

United States Department of State
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL)
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): DRL FY20 Promoting Human Rights and
Transparent and Accountable Government in Vietnam

This is the announcement of funding opportunity number **SFOP0007745**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.345

Type of Solicitation: Open Competition

Application Deadline: 11:59 PM EST on 12, MAY, 2021

Funding Floor: \$750,000

Funding Ceiling: \$1,000,000

Anticipated Number of Awards: 1

Type of Award: Grant

Period of Performance: 18 – 36 months

Anticipated Time to Award, Pending Availability of Funds: 7 months

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) announces an open competition for organizations interested in submitting applications for projects that strengthen transparent and accountable government and the protection of individual rights in Vietnam.

Vietnam has ratified several international treaties related to human rights and has domestically pursued legal reform in recent years advancing government accountability, transparency, and the protection of individual rights, including laws covering access to information, countering corruption, legal aid, and public interest law. However, gaps in law, policy, and enforcement persist. Moreover, civil society and legal advocates continue to contend with an array of challenges to promote transparent and accountable government and the protection of rights and freedoms guaranteed under Vietnam's laws and international treaty obligations and commitments.

DRL's goal for this project is strengthen transparent and accountable government and the protection of individual rights in Vietnam, including for vulnerable populations. U.S. assistance for this solicitation will be tailored to address the challenges civil society and legal advocates face in advancing transparent and accountable government, and the protection of individual rights. It will also seek to focus on addressing gaps in law, policy, and enforcement that

undermine government accountability, transparency, and the protection of rights under Vietnam's domestic laws and international treaty commitments.

A competitive project will seek to achieve the following desired outcomes:

- Civil society and legal advocates effectively pursue strategic efforts to advance transparent and accountable governance and the protection of individual rights, including for vulnerable populations
- Civil society and legal advocates more effectively inform and support legal and policy reforms and implementation of existing laws advancing individual rights and transparent and accountable government
- Policymakers and government reform and strengthen laws and practices advancing transparent and accountable government and the protection of individual rights

DRL seeks projects that include, but are not limited to, the following illustrative activities:

- Build capacity among civil society and legal advocates to conduct evidence-based advocacy and develop effective and sustainable strategies for engaging with local communities and government on policy and legal reforms that advance transparent and accountable government and the protection of individual rights.
- Develop high-quality, actionable policy research on rights-focused issues of broad concern to the Vietnamese public as a foundation to influence the development of public policy and legal reform.
- Promote dialogue and joint action among civil society, legal advocates, and other relevant stakeholders to foster legal and polity reform, including on laws advancing government transparency and accountability and the protection of individual rights, including for vulnerable populations.
- Support civil society and legal advocates to utilize existing laws and international mechanisms to strengthen the protection of individual rights and advance transparent and accountable government.
- Empower civil society and legal advocates to engage with local communities, policymakers, and government to strengthen implementation of existing laws protecting individual rights and advancing transparent and accountable government.

A proven ability to implement programs in Vietnam must be demonstrated. DRL prefers to fund activities of local civil society organizations to advocate for, and