



The Asia Foundation

The Asia Foundation Afghanistan
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS,
RFP: TAF-WVL- MARCH-2021-039

Program Office: Women’s Voice & Leadership, Afghanistan

Funding Opportunity Title: Organizational Capacity Building of Women’s Rights Organizations (WROs)

Announcement Type: Request for Proposal

Funding Opportunity Number: TAF-WVL- MARCH-2021-039

Deadline for Applications: April 25, 2021 – 04:00 p.m. Kabul time via email in PDF format

CONTACT INFORMATION

For all queries contact Procurement Department (country.afghanistan.procurement@asiafoundation.org). No personal visits or telephone calls shall be entertained.

THE PROCUREMENT UNIT

The Asia Foundation
House # 861, Street # 1
Shirpour, District-10, (Sub Street of Shirpour Project)
Kabul, Afghanistan.

The Foundation will not be responsible for proposals left at the main gate, reception, guard offices, or handed over to any TAF employee other than the procurement unit staff. **Owing to the COVID -19 situation we would encourage you to submit your proposal in soft version (PDF form) duly signed and stamped (Technical Proposal & Financial Proposal) at the following email –**

country.afghanistan.procurement@asiafoundation.org

CHECKLIST OF DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN PROPOSAL

Documents / Content to be included in the RFP	Yes	No	Please explain if “No” has been checked.
Technical proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
CVs of key staff and core personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Summary table of similar projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Letters of recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Implementation plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk assessment plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Financial Proposal including narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
M&E strategy/manual distinct from M&E Plan in body of technical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Bidder’s declaration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The Asia Foundation (the Foundation) is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Informed by six decades of experience and deep local expertise, our work across the region addresses five overarching goals – strengthen governance and rule of law, empower women, expand economic opportunity, increase environmental resilience, and promote regional cooperation.

Headquartered in San Francisco, the Foundation works through a network of offices in 18 Asian countries, including Afghanistan and in Washington, DC. Working with public and private partners, the Foundation receives funding from diverse group of bilateral and multilateral development agencies, foundations, corporations, and individuals.

I. Project Background

The *Women’s Voice and Leadership- Afghanistan* (WVL-AG) project is a five-year (March 2019 - March 2024) initiative to strengthen women’s voice and leadership in Afghanistan. WVL seeks to support the capacity and activities of Afghan women’s organizations and movements seeking to empower women and girls, advance the protection of women’s and girls’ rights and achieve gender equality. Through increased funding to local and regional women’s rights organizations and movements, the WVL project assists local Afghan women’s organizations and movements in their efforts to eliminate discrimination and rights violations in policy and legislation (including implementation) and the provision of services, as well as harmful social beliefs and practices.

The Project’s three intermediate outcomes include:

- I. Improved management and sustainability of local women’s rights organizations.
- II. Enhanced performance of women’ rights organization’s programming and advocacy to advance gender equality and empower women and girls.
- III. Increased effectiveness of national and sub-national women’s rights platforms, networks and alliances to affect policy, legal and social change in Afghanistan.

Through the WVL project, the Foundation will provide funding to grassroots WROs to design unique projects to enhance women’s rights and empower women in Afghanistan. Financial support to WROs will include the following:

- a. Multi-year funding to ten selected WROs to ensure that they have the financial security to implement long-term projects that will increase the opportunities for sustained women’s empowerment.
- b. At least twenty-five opportunities for fast, responsive funding for discrete activities and short-term projects to allow for flexible, timely and strategic responses to perceived/identified needs or events, and to pilot innovative ideas.
- c. Institutional capacity-building support for **ten selected WROs**; and
- d. Network alliance building for movement building to amplify the voices of local women’s rights organizations and to foster an enabling environment in which broader collective action can coalesce

II. Objective

The Objective of this RFP is to solicit proposals from national non-governmental organizations/for profit organizations or consultancy firms (to be referred to in this document as the “IP”) on “**Organizational Capacity Building of Women’s Rights Organizations (WROs)**”.



