

**Department of State
Public Notice**

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Request for Proposals: Democracy, Human Rights, and Rule of Law in Africa.

SUMMARY

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) announces a Request for Proposals from organizations interested in submitting proposals for projects that promote democracy, human rights, and rule of law in Africa.

PLEASE NOTE: DRL strongly urges applicants to access immediately www.grants.gov or www.grantsolutions.gov in order to obtain a username and password. It may take two full weeks to register with www.grants.gov. Please see the section entitled, “DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS” below for specific instructions.

REQUESTED PROPOSAL PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

DRL invites organizations to submit proposals outlining program concepts and capacity to manage projects targeting the following issues:

Equatorial Guinea:

Building the Capacity of Civil Society Organizations in Equatorial Guinea (approximately \$500,000 available): DRL’s objective is to improve human rights conditions, fight corruption, and increase transparency and accountability in Equatorial Guinea through the implementation of activities that build the capacity of in-country civil society organizations (CSOs) to effectively engage with the government and other stakeholders on 1) improving prison conditions, and/or 2) increasing transparency in the oil sector. DRL seeks proposals that include capacity-building activities for in-country CSOs including skills building workshops and coaching to build organizational capacity and financial sustainability; develop communications and advocacy strategies; and conduct strategic planning. Proposals should include plans for working inside Equatorial Guinea with local partners to monitor prisons and police holding cells, including monitoring detainees with disabilities and incidents of forced labor, and ensuring joint monitoring exercises with the Red Cross; as well as plans to work with in-country Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)-associated organizations to promote collaboration and create platforms for dialogue among key stakeholders, including representatives from civil society organizations, companies, government representatives, and private citizens to work together to promote transparency in the oil sector and ensure that natural resources are managed for the benefit of all. Preference will be given to proposals that provide sub-grants to local partners to carry out program activities inside Equatorial Guinea.

Guinea:

Improving Prison Conditions in Guinea (approximately \$500,000 available):

DRL’s objective is to promote rule of law, increase access to justice, and improve human right conditions in Guinea through the implementation of activities that promote reform in the Guinean justice system. DRL seeks to support a program that builds a partnership between the national association of jurists, the Ministry of Justice, and NGOs focused on prisoner rights to

provide training sessions on detainee rights for judicial police units and magistrates; create codes of prison conduct; develop a strategy to address the significant backlog of cases; and enhance the capacity of faith-based organizations to increase public awareness of detainee rights. Programs should include sub-grants to local organizations to enable them to carry out their work and address prison reform across the country. Program beneficiaries should include: 1) those persons within the Ministry of Justice in charge of prison administration and reform; 2) lawyers responsible for advocating for detainees, especially those who linger in lengthy pre-trial detention; and 3) NGOs charged with monitoring the cases and overall welfare of detainees.

Nigeria/Ghana:

Implementing the Voluntary Principles (VPs) in Ghana and Nigeria (approximately \$400,000 available): DRL's objective is to increase the level of knowledge about human rights issues and promote the incorporation of the VPs as a fundamental element in government agendas and business strategies. DRL seeks proposals for activities that may include, but are not limited to the following: 1) raising awareness about the VPs and applicable rights and laws with relevant local and national companies and NGOs; 2) combating violence (including violence against women), human rights abuses, and corruption associated with the extractive industries; and/or 3) educating the community on human rights concerns within the extractive industry. Proposals should include a component that bring governments, civil society organizations, companies, and community representatives to the table to 1) increase awareness of the VPs; 2) stop violations before they happen; 3) offer a confidential place where parties can discuss the issues before, during, and after problems occur; and 4) encourage all parties to join and implement the VPs. When present and if helpful, embassies for VPs participating countries in Abuja and Accra (UK, US, Canada, Norway, Colombia, Switzerland, and the Netherlands) should be consulted.

Zambia: Building the Capacity of Zambia's Judiciary (approximately \$500,000 available): DRL's objective is to strengthen the capacity of the Zambian judiciary to act independently and serve as a check on executive power. DRL seeks proposals to build capacity in the judiciary through a series of training sessions on international human rights law conducted by international and domestic organizations. Training sessions should increase awareness of international conventions and legal perspectives on human rights, including gender rights and gender-based violence, the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, disability rights, rights of those living with HIV/AIDS, labor rights, freedom of speech and assembly, and statutory media regulations. Proposals should provide subgrants to local organizations to bolster their capacity to conduct future activities.

