

**Counterpart International – Afghanistan
Afghan Civic Engagement Program (ACEP)**

Request for Applications (RFA)

International Youth Day Grants (IYDG)

RFA Number:	RFA 19-07
Issuance Date of RFA:	11 April 2019
Deadline for Submission of Questions:	17 April 2019 at 02:00 PM Kabul Time
Email Date of Answers to Questions:	18 April 2019
Application Submission Deadline Date:	26 April 2019 at 23:59 Kabul Time
Projected Date of Grant Awards:	01 June 2019

On behalf of the USAID-funded Afghan Civic Engagement Program (ACEP), Counterpart International Inc. (Counterpart) would like to invite you to apply for a Fixed Amount Award (FAA) Grant, as described in this RFA. All Registered CSOs and All Emerging Civil Society Leaders (ECSLs) graduates are encouraged to design, develop and implement activities that promote a sense of responsibility towards peace building activities, conflict resolutions, election awareness, volunteerism, activism and public interest among youth at the community, district and provincial level.

ECSLs can apply through ACEP Provincial Partners (PCPs) or ACEP Regional Partners in their respected province for an International Youth Day Grant. In case an ACEP PCP or RCP lacks interest to work with ECSL or may not be able to afford time to work jointly on this grant or there is no PCP or RCP present, ECSLs applicant can apply via another CSO in their respected province that is willing to work with the ECSL. ACEP will award the grant to CSO in which ECSL applied through and that CSO will be responsible for reporting and ensuring agreed deliverables are delivered properly as planned.

Counterpart has decided that the goals and activities in the grant description below meet the criteria for FAA funding. Counterpart International anticipates awarding two (2) International Youth Day Grants (IYDG). The grants will be for a duration of three months and a value of up to Afghani One million One Hundred Fifty Thousand (AFN 1,150,000). The anticipated start date of the Fixed Amount Award is on or about 01 June 2019.

You are requested to submit one FAA application for implementation of a project that meets the criteria described below. Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions contained in this RFA.

A sample Fixed Amount Award grant is attached for your review and consideration.

A. ACEP BACKGROUND

The Afghan Civic Engagement Program (ACEP) is a five-year program which has just been extended for the 6th year to focus on civic and voter education, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Counterpart International, Inc. (Counterpart), in partnership with Internews, the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and the International Centre for Non-profit Law (ICNL). The goal of ACEP is to promote civil society and media engagement that enables Afghan citizens to influence policy, monitor government accountability, and serve as advocates for political reform. The program aims to achieve this goal through five program areas: (1) Regular Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) Engagement with Government; (2) Increased CSO and Media Thematic Expertise in Democracy and Governance; (3) Expanded Civic Engagement; (4) Improved Access to Independent News and Public Affairs Information, and (5) Increased CSO Organizational Capacity.

B. GRANT GOAL AND OUTCOMES

The goal of this Grant is to celebrate International Youth Day by encouraging CSOs and ECSLs to design, develop and implement activities that promote a sense of responsibility towards peace building activities, any initiatives that leads to increasing sense of national unity, respect, culture of tolerance, acceptance and integration of combatants into communities. Initiatives can be at different level of either national or sub-national level. We also encourage CSO and ECSLs to brings together youth to discuss about innovative work, intercultural dialogue (conflict affective areas, victims of violence, between provinces) that promote peace and promote voices that is against violence and radicalization. Series of events that increase youth social skills and personal development and initiative process for youth active participation in society especially in peace processes and election.

Increasing role of youth in national decision-making, informing and reforming policies is key for ACEP, peace and election are two major emerging areas that youth participation and engagement is quite important to make sure it is sustainable and inclusive. These projects are anticipated to advocate for increasing youth participation and engagement into these two major issues including peace and election.

It is anticipated that at least one of the following outcomes will be achieved upon completion of grant activities:

- IDY 2019 is celebrated showcasing contribution by youth in Afghanistan's current national efforts underway (election and peace talks).
- Awareness is created among youth about current political issues in country and how they can play an active role in the current context for enhancement of peace, role of youth, women and civil society in peace process is further recognized and increased. Youth awareness about importance of election increased, youth have better understanding of their role in increasing integrity in election and keep winners of the election accountable to their pledges.