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The proposal is expected to focus on developing ideas, ways, means and a strategy for the provision of organizational capacity building support for ten selected WROs. Note that the ten selected WROs which will be the beneficiaries of the IP are in the following provinces where WROs' head offices are located:

No	Name of Target Province	Number of WROs
1	Kabul	5
2	Balkh	2
3	Parwan	1
4	Baghlan	1
5	Takhar	1

III. Scope

In each of the domains mentioned in the section below, the IP is expected to design a methodology/implementation plan to assess status of current WROs' organizational capacity and provide the required support for improvement of organizational capacity of the 10 WROs.

In the submitted proposal and methodology design, the IP/applicant **must** demonstrate creativity and flexibility to address differing levels of capacity in the domain areas noted below for a number of the ten WROs or all ten WROs. Various levels of capacity and specific needs will be shared and discussed during the inception phase with the WVL Project Team at The Asia Foundation (TAF) and the 10 WROs.

For example, the Foundation anticipates that the selected IP for this assignment will work in close collaboration with the TAF WVL Project Team and TAF Grants Committee to determine if after initial assessments, general and core training materials/curriculum may be developed:

- (a) in all domain areas suitable for all 10 WROs; or
- (b) whether general core training materials/curriculum may be modified for each of the 10 WROs, dependent upon each WROs' capacity level; or
- (c) whether individual training materials/curriculum must be developed for each WRO.

In addition, given the geographic diversity of the ten selected WROs/grantees noted above, the IP in close collaboration with the TAF WVL Project Team and TAF Grants Committee will agree on a delivery mechanism for capacity building training, e.g., whether training will be provided to each WRO individually, regionally, face to face or through virtual applications, development of video training for self-study by WROs, mentoring opportunities, etc.

Given the information shared above re: the scope of this project and expected outcomes, the IP/applicant should share **in as much detail as possible** its method for moving forward from inception, refining the capacity building delivery implementation plan per assessment(s), and monitoring and evaluation and reporting requirements.

A suggested capacity building planning process is described below: **however**, this process description is not exhaustive and TAF requests **creative participatory approaches incorporated** by the IP/applicant in its proposal submission:



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- Review existing WROs policies, procedures, standard operating procedures, guidelines, etc., in all domains listed above and analysis same from a 'best practices standpoint', factoring in Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy priorities listed below:
- In collaboration with each WRO, develop or update, amend, revise all existing WROs policies, procedures, standard operating procedures, guidelines, etc., in all domains listed below, under section IV titled Expected Deliverables and Timeline.
- Develop requisite training plan and methodology on the documents listed below for line staff, middle management and relevant department/unit staff as needed (e.g., HR staff receives training in HR related policies/procedures; Procurement staff receives training in Procurement related policies/procedures; Finance staff receives training in Finance related policies/procedures, etc.
- Train assist and mentor WROs/grantees staff in implementation of all documents as per training plan/methodology agreed upon in collaboration with the WROs, within budget.
- Follow up on specific issues identified by WROs/grantees after initial trainings are completed, to be determined on a case by case basis.
- Development of a monitoring and evaluation plan by the IP/consultancy firm to follow and track the progress of each WRO in areas of capacity building shared under section IV.
- Based on M&E, provide remedial support or refresher work to WROs, on as needed basis.

In its submission/proposal, the selected IP/applicant **must be able to demonstrate proven track record** providing successful organizational capacity building, working with different civil society organizations of varying levels of capacity and competency, in different regions of Afghanistan. The selected IP must also be able to demonstrate flexibility in previous similar projects/work assignments building organizational capacity of civil society organizations simultaneously which focus on different project/activities and service deliverables.

One of the threshold criteria of the selection of the 10 WROs grantees which the selected IP/applicant will be assisting is that these organizations are fully women led and/or women managed possible. All 10 grantees are providing a variety of services and/or advocacy to women across Afghanistan to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. It is for this reason that the selected IP **must also be able to demonstrate a proven track record in working with women's groups or organizations, have a firm understanding of gender mainstreaming and supporting women in decision making/leadership positions within organizations.** It would be **preferred** that the selected IP should have enough female experts and/or qualified female staff in its own organization/consultancy firm/ or office to provide meaningful contributions regarding substantive development of capacity training tools as well as effective communication skills with female WRO staff and leadership.