Cote d'Ivoire: Reconciliation, Human Rights and Transitional Justice (approximately \$800,000 available): DRL's objective is to support programming that works to end impunity, acknowledges and redresses harms, and fosters reconciliation. DRL seeks proposals to support civil society to strengthen their ability to improve human rights protection and monitoring in the country. Programs may enhance civil society capacity to support reconciliation efforts by the government, including the national Commission of Inquiry. Programs may provide training on transitional justice and reconciliation methods, aimed primarily at civil society, but with the secondary goal of preparing these non-state actors to hold government, especially the Ministry of Justice, more accountable during this critical transitional phase. Programs may also work to

expand the capacity of the Ministry of Human Rights. Proposals may also include reconciliation activities that will engage local leadership in multiple regions of Cote d'Ivoire, including the West, strengthening their ability to promote reconciliation and social cohesion in their areas.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should conform to DRL's posted Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI), available at http://www.state.gov/g/drl/p/october_2010/index.htm#. (For this solicitation, applicants must use the Revised PSI dated October 2010.)

An organization may submit no more than **five proposals (5)** proposals (one proposal per theme). Proposals that do not meet the requirements of the announcement and PSI may not be considered. Proposals that combine target countries and/or themes may be deemed technically ineligible. **Proposals that request less than the award floor (\$400,000) or more than the award ceiling (\$800,000) will be deemed technically ineligible.**

For all application documents, please ensure:

- 1) All pages are numbered, including budgets and attachments,
- 2) All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
- 3) All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

Complete applications should include the following for proposal submission:

- 1) Completed and signed SF-424, SF-424a (Budget Summary) and SF424b (Assurances), most recent A-133 Audit, and Certifications Regarding Lobbying forms as directed on www.grants.gov and www.grantsolutions.gov.
- 2) Table of Contents (not to exceed one [1] page in Microsoft Word) that includes a page-numbered contents page, including any attachments.
- 3) Executive Summary (not to exceed one [1] page in Microsoft Word) that includes:
 - a) Name and contact information for the project's main point of contact,
 - b) A one-paragraph "statement of work" or synopsis of the program and its expected results,
 - c) A concise breakdown of the project's objectives and activities,
 - d) The total amount of funding requested and program length, and
 - e) A brief statement on how the project is innovative, sustainable, and will have a demonstrated impact.
- 4) Proposal Narrative (not to exceed ten [10] pages in Microsoft Word). Please note the ten page limit does not include the Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Attachments, Detailed Budget, Budget Narrative or NICRA. Applicants may submit multiple documents in one Microsoft Word file, i.e., Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Proposal Narrative, and Budget Narrative in one file or as separate, individually submitted files. Submissions should address four specific criteria (Quality of Program, Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives, Multiplier Effect/Sustainability, and Institution's Record and Capacity). Details about these criteria are described in the Review Process section below.

- 5) Budget Narrative (preferably in Microsoft Word) that includes an explanation/justification for each line item in the detailed budget spreadsheet, as well as the source and description of all cost-share offered. For ease of review, it is recommended that applicants order the budget narrative as presented in the detailed budget. Primarily Headquarters- and Field-based personnel costs should include a clarification on the roles and responsibilities of key staff and percentage of time devoted to the project. In addition, cost-effectiveness is one of the key criteria for rating the competitiveness of a program proposal. Applicants that include cost share in their budget should note that cost share is considered a commitment and that the grantee will be held responsible for meeting the amount of cost share included. It is recommended that budget narratives address the overall cost-effectiveness of the proposal, including any cost-share offered (see the PSI for more information on cost-sharing and cost-effectiveness).
- 6) Detailed Line-item Budget (in Microsoft Excel or similar spreadsheet format) that contains three [3] columns including DRL request, any cost sharing contribution, and total budget. A summary budget should also be included using the OMB approved budget categories (see SF-424 as a sample). See the PSI for more information on budget format. Costs must be in U.S. Dollars.
- 7) Attachments (not to exceed seven [7] pages total, preferably in Microsoft Word) that include the following in order:
 - a) Pages 1-2: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (see PSI for more information on this section).
 - b) Page 3: Roles and responsibilities of key program personnel with short bios that highlight relevant professional experience. Given the limited space, CVs are not recommended for submission.
 - c) Page 4: Timeline of the overall proposal. Components should include activities, evaluation efforts, and program closeout.
 - d) Page 5-7: Additional optional attachments. Attachments may include additional timeline information, letters of support, memorandums of understanding/agreement, etc. For applicants with a large number of letters/MOUs, it may be useful to provide a list of the organizations/government agencies that support the program rather than the actual documentation.
- 8) If your organization has a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be sent as a pdf file. This document will not be reviewed by the panelists, but rather used by program and grant staff if the submission is recommended for funding. Hence, this document does not count against the submission page limitations. If your organization does not have a NICRA agreement with a cognizant agency, the proposal budget should not have a line item for indirect cost charges. Rather, any costs that may be considered as indirect costs should be included in specific budget line items as direct costs. Furthermore, if your proposal involves sub-grants to organizations charging indirect costs, and those organizations also have a NICRA, please submit the applicable NICRA as a .pdf file (see the PSI for more information on indirect cost rate).