C. YOUNG LEADERS ENGAGEMENT IN PEACE PROCESS GRANT ACTIVITIES

August 12 is the International Day of Youth and recognizing the contribution and efforts of youth for a better world. ACEP will seize the opportunity to celebrate this annual event by inviting the Afghan Civil Society Organization (CSO) and Emerging Civil Society Leaders (ECSLs) to design an initiative demonstrating political participation. Through announcing a Request for Application (RFA), ACEP will provide two (2) grants to be competitively awarded among Civil Society Organization (CSO) that can propose creative activities to support the engagement of women and youth in the current political efforts underway in the country. Afghanistan is experiencing two important national events: 1) a presidential election and; 2) peace talks, both of which will benefit from youth-at-large engagement; Therefore, ACEP will encourage CSOs and ECSLs to come up with initiatives that promote these efforts.

CSO initiatives **should not** limited to a one-day celebration event but rather a set of innovative activities that lead up to the celebration day, which will be August 12, 2019. Activities should increase the constructive engagement of youth both male and female in the ongoing national dialogues. ECSL and/or CSOs can prioritize working on activities that leads to increasing culture of tolerance, acceptance, respect and national unity.

CSOs are expected to submit technical proposals outlining projects which include at least three (3) activities. These activities should be designed to celebrate international youth day through delivering number of initiatives in order to promote a sense of responsibility towards peace building activities, election awareness, activism and public interest among youth at community and/or district and/or provincial level. The description of each activity in the technical proposal must include expected outcomes that are in-line with the grant goal described above under Section C. Applicants should provide comprehensive and detailed descriptions of the activities they are proposing and how they contribute to the expected outcomes of the project. Activities that promote social inclusion by including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups are an essential part of this grant.

The following activities are only examples for illustrative purposes and CSOs and ECSLs are encouraged to propose other activities:

Youth Coalition for Peace, Youth Peace Camp:

The following illustrative examples are potential activities that CSOs/ECSLs could conduct to celebrate the International Youth Day by carrying out activities that promote peace and election processes:

1. Establish a network of likeminded youth from different communities to work for peace at community, district and/or provincial level.
2. Mobilize youth to advocate for peace and human rights while including youth and community representatives to voice their mind at district and provincial level
3. Undertake a wide range of activities to raise awareness about elections

Advocacy for Peace Restoration:

The following illustrative examples are potential activities that youth could conduct to advocate for the impactful peace processes among communities.

1. Establish youth-led advocacy groups for effective implementation of quick impact advocacy initiatives in regard to peace processes and elections.
2. Empower youth to become active members in Community Development Councils to

- promote peace building efforts.
3. Monitor, evaluate, and report on the ongoing peace processes with different stakeholders at the community, district, provincial and national level.
 4. Engagement of rural youth in the national decision-making process.
 5. Develop youth activism skills, interventions and programs to enable youth to be agents of change for positive social and political reforms in their communities.

Peace Outreach through Debates and Dialogues:

The following illustrative examples are potential activities that youth could conduct to improve access to fundamental rights, promote democratic values and enhance responsiveness of youth to emerging issues focusing on peace and election:

1. Initiate youth led community-based projects focusing on election and peace processes, contemporary issues at community level, such as: research on youth centric issues, needs in civic and political engagement as well as in peace process and its sustainability, understanding and encountering violent extremism etc.
2. Encourage the participation of youth in provincial council meetings, peace council meetings, district level shuras, and/or shuras and jirgas at the community level.
3. Initiate small community level project aiming at to promote sense of citizenship, civic engagement, openness, diversity, peace, stability through debates, competitions, exhibitions, cultural and other locally accepted events.
4. Outreach initiatives to promote youth and women's political participation.

Note: Counterpart will not fund activities that are described as banned activities by the NGO Law and other Laws of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (Article 8).

A. Eligibility Requirements

Counterpart will accept applications from organizations that meet the following eligibility requirements:

Peacebuilding and reconciliation:

- a) Applicants must be an Afghan Civil Society Organization, holding valid registration certificates from the Ministry of Economy and/or the Ministry of Justice, should be formally constituted, recognized by and in good standing with appropriate Government authorities, have its principle place of business in the recipient country, and compliant with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations
- b) The applicant cannot be currently implementing another grant awarded by ACEP.
- c) Applicants must have established outreach capabilities with linkages to the beneficiary group(s) identified in the program description.
- d) Applicants must display sound management in the form of financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures and present a system of internal controls that safeguard assets; protect against fraud, waste, and abuse; and support the achievement of program goals and objectives. ACEP will assess this capability prior to awarding a grant.
- e) Applicants must be based or be able to travel to the provinces they are applying for.

D. FUNDING AND OTHER LIMITATIONS

E.1. Fixed Amount Awards (FAAs)

Two (2) Fixed Amount Awards shall be issued. Each FAA grant shall be for a three-month period of time (01 Jun 2019– 30 Aug 2019) and cannot exceed Afghani AFS 1,150,000 (One million One Hundred Fifty Thousand Afghani). Payments shall be made based on the successful achievement of the deliverables identified for each milestone.

Please note the following points regarding ACEP’s issuance of FAAs, according to USAID’s Automated Directives System (ADS 303.3.25):

- FAAs are intended to support very specific program elements; there is no requirement for ACEP to monitor the actual costs subsequently incurred. This type of award reduces some of the administrative burden and record-keeping requirements. Accountability is primarily based on performance and results.
- FAAs are used to support specific projects, where there is a certainty about cost, and where the accomplishment of the purpose or outcomes(s) in the grant is readily discernible and feasible.
- ECSLs are paid a set, fixed amount (determined by the final value of the approved budget) upon the accomplishment of the approved deliverables.
- There is limited risk that the grant activity will change.
- International airfares and indirect costs are not eligible for ACEP financing.
- Real property may not be purchased with FAA funding. Real property means land, including land improvements, structures and accessories thereto, but excludes movable machinery and equipment.

E.2. Preventing Terrorist Financing

Individuals and organizations are reminded that they must not engage in transactions with, or provide resources or support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism, including those individuals or entities that appear on the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List maintained by the U.S. Treasury (online at: <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/SDN-List/Pages/default.aspx>), or the United Nations Security designation list (online at: http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aq_sanctions_list.shtml).

E.3 Prohibition to Fund Banned Activities

Counterpart will not fund activities that are described as banned activities by the NGO Law and other Laws of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (Article 8).

E.4 Other Limitations

To avoid duplication of funding, applicants that have active grants/programs and/or planning to receive grants/programs of similar nature from USAID or other donors will not be considered for this opportunity at this time. By submitting a proposal in response to this RFA, the applicant certifies that it has not received a grant of a similar nature from USAID or other donors.

F. INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

FAA applications shall consist of a Technical Proposal and a Cost Proposal (Budget and Narrative), as described below. An application containing all of the required information in the following Application Requirements shall be considered a complete application.

F.1 Application Requirements

To be considered, applications must meet the following criteria and/or submit the following documents:

a. Applications can be in English, Dari or Pashtu.

Where applications are provided in Dari or Pashtu they will be translated into English by ACEP professional interpreters in order that ACEP's Grants Technical Evaluation Committee (GTEC) members and representatives of Counterpart's Grants, Contracts and Compliance (GC&C) department who are not able to read the language of the application can review the application in English. The application in this case will be evaluated based on the translation of the original application into English from the original Dari or Pashtu version. While every effort will be made to ensure that the translation is as accurate as possible to the original, there may be some slight change in the nuances of meaning as is always the case with translation from one language to another.

b. Technical Proposals should be limited to no more than ten (10) pages, submitted in font Times New Roman, point 12. Technical Proposals must be written using Attachment A1, Grant Activity Proposal.

A Technical Proposal shall be submitted per the Program Description above using Attachment A1 *Technical Proposal Template*. Technical proposals should include the following information:

1. Name and contact information of applicant applying (address, telephone number, email address).
2. Grant Goal, Analysis and Understanding: this section presents the applicant's analysis and understanding of the goal of the grant and why they have chosen the activities they have to contribute to achieving this goal.
3. Grant Outcome: this section describes what the outcome of the implementation of the grant will be and how the grantee will evaluate if this outcome has been achieved. Reference should be made to how the outcome will be achieved in a gender aware and responsive manner and how the outcome will impact on youth and people living with disabilities.
4. Activities and their Outputs: this section describes the activities that will be implemented under this grant and what the specific outputs will be from each activity. This section should also describe how these outputs contribute to achieve the outcome of the grant. Reference should be made to how activities will be implemented in a gender aware and responsive manner and how the activities will include youth and people living with disabilities. A description of how the applicant will monitor and evaluate the activities and their outputs should be included.
5. Implementation Plan: this section presents a detailed plan, including a timeline for the implementation of the grant activities.

Note: All technical proposals must be the original work of the CSO and ECSL applying. Instances of plagiarism (the use of others work/writing without correct referencing) will not be tolerated and any part of a proposal that has been plagiarized will not be considered as part of the technical proposal when the proposal is evaluated by the Grant Technical Evaluation Committee (GTEC).

c. Budget and Budget Narrative (Using Attachments B1, Budget and B2, Budget Narrative):

1. Using Attachment B1, please develop a five-months budget with a proposed start date of Jun 01 2019 to Aug 30, 2019, in an amount not to exceed AFN 1,150,000. Please note the Sample Budget tab including in the template that shows what the budget should look like. Please ensure that only costs that are directly related to the proposed grant activities are budgeted. Indirect costs are not allowed under this Program. The budget should reflect all the resources necessary for project implementation. Budgets are to be developed based on the specific needs associated with the applicant's proposed activities.

2. Please develop a Budget Narrative using the template provided in Attachment B2. The budget narrative should provide details on all types of costs planned, cost per unit and cost justification.

Required Documents to Attach as Part of the Application. If these are not included, the proposal will not be read, scored or considered.

1. Copy of the Registration Certificate for partner CSO
2. Copy of the Organization's Charter or Document of Incorporation or Organization's bylaws
3. Organization's most recent annual financial statement/audit report for the most recent year (if one was conducted).
4. Organizational chart outlining the staffing structure by name and title and showing the number of staffs employed; including CVs of the key staff.
5. A copy of the receipt from the Ministry of Economy of the CSO biannual report to the Ministry/Department of Economy

F.2 Questions and Answers

Questions regarding the RFA or the selection process must be submitted in writing to applications.acep@counterpart.org with subject line: "**Question RFA 19-07 International Youth Day Grants (IYDG)**" by no later than **17 April 2019 14:00 (Kabul time)**.

All Questions & Answers (Q&A) shall be emailed to the ECSLs **on 18 April 2019. During this RFA process, interested applicants may not contact, speak with or ask questions of any Counterpart ACEP staff. Any contact is grounds for disqualification of the organization's application.**

F.3 Deadline Date for Responding to this RFA

Complete Applications must be emailed to **applications.acep@counterpart.org**. The email and attachment total size should not exceed 20 MB. If needed, an application may be submitted through multiple emails. Please include in the submission email the following subject line: **RFA 19-07 International Youth Day Grants (IYDG)**.

The deadline for submitting Complete Applications is April 26, 2019, 23:59 PM Kabul Time. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Applications and accompanying documentation will not be returned.

All applicants will be notified on outcome once the grant recipients are determined.

F.4 Application Evaluation and Selection Criteria



Only complete applications received by the Application Submission Deadline Date will be accepted and submitted to the Grant Technical Evaluation Committee (GTEC) for review. GTEC members will thoroughly review and evaluate the applications in accordance with application evaluation procedures.

Applications will be reviewed based on the following evaluation criteria:

No.	Criteria	Max Score
1	Relevance of the proposed project to the key purpose of the International Youth Day Grant:	15
1.1	Do the project objectives directly contribute to peace building initiatives and improved peace awareness in the country?	15
2	Organization's ability to successfully implement the project. Relevant previous experience including list of grants obtained in the last three years:	25
2.1	Does the organization have the relevant experience for the project implementation?	9
2.2	Are the main sources for the organization's current active projects described well (funding, objectives, donors, duration and cost share)?	3
2.3	Are the management and operation adequately described that will support the implementation of this project?	8
2.4	Is the involvement of the stakeholders and partners in the implementation of the project described clearly?	5
3	Relevance and suitability of planned activities and expected result to achieve project objectives related to the thematic areas described in the RFA:	30
3.1	Has the organization clearly described realistic and sufficient short-term and long-term results?	10
3.2	Has the organization proposed a methodology for measuring project performance?	4
3.3	Has the organization listed methodologies and/or tools to be used for peace building and peace awareness activities?	10
3.4	Has the organization realistically specified the project duration, geographic coverage and targets (communities, ministries, organizations, etc.) towards achieving the project objective?	6
4	Potential for sustainability of project results. Project sustainability potential and impact on system, institutions, laws and policies or target communities/beneficiaries:	7
4.1	Are steps adequately described that would ensure sustainability of results? What are the new threats and/or opportunities for project activities that have been identified in the process? Learning questions	7



5	Project activities demonstrated an inclusive social inclusion plan	8
5.1	Have interests of women and other marginalized groups been considered in the design and implementation of the project?	8
6	Budget reasonableness and cost effectiveness	15
6.1	Is the allocated budget reasonable and well justified (budget narrative) for the proposed project activities?	8
6.2	Is there enough allocation for both program and operational costs?	7
Total Score:		100

G. AWARDING FIXED AMOUNT AWARD GRANTS

Up to two (2) Fixed Amount Award types of grants will be issued for the International Youth Day Grants.

The total value of the Fixed Amount Award grant will be equal to the value of the final approved FAA budget. The Grantee will be paid based on achievement of the deliverables as outlined in the FAA and not on actual costs incurred. The focus will be on performance and results and not on cost. Payment will be based on successful completion and reporting of the established deliverables outlined in the FAA.

A sample Fixed Amount Award Grant template is included as part of this RFA package.

G.1 Post-Award Orientation Meeting

After the award of the fixed amount award, ACEP shall conduct a post-award orientation meeting with the Successful Applicants. The meeting may be held in person or by phone. The post-award orientation meeting is an essential tool to help ACEP and the recipient achieve a clear and mutual understanding of the fixed amount award's requirements. The meeting helps the grantees understand the roles and responsibilities of ACEP who is administering the grant and reduces performance risks and future problems. It is an opportunity to review, discuss and clarify key aspects of the grant and its administration, help the Grantee meet the intended goals and outputs of the grant. In addition, it should identify those areas where the Grantees may need additional help in meeting the grant's conditions. Items to be discussed at the meeting may include, but not be limited to, the authority of ACEP personnel who administer the grant, the specific terms and conditions of the grant, ACEP's monitoring and evaluation plans, milestones, requests for payment, voucher approval, and payment procedures.

G.2 Monitoring and Site Visits

Because monitoring of the grant activities is based on fixed-cost deliverables, and is not tied to incurred costs, it is important that appropriate monitoring and oversight of the Grantee and the activities are conducted. As part of the technical oversight, site visits by Counterpart staff may be conducted to ensure that satisfactory progress is being made and the milestones are being met.

G.3 Payment

All requests for payment must correspond to a deliverable specified in the fixed amount award. Invoices (also referred to as Vouchers) must list the deliverable, not costs, as the product, task, deliverable or objective for which payment is being made. ACEP shall independently verify and document that the deliverable has been completed; however, it may choose to rely on verification by a third-party verifier. Only ACEP may give administrative approval of recipient vouchers.

Since fixed amount award payments are for fixed-amount deliverables, ACEP will not verify that the Grantee incurred the costs as estimated in making the award. Any actual differences between the estimated costs used to set the payments and the Grantee's actual incurred costs cannot be used to adjust the agreed upon amount for the milestone or the FAA. The documentation required for payment, per the Deliverable Schedule in the FAA, relates to proof that the deliverable was completed. Because payment follows verification of deliverable completion, the timing of verification shall be planned and conducted in a manner so that payment is received as soon as possible.

H. DISCLAIMERS

Please note that the issuance of this Request for Application does not constitute an award or a commitment on the part of Counterpart International, Inc. for funding or an award.

All costs associated in the preparation and submission of a proposal in response to this RFA is the sole responsibility of the applicant.

Counterpart International reserves the right to reject any or all applications received.

I. RFA ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A1: Grant Activity Proposal Template
- Attachment B1: ACEP Budget Template (including budget narrative)
- Sample Fixed Amount Award