Methodology and Approach:

In preparing its submission, applicants must review the following requirements.

Consistent with the Government of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), the WVL Program and all implementing partners as well as grantees must espouse a feminist approach to policy and programming. In terms of IPs, this requirement equates to acknowledging the following principles and values:

- IP provides opportunities for WROs/grantees to be directly engaged in decision making throughout the project cycle.



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- IP reflects the priorities identified by WROs and movements and their transformative agendas of social change, including their agendas for humanitarian action.
- IP acknowledges that WROs create their own policies and approaches to including men and boys or addressing masculinities and male privilege as part of their programming. The WVL program allows for a range of diverse approaches to this issue.
- IP acknowledges that approaches to organizational capacity building respond to the feminist aspirations of WROs. For example, they may include nurturing transformative feminist leadership, fostering security and self-care for women’s human rights defenders, or identifying alternative strategies for resources mobilization.
- IP ensures that mechanisms proposed incorporates participation of diverse local WROs and the multiple identities they represent.
- IP acknowledges potential power dynamics among WROs and creates spaces through capacity building where diverse organizations can be heard.
- All documents related to organizational capacity are co-designed, developed and owned by selected WROs.
- During the capacity building process, discussion of empowerment reflects a process by which selected WROs, and women and girls reached by those WROs have increased leadership and agency to question and collectively challenge patriarchal power relations and other oppressive economic, social and political structures.
- Donor-recipient power dynamics are addressed during capacity building related to fund raising, sustainability and project implementation.
- IPs set up regular and transparent communications with selected WROs through the duration of the IP contract.
- All such mechanisms, procedures, policies, and guidance provided by the IP establish and reinforce shared accountability among different levels of actors within the WVL Project as well as strengthen the power and sustainability of selected WROs.

As noted above, IP/applicants submitting proposals are encouraged to give a detailed explanation of the methodology to be used to achieve the deliverables listed above, going beyond the sample capacity building process shared in this RFP. For example, submissions should include detailed activities descriptions, e.g., development of the HR system, training and so on. If submissions propose training please provide a detailed curriculum, or if submission propose development of manuals/policies, please provide detailed description of process and contents. A **specific deliverables** plan will facilitate an accurate reasonable budget with the RFP reviewers may understand. NOTE: **All training materials** must be drafted in English and local languages (Dari or Pashto as per need of each WRO). Delivery of training, workshops, virtual events, etc., will be in local languages.

IV. Expected Deliverables & Timeline

The WVL Project seeks proposals from IP/applicants to provide comprehensive technical assistance in the overall improvement of the organizational capacity for ten selected Women’s Rights Organizations (WROs), designated as sub-recipients/grantees of GAC WVL - Afghanistan multiyear grants, in the **domains specified below** and seeks to achieve the following potential **deliverables**¹;

¹ This is not intended to be a complete list and may be subject to change depending upon selected Implementing Partner’s assessment of the overall organizational capacity needs of the ten selected WROs sub recipients/grantees.



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a. Leadership and Governance

Deliverables: (Vision/Mission, Organizational Structure, Board Composition and Responsibilities, Legal Status, Charter/By Laws, Succession)

b. Structure and System:

Deliverables: (Operational Policies, Procedures and Systems, Travel Policies and Procedures, Procurement, Fixed Asset Control, Information Systems, etc.)

c. Human Resources Management

Deliverables: (Employee Handbook, Job descriptions, Recruitment, Staffing Levels, Personnel Policies, Gender Policy, Child Protection Policy, Staff Salaries and Benefits, Time Sheet system/management, Staff Performance Management, Volunteers, and Interns, etc.)

d. Financial Management:

Deliverables: (Financial Systems, Financial Policies and Procedures, Internal Controls, Financial Documentation, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, Audits, Cost Share, Financial Sustainability, etc.)

e. Organizational Management:

Deliverables: (Strategic Planning, Resource Mobilization, Operational Plan Development, Communication Strategy, Change Management, Knowledge Management, Stakeholder Involvement, Internal Communication, Decision-Making, etc.)

f. Program Management:

Deliverables: (Program Design and Implementation, Donor Compliance, Sub-grant Management, Technical Reporting Referral, Community Involvement, Culture and Gender, Partnership and Networking, Fundraising/Sustainability Planning and/or Guidelines, etc.)

g. Project Performance Management:

Deliverables: (Field Oversight Activities Standards, Quality Assurance, etc.)

h. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL):

Deliverables: (Developing MEL system inclusive of feminist values and principles, M&E framework at organizational and project level, M&E Plan, M&E tools including data analysis tools/skill sets, etc.)

V. Budget/ Financial Proposal

Interested applicants will propose a Budget/Financial proposal and detailed implementation timeline for works as described in sections II, III & IV of this RFP. The Financial proposal should separately include at least the following information and related cost and narrative (assumptions/justification for propose/budgeted cost and activity):

Note: *The Budget has been capped under this assignment and your cost proposal should be no more than \$ 90,000 for a period of one year.*

The above budget is to expect to cover the activities being planned for the first year, and the contract and its activities may be extended for another year subject to successful implementation of activities proposed by the bidder in year one.

Activity 1:

Activity 2:



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Activity 3:

Activity 4:

Note: Your budget should be all inclusive of cost of manpower time, stationary, travel (outbound or local), communication, and other associated cost. 5 % amount will be retained from each payment and paid upon successful completion of all deliverables. Delays in meeting agreed timelines during the progress of the contract would attract another 1% per day penalty.

VI. Eligibility, selection process and evaluation criteria

TAF-AG is seeking the services of IP/applicants that have the capacity to undertake expected deliverables mentioned under section IV for 10 Women’s Rights Organizations (WROs) in five provinces of Kabul, Balkh, Parwan, Baghlan and Takhar.

Eligibility criteria:

- Applicants must be national consultancy firms registered with Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
- The firms must have at least 5 years of proven similar experience in organizational capacity building.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate successful past performance in carrying out and in the development of similar organizational capacity building in Afghanistan.
- Preference will be given to applicants having the experience in carry out similar organizational capacity building demonstrating gender mainstreaming in Afghanistan.
- The Applicant must be expert in organizational capacity building working with a wide range of organizations with varying degrees of experience and expertise in different regions of Afghanistan.
- Applicant and team members must have strong command of English language and local languages and excellent communicator in terms of building capacity of local women’s rights organizations.

Review criteria:

Applicants must propose a detailed technical and financial proposal for assignment as described under section II and III of this RFP. Applicants are also expected to include initial thoughts on methods and approach to implementing phase, and budgets. Full applications will be evaluated against the merit review criteria in the table below:

Merit review criteria	Points
Technical methodology and approach	40
Past performance and track record	25
Proposed team and organizational capacity	15
Cost efficiency	25
Overall rating (out of 100 points)	100

Technical Methodology and Approach: The technical approach must be responsive to the expectations set out in sections II & III of this RFP. To receive full points, the proposed methodology for the activities and deliverables as described in sections II and III should demonstrate expert understanding of the requirements and propose convincing responses that are well-tailored to the activity’s requirements in all aspects. The level of detail and quality of information should provide a high degree of confidence in certainty of delivery, with due regard to the adjustments required to ensure the safety of the uses (end beneficiary) and to the cost-effectiveness of the approach proposed.

Past Performance: Demonstrated track record and experience with software solutions of similar scope and size. Preference will be given to applicants with experience mobilizing effectively and/or experience



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in having implemented similar projects in past in Afghanistan. Applicants shall provide references for a minimum of three examples/customers of relevant past work.