Note: To ensure all applications receive a balanced evaluation, the DRL Review Committee will review the first page of the requested section up to the page limit and no further. DRL encourages organizations to use the given space effectively.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The bulk of funding activities should take place during a two to three-year time frame. Programs that leverage resources from funds internal to the organization or other sources, such as public-private partnerships, will be highly considered. Programs that have a strong academic or research focus will not be highly considered. Cost sharing is strongly encouraged, and cost sharing contributions should be outlined in the proposal, budget, and budget narrative.

DRL will not consider proposals that reflect any type of support, for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization, whether or not elected members of government.

The information in this solicitation is binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts this language will not be binding. Issuance of the solicitation does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program evaluation requirements.

This request for proposals will appear on www.grants.gov, www.grantsolutions.gov, and DRL's website, www.state.gov/g/drl.

APPLICANT/ORGANIZATION CRITERIA

Organizations submitting proposals must meet the following criteria:

- * Be a U.S. non-profit organization meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c) (3), or other U.S.-based non-profit organizations, or comparable non-profit organizations based outside of the U.S., or an international organization.
- * Have demonstrated experience administering successful and preferably similar projects. DRL reserves the right to request additional background information on organizations that do not have previous experience administering federal grant awards. These applicants may be subject to limited funding on a pilot basis.
- * Be a registered user of www.grants.gov and/or www.grantsolutions.gov.
- * Have existing, or the capacity to develop, active partnerships with in-country entities and relevant stakeholders including industry and non-governmental organizations.
- * Organizations may form consortia and submit a combined proposal. However, one organization should be designated as the lead applicant.

* An OMB policy directive published in the Federal Register on Friday, June 27, 2003, requires that all organizations applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements must provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for all Federal grants or cooperative agreements in or after October 1, 2003. Please reference: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/062703_grant_identifier.pdf for the complete OMB policy directive.

* All organizations applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements will need to be registered with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) <http://www.ccr.gov/>. Your organization's DUNS number is needed to complete this process.

REVIEW PROCESS

The Bureau will review all proposals for eligibility. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance of Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final signatory authority for assistance awards resides with the Department's Grants Officer. DRL and the Grants Office reserve the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

Proposals will be funded based on an evaluation of how the proposal meets the solicitation review criteria, U.S. foreign policy objectives, and the priority needs of DRL. A Department of State Review Committee will evaluate proposals submitted under this request. Each proposal will be rated along six criteria. Review criteria will include:

1) Quality of Program Idea

Proposals should be responsive to the solicitation and should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission of promoting human rights and democracy.

2) Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives

A strong proposal will include a clear articulation of how the proposed program activities contribute to the overall program objectives, and each activity will be clearly developed and detailed. A relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and the logistical capacity of the organization. The work plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. Programs should be for no less than 18 months in duration. Objectives should be ambitious, yet measurable and achievable. For complete proposals, applicants should provide a monthly timeline of project activities. Proposals should address how the program will engage relevant stakeholders and should identify local partners as appropriate. If local partners have been identified, the Bureau strongly encourages applicants to submit letters of support from proposed in-country partners. Organizations also should identify and address gender considerations in all proposed program activities, and must provide specific means, measures, and corresponding targets to address them. As appropriate, organizations should also explain how the program plan addresses the participation of people with disabilities and their organizations. Additionally, applicants should describe the division of labor among the direct applicant and any local partners. If applicable, proposals should identify target areas for activities, target participant groups or selection criteria for participants, and purpose/criteria for sub-grantees, among other pertinent details. In particularly challenging operating environments,

proposals should include contingency plans for overcoming potential difficulties in executing the original work plan.

3) Multiplier Effect/Sustainability

Proposals should clearly delineate how elements of their program will have a multiplier effect and be sustainable beyond the life of the grant. A good multiplier effect may include but is not limited to, plans to build lasting networks for direct and indirect beneficiaries, follow-on training and mentoring, and continued use of project deliverables. A strong sustainability plan may include demonstrating capacity-building results or garnering other donor support after DRL funding ceases.

4) Program Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan

Programs should demonstrate the capacity for engaging in outcome-based evaluations and identify outputs and outcomes to measure how program activities will achieve the program's strategic objectives. The M&E Plan should include output- and outcome-based indicators, baseline and target for each indicator, disaggregation if applicable, monitoring and evaluation tools, data source/s, and frequency of monitoring and evaluation. For a more detailed explanation of what DRL is looking for in the M&E Plan, please see the PSI and the DRL Monitoring and Evaluation Primer (www.state.gov/g/drl/p/c12302.htm). Projects that propose an independent evaluation, including a midterm and final assessment, with a clear monitoring and evaluation plan will be viewed favorably in this category.

