notified.

#### 4. Scope of Work

IFES is implementing the Building Understanding and Involvement in Local Governance and Democracy (BUILD) project with funding support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Under BUILD, IFES will implement a modular women's transformative leadership training program that aims to build women's leadership capacities, enabling them to assume leadership roles while taking up community challenges and contributing to overall community development. The She Leads program is one of the flagship programs of IFES, empowering women to develop and implement community-based action plans around local issues such as climate resilience, women's leadership, advocacy, and electoral participation through a series of trainings. She Leads comprises of Beginner (3-day), Advanced (2-day), five Add-ons (1-day each) trainings. The participants go through the modular trainings over a period of several months, with approximately six to eight weeks between the training modules. The trainings build knowledge of peace, rights, equality, power dynamics and good governance at the local level, and they promote skills that build self-confidence, cultivate allies and mobilize support for alumnae to effectively implement their work. After each training, participants develop action plans to address the community development issue as identified during the training. They implement their action plans by engaging at least 10 additional local women, including by developing a network of She Leads alumnae that can be drawn on to run joint advocacy campaigns and other community-based initiatives.

A complementary component of the She Leads program is building networks of MALE Allies (Male Allies for Leadership Equalities). MALE Allies are local men who volunteer to help She Leads participants implement their action plans and address obstacles they face in doing so. MALE Allies are instrumental in tackling the lack of family support for She Leads alumnae which is one of the key obstacles to women pursuing leadership roles. Selected men are trained as MALE Allies through Beginner (1-day), Advanced (1-day) and several Add-on (1-day) training modules. A district level coordination committee is also formed to serve as the key forum for sustainability, regular interaction, experience sharing and working out synergies amongst She Leads alumnae.

IFES is looking for local civil society organization (CSO) partners for implementation of the She Leads project in the selected districts of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as detailed in the following table.

<b>Geographical Location</b>	<b>Balochistan (Lasbela)</b>	<b>Sindh (Shahid Benazir Abad and Naushehro Feroze)</b>	<b>KP (Bajaur and Khyber)</b>
<b>She Leads target</b>	100	500	150
<b>MALE Allies target</b>	50	250	75

**Please note that bids must be for one province only, however organizations interested in working in more than one province should submit a proposal for each province separately. The Planned intervention will be implemented in two years.**

Under the She Leads program, CSO partners will be expected to carry out the following project requirements:

- Develop an area/village profiling tool for selection of villages/locations for implementation of She Leads intervention, in consultation with IFES.
- Develop criteria for the selection of participants from the selected area/village including but not limited to the interest/experience in doing community work and willingness to engage with a long term (two years) training and advocacy program.
- Engage Mentors/trainers and arrange for them to attend a training of trainers (ToT). IFES will develop the curriculums and provide Lead Trainers to conduct the ToT and will also bear all related costs.

- Conduct a series of She Leads training sessions; provide small grants for post-training assignments and action plans; support the formation, development and training of District Coordination Committees (DCCs) of She Leads and MALE Allies top performers; and lessons learned and experience-sharing workshops and visits for She Leads and MALE Allies alumni (see below for required details).
- Adhere to IFES' Do-No-Harm approach ensuring safety of project staff and any of the direct beneficiaries.
- Develop a recording and reporting system, in consultation with IFES, ensuring that the implementation process is well documented. This should include a focus on tracking and verifying She Leads and MALE Allies alumni performance, including development and implementation of their respective action plans.

Applications must include the following activities in their budgets:

- Conduct of three-day beginner, two-day advanced, and two one-day add-on sessions for She Leads Alumnae and one-day beginner, one-day advanced, and two one-day add-on sessions for MALE Allies participants. The trainings will be managed by a cadre of Mentors who shall be responsible to conduct trainings, facilitate implementation of action plans, provide mentoring and guidance support, and tracking and verifying participants' progress.
- Provision of small grants to the She Leads participants for the implementation of post-training assignments, which may include but are not limited to the following focus areas: advancing climate resilience, NIC registration of women and other marginalized groups, voter and civic education, education, and health.
- Provision of micro grants to She Leads graduates for implementing action plans.
- Conduct of three capacity building sessions (one-day each) for the DCC members only, on advance networking and coordination skills to enhance their capacity in leading the community-based issues with the departments and manage the monthly coordination meetings.
- Design, printing and dissemination of relevant IEC materials for the general public awareness through online and community-based campaigns. Wherever needed, materials should be converted into braille and sign language to make it more inclusive.
- Organization of a lessons learned workshop for She Leads and MALE Allies for showcasing and experience sharing.
- Organization of experience sharing and exposure visits of She Leads and MALE Allies.

#### **Reporting and Monitoring:**

- Submit program progress, event reports, M&E reports and final report - on weekly, monthly and quarterly basis or as required by IFES.
- Provide IFES with participant lists, photographs of trainings, monitoring and evaluation data and training reports for each training.
- Participate regularly in project coordination/progress review meetings arranged by IFES (online or in-person).

## **5. Functional Requirements**

### **5.1. Timeline:**

Applicants must submit a detailed timeline in their Application showing the time required to implement the services requested. IFES requires all deliverables to be completed not later than June 30, 2026.

