

**Department of State
Public Notice**

**Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Request for Proposals:
Democracy, Human Rights, and Rule of Law in the Middle East and Burma.**

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 the Middle East and Burma.

PLEASE NOTE: DRL strongly urges applicants to access immediately www.grants.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:

Middle East Regional (approximately \$600,000 available): DRL seeks proposals to support the fledgling independent trade union movement in the Middle East, and to support women’s empowerment in the labor movement and workplace. This program will help build relationships among independent Arab trade unions in support of their efforts to build labor organizations that effectively represent workers and play constructive roles in political and economic reform in the region. Activities will include promoting regional cooperation in pursuit of labor rights, and union-to-union collaboration for sharing best practices. It will also work toward promoting independent and democratic trade union practices and principles, and helping unions play constructive roles in support of peaceful political and economic reform. In particular, the trade unions should advocate enactment and impartial enforcement of the rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and elimination of discriminatory practices. Similarly, it will promote women’s equality in the region by building women’s participation in trade unions and other organizations. Proposals must target some or all of the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yemen.

Morocco (approximately \$1,000,000 available): Morocco is in the midst of a process meant to address public demands for change. The country is experiencing renewed calls for political and economic change including the demand for employment, greater openness and a dialogue with the government to address social justice. DRL seeks project proposals to focus on (1) improving tripartite institutional capacity to participate in increased social dialogue during this critical time; (2) improving the application of existing labor laws; (3) promoting the inclusiveness of trade union structures; and (4) building capacity of trade unions to participate in national and political dialogue. Program activities and outputs should specifically focus on:

- promoting increased and improved social dialogue and consensus at the national, regional (in urban and particularly in rural areas), and sector levels (including EPZs) by improving the capacity of tripartite constituents;
- strengthening the governance of the labor market by improving application of existing labor laws that comply with international labor standards (including the right to freedom of association, the right to organize and bargain collectively, tripartite consultation, social security, and occupational safety and health) and by building the capacity of the labor monitor inspectorate;
- training for labor leaders and activists to organize and recruit new members, particularly marginalized workers, such as women, youth, and informal sector workers;
- training and capacity building to strengthen democratic practices in worker organizations, increase representativeness of unions and worker associations, and to increase the presence of women in leadership positions; and
- capacity building and technical support on socioeconomic and legal issues to Moroccan trade unions so they can play a more effective role in national and political dialogue.

Burma (approximately \$450,000): To promote workers rights in Burma's pre-transition environment, DRL seeks proposals that provide capacity building and technical support to nascent union and worker organizations in Burma. DRL's objective is to support efforts that develop the internal foundations necessary for unions to play constructive roles in support of peaceful transition in Burma. DRL seeks proposals including the following activities:

- Increase information regarding labor laws and international standards and the role of unions among workers, the Government of Burma (GoB) and the broader society.

- Provide assistance to help nascent unions register legally, including by providing training on relevant laws and regulations; assisting in navigating registration processes and paperwork; building a membership base that includes a broad array of workers; and connecting worker organizations across regions in Burma.
- Provide technical support to develop locally-led, independent democratic union organizations, emphasizing the skills and information needed for internal democratic practices, including internal elections, decision-making, transparent accounting practices, and leadership skills.
- Provide organizational assistance to develop unions' internal operations to successfully represent, provide services for, and advocate on behalf of workers.
- Support and facilitate tripartite discussions (including workers, management, and the GoB) to foster compliance to new labor laws and build confidence and communication in labor-management relations.

Competitive proposals will: 1) conduct activities inside Burma and from its borders to reach a variety of ethnic and Burman populations; 2) foster linkages between workers in the core and periphery areas of the country, and workers from a variety of economic sectors; 3) foster linkages between worker organizations and relevant GoB officials; 4) incorporate women workers in training and leadership development; 5) be flexible, discussing how proposed activities can expand or contract under changing political conditions; 6) prioritize working with local actors, identifying how the program will not overwhelm existing absorptive capacity of organizations; 7) create an output- and outcome-driven program with a strong monitoring and evaluation plan; 8) outline how your organization will select and vet GoB officials participating in program activities; and 9) organizations working in Burma should discuss how this proposal complements or expands on existing projects.