Proposed personnel and organizational capacity: Evidence of the capability to undertake and accomplish the proposed activities, both at the individual and organizational levels, in the period of time prescribed. The applicant's process for quality assurance should be discussed. Any additional staff the applicant wishes to include should be discussed and will be evaluated here. The applicant shall provide CVs for key positions. **Please do not load your proposal with CV's of personnel not relevant to the project.**

Cost Efficiency: The applicant is expected to submit a detailed budget/financial proposal covering the deliverables as mentioned in section IV of this RFP. This information will be reviewed for cost reasonableness, cost eligibility and thoroughness. Cost efficiency will be evaluated in comparing the budget to the proposed methodology, work plan and project deliverables. A good budget is one that is clear and reasonable and reflects best use of resources to deliver agreed objectives and deliverables.

The proposal must be in English and accompanied by the following documents:

- Technical proposal (**not to exceed 25 pages**). Please use 12-point times '**New Roman**' font, single-spaced, with appropriate margins.
- CVs of key staff and core personnel. Please limit individual CVs to three (3) pages.
- Detailed implementation plan with clear milestones and deliverable showing major activities and how they will be implemented. Please include start up activities.
- Risk assessment plan.
- Detailed Budget/Financial proposal along with budget narrative.
- References for last three similar projects (Name for point of contact, designation, E-mail address and Cell #) to cover at least five years duration.
- Copy of the registration certificate/license with the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoRA).

VII. Type of Award Instrument

The Foundation-AG will issue an Agreement (type of agreement to be determined) to the IP, which will be as per the Foundation's internal policies and will be governed by the Foundation's Rules, Regulations and Guidelines. Payments to the IP will be made as per the payment schedule, which will be negotiable and finalized while signing the agreement.

VIII. Other Terms and Conditions

The Foundation project-specific Marking and Branding regulations may apply to all deliverables produced from this assignment.

Finally, this RFP does not obligate the Foundation to award a contract nor does it commit TAF to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal. Award of a Contract under this ToR is subject to availability of funds and other internal Foundation approvals.

The Foundation reserves the right to visit the IP for due diligence purposes.

In case of you should be submitting your proposal in hard copy than it needs to be directed to:

THE PROCUREMENT UNIT

The Asia Foundation

House # 861, Street # 1



The Asia Foundation

**Shirpour, District-10, (Sub Street of Shirpour Project)
Kabul, Afghanistan.**

Owing to the COVID -19 situation we would encourage you to submit your proposal in soft version (**PDF form**) duly signed and stamped (Technical Proposal & Financial Proposal) at the following email: country.afghanistan.procurement@asiafoundation.org

IX. TIME FRAME

The project work plan shall be designed in a way to allow the local partner organization one to two months to adequately prepare and perform all necessary preparatory activities.

Announcement of RFP	March 30, 2021
Pre-Bid Conference	April 11, 2021 2:30 p.m. Kabul time*
Last date for submission of Proposal	April 25, 2021 via email in PDF format no later than 04 :00 pm Kabul time
Proposal review and pre-contract negotiations	May 3, 2021
Agreement Signing off	May 10, 2021

***Note:** The Foundation will organize a **Pre-Bid virtual Conference** on the above-mentioned date & time through Microsoft Teams/Zoom application, that will provide an opportunity to all the interested bidders to seek clarifications to their questions and doubts on the RFP. The designated technical team on this assignment at the Foundation will also provide a brief overview of the assignment and brief the audience on the Foundation's expectations out of this RFP. Hence, all interested bidders are encouraged to participate in the pre-bid virtual conference. The invitation link of virtual conference will be shared with the applicants later. All potential agencies interested to bid are required to send us a request email to attend the pre-bid conference at – country.afghanistan.procurement@asiafoundation.org , no later than April 8, 2021 01:00 p.m. Kabul time.

X. TYPE OF AWARD INSTRUMENT

The Foundation-AG will issue a Service Agreement to the selected agency, which will be as per the Foundation's internal policies and will be governed by the Foundation's Rules, Regulations and Guidelines. Payments to the selected agency will be made as per the payment schedule, which will be negotiable and finalized while signing the agreement.

XI. OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Foundation project-specific Marking and Branding regulations may apply to all deliverables produced from this assignment. **Foundation reserves the right to visit final selected firm(s) for due diligence purposes if required.**

ANNEXES:

ANNEX I - Proposal Budget Template with sample budget worksheet.