### **5.2. Monitoring & Evaluation**

- As part of its due diligence, IFES conducts pre-award surveys on all potential grantees to assess capacity and inform the appropriate grant mechanism. In addition, applicants expected to expend \$750,000 or more in U.S. funded awards during their fiscal year must have an audit conducted in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F—Audit Requirements. If Applicable, applicants must ensure that funds are included in the grant budget for an audit.
- IFES will issue the appropriate grant mechanism depending on the nature of the work, the capacity of the grantee, the duration of the grant, and the overall value of the grant.
- IFES will provide continuous mentorship, training and oversight to ensure grant management practices are in line with anti-corruption principles as well as to build capacity of local grantees to fully manage and implement their programs in adherence to donor regulations and with a view towards sustainability.

### **5.3. Deliverables:**

Specific deliverables and reporting will be determined based on the grant activities proposed and negotiated during the negotiation phase.

## **6. Additional Terms & Conditions**

### **6.1. Non-Disclosure Agreement**

IFES reserves the right to require any applicant to enter into a non-disclosure agreement.

### **6.2. 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.

### **6.3. Intellectual Property**

Applicants should not use any intellectual property of IFES including, but not limited to, all logos, registered trademarks, or trade names of IFES, at any time, without the prior written approval of IFES, as appropriate.

### **6.4. Applications**

All accepted applications shall become the property of IFES and will not be returned.

### **6.5. Governing Law**

This RFA and the applicants' applications shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, USA.

### **6.6. Partial Awarding**

IFES reserves the right to accept all or part of the application when awarding the grant. IFES also reserves the right to issue multiple awards and procure only items or services from selected applicants.

### **6.7. No Liability**

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute a commitment on the part of IFES to make an award nor does it commit IFES to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of any application in response to this RFA. Further, IFES reserves the right to reject any or all applications received or stop solicitation process at any time, without assigning any reason or liability.

IFES shall not be liable to any applicant, person, or entity for any losses, expenses, costs, claims, or damages of any kind:

- Arising out of, by reason of, or attributable to, the applicant responding to this RFA; or
- As a result of the use of any information, error, or omission contained in this RFA document or provided during the RFA process.

**6.8. Entire RFA**

This RFA, any addenda to it, and any attached schedules, constitute the entire RFA.

**6.9. Attachments**

Attachment A: Technical Narrative Template

Attachment B: Budget Template

Attachment C: Organizational Capacity and Past Performance Template

**End of RFA**

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**Technical Narrative Template**

**I. General Information**

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Complete Legal Name of Applicant Organization

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Office Address

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Legal Mailing Address (if different)

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Office Telephone Number(s)

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E-Mail Address(es)

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Director of Organization

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Project Manager/Contact Person

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Project Dates (month/year – month/year)

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Project Title

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Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)<sup>1</sup>

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PAN Number

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<sup>1</sup> Only organizations with Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) are eligible to receive a subaward under this RFA. If your organization does not have a UEI, please visit [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) to get a Unique Entity ID only (no entity registration required).

**II. Technical Approach:**

*Please include the following components in in a maximum of 5 pages*

- A. Project Summary:** describe your project in one paragraph, including objectives, issue, target audience, and geographic coverage.
- B. Need for the project:** identify the problem your project would help to solve. Why is this project important?
- C. Project’s Goal and Objectives:** what is the specific goal of your effort? Does it comply with the goals and objectives of the competition?
- D. Target Audience and Stakeholders:** what is your main target audience? What groups of stakeholders will the project primarily serve?
- E. Activities:** identify and describe in detail each activity to be undertaken to produce results, justifying the choice of activities.
- F. Expected Deliverables:** identify specific deliverables that you expect to develop within your project (research/analytical reports; specific strategies; public policy recommendations; etc.).

**III. Implementation Timeline**

*Please use the following format to provide an implementation timeline*

Project Month	Activity	Expected Result	Involved Stakeholders

**IV. Results Framework**

*Please identify specific results that you expect to realize upon completion of your project and the quantitative and qualitative criteria for the project’s success. How will you determine that the project goals have been accomplished? The framework should include:*

- A list of results you expect to accomplish throughout the project
- 1-4 performance indicators for each result including a detailed definition for each
- The source, method, frequency and schedule of data collection,
- Staff responsible for collecting data.
- How the performance data will be collected
- How data will be reviewed, analyzed and reported

**ATTACHMENT B**  
**Budget Template**

[CLICK HERE](#) to visit IFES Procurement Notices page and download the budget template.

**ATTACHMENT C**  
**Organizational Capacity and Past Performance Template**

**I. Summary**

*Briefly present your organization’s mission, its core activities, and why it is best suited for this project*

**II. Human Resources**

- A. *Please provide full legal name of organization’s Director and / or Chief Executive Officer.*
- B. *Please provide CVs for the core technical members of the team (the director of the organization training or curriculum experts, project manager etc.).*
- C. *Please provide hiring plan for full and part-time positions the organization including a list of positions and recruitment plan or cost-share with existing positions.*

**III. Past Performance**

- A. *Briefly describe how your organization’s previous experience prepares it to successfully implement the proposed project; highlight the organization’s relationship and work experience with lawmakers, political parties or government officials if applicable.*
- B. *Please specify previous work in the relevant field.*
- C. *Please list the organization’s major projects from the past five years in the following format:*

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Project Activities</i>	<i>Donor</i>	<i>Award Amount</i>	<i>Period of Award</i>

**IV. References:**

*If applicable, contact information for three references from donor funded projects similar in scope.*