5) Institution's Record and Capacity

The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past grants. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's objectives. Roles, responsibilities, and brief bios demonstrating relevant professional experience of primary staff should be provided as one of the main attachments.

6) Cost Effectiveness

The administrative, including salaries and honoraria, and overhead components should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Given that the majority of DRL-funded programs take place overseas, U.S.-based costs should be kept to a minimum. Cost sharing is strongly encouraged and is viewed favorably by DRL reviewers. For a more detailed description of how DRL evaluates the cost effectiveness of its proposals, please see the PSI.

DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants must submit proposals using www.grants.gov or www.grantsolutions.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on **January 20, 2012**. DRL will **not** accept proposals submitted via email, fax, the postal system, or delivery companies or couriers. Applicants may submit more than one application; however, each application should be submitted only once.

Several of the steps in the www.grants.gov / www.grantsolutions.gov registration process can take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their

organizations immediately after reviewing this solicitation to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Applicants are encouraged to submit applications via www.grantsolutions.gov. This website is available to all applicants, but DRL especially encourages foreign NGOs and public international organizations to submit proposals through this web site.

Interested organizations using GrantSolutions for the first time should register on the www.GrantSolutions.gov site to create a new Applicant account as soon as possible because this process must be completed before an application can be submitted. To register with GrantSolutions follow the “First Time Applicants” link and complete the “GrantSolutions New Applicant Sign Up” application form. Organizations that have previously used www.GrantSolutions.gov do not need to register again. If an organization that has previously used www.GrantSolutions.gov is not able to access the system, please contact Customer Support for help in gaining access (see contact information below).

Please note: In order to safeguard the security of applicants’ electronic information, www.grants.gov/ www.grantsolutions.gov utilizes a credential provider to confirm, with certainty, the applicant organization’s credentials. The credential provider for www.grants.gov/ www.grantsolutions.gov is Operational Research Consultants (ORC). Applicants MUST register with ORC to receive a username and password which you will need to register with www.grants.gov/ www.grantsolutions.gov as an authorized organization representative (AOR). Once your organization's E-Business point of contact has assigned these rights, you will be authorized to submit grant applications through www.grants.gov/ www.grantsolutions.gov on behalf of your organization.

Each organization will need to be registered with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) <http://www.ccr.gov>, and you will need to have your organization's DUNS number available to complete this process. For more information regarding the DUNS number, please visit www.dnb.com or call 1-866-705-5711. After your organization registers with the CCR, you must wait approximately three to five business days before you can obtain a username and password. This may delay your ability to post your proposal. **Therefore, DRL strongly urges applicants to begin this process well in advance of the submission deadline.**

No exceptions will be made for organizations that have not completed the necessary steps to post applications on www.grants.gov / www.grantsolutions.gov .

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via www.grants.gov or www.grantsolutions.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through www.grants.gov / www.grantsolutions.gov.

The www.grants.gov/ www.grantsolutions.gov websites include extensive information on all phases/aspects of the www.grants.gov/ www.grantsolutions.gov process, including an extensive

section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. DRL strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly www.grants.gov or www.grantsolutions.gov, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the www.grants.gov/ www.grantsolutions.gov system.

Direct all questions regarding www.grants.gov registration and submission to:
www.grants.gov Customer Support
Contact Center Phone: 800-518-4726
Business Hours: Monday – Friday, 7AM – 9PM Eastern Standard Time
Email: support@grants.gov

Direct all questions regarding www.grantsolutions.gov registration and submission to:
www.grantsolutions.gov Customer Support
Contact Center Phone: 888-577-0771
Business Hours: Monday – Friday, 8AM – 6PM Eastern Standard Time
Email: help@grantsolutions.gov

Applicants have until midnight (11:59 p.m.), Washington, D.C. time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to www.grants.gov/ www.grantsolutions.gov. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the www.grants.gov/ www.grantsolutions.gov system and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to www.grants.gov/ www.grantsolutions.gov for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from www.grants.gov/ www.grantsolutions.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via www.grants.gov/ www.grantsolutions.gov can take up to two business days. DRL will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

Faxed, couriered, or emailed documents will not be accepted at any time. Applicants must follow all formatting instructions in this document and the PSI.

It is the responsibility of all applicants to ensure that proposals have been received by www.grants.gov / www.grantsolutions.gov in their entirety. DRL bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For questions regarding Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, and Nigeria/Ghana, please contact Pamela Erickson at ericksonpc@state.gov. For questions regarding Zambia and Cote d'Ivoire, please contact Megan Shaw at shawmel@state.gov.

Once the RFP deadline has passed, U.S. Government officials - including those in the Bureau, the Department, and at embassies/missions overseas - must not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process is completed.