TECHNICAL ELIGIBILITY

Proposals should conform to DRL's posted Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI), as updated in March 2012, available at <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c12302.htm>. (For this solicitation, applicants must use the Revised PSI dated March 2012.)

Technically eligible submissions are those which: 1) arrive electronically via www.grants.gov by July 10, 2012 before 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST); 2) heed all instructions contained in the solicitation document and Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI), including length and completeness of submission;

and 3) do not violate any of the guidelines stated in the solicitation and this document.

An organization may submit no more than **one (1) proposal per project listed in this announcement**. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of the announcement and Proposal Submission Instructions (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 or more than the award ceiling will be deemed technically ineligible. The award floor for the Middle East Regional program is \$200,000 and the ceiling is \$600,000; the award floor for the Morocco program is \$300,000 and the ceiling is \$1,000,000; and the award floor for the Burma program is \$250,000 and the ceiling is \$450,000.**

The information contained herein is to assist you as a general reference for completion of the proposal submission. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all of the material submitted in the grant application package is complete, accurate, and current.

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 a comparable organization headquartered internationally, 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. NOTE: This process can take up to one month for new organizations so please register early. See additional details below.
- * 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.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

The U.S. Department of State requires proposals be submitted electronically via www.grants.gov.

Please note: In order to safeguard the security of applicants' electronic information, www.grants.gov utilizes a credential provider to confirm the applicant organization's credentials. The credential provider for www.grants.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 as an authorized organization representative (AOR). You will be authorized to submit grant applications through www.grants.gov on behalf of your organization.

Each organization must be registered with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR), for which you will need your organization's Duns & Bradstreet DUNS number (www.dnb.com). After your organization registers with the CCR, you may obtain a username and password after 3-5 business days.

PLEASE be advised that completing all the necessary steps for obtaining a username and password from www.grants.gov **can take two full weeks**. DRL strongly urges applicants to begin this process on www.grants.gov 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.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application varies 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 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.

The www.grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the www.grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section. DRL strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the www.grants.gov website well in advance of submitting a proposal through the www.grants.gov system.

Direct all questions regarding www.grants.gov registration and submission to the Grants.gov Contact Center, www.grants.gov, support@grants.gov, or 1-800-518-4726 (local toll free) 24 hours/day and 7 days/week. For international callers, please use 606-545-5035. IPortal: Top 10 requested help topics (FAQs), Searchable Knowledge Database, self-service ticketing and ticket status, and live web chat available 7:00 a.m – 9:00 p.m. EST.

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

Please refer to the www.grants.gov website 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 upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via www.grants.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. Applicants must follow all formatting instructions in the applicable request for proposals (RFP) and these instructions.

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

PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

DRL strives to ensure each application receives a balanced evaluation by the Department of State (DOS) Review Committee. The Committee will evaluate how

the proposals meet the solicitation request, U.S. foreign policy goals, and the priority needs of DRL overall. Panelists review each proposal individually against the evaluation criteria, not against competing proposals.

In most cases, the Department of State Review Committee includes representatives from DRL, the appropriate DOS regional bureau, as well as USAID Washington. DRL requests feedback on the proposals from the appropriate U.S. Embassies and USAID Missions for the panelists' consideration. At the end of discussion on a proposal, the Committee votes on recommending the proposal Bureau approval.

Department of State Review Committee panels may make conditions and recommendations on proposals to enhance the proposed programs, which must be addressed by the applicant before further consideration of the award. To ensure effective use of limited DRL funds, conditions or recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify and/or justify costs and program activities.

For further information on the DRL grants process, please see the DRL website: <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/index.htm>

NOTE: Approved applicants will need to register on www.grantsolutions.gov in order to process final awards. In order to use this portal, please follow the instructions to register on www.grantsolutions.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Should you have any questions regarding the solicitation, please contact Mitchell Alva at 202-425-2133 or AlvaMG@state.gov; for questions regarding the Burma solicitation, please contact Linnea Beatty at 202-632-2065 or BeattyLM@state.gov. Once the deadline has passed, State Department officials and staff - both in the Bureau and at embassies overseas - may not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process is completed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Programs that leverage resources from funds internal to the organization or other sources, such as public-private partnerships, will 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/j/drl.

U.S. Department of State staff in Washington and overseas may not discuss competing proposals with applicants until the review process has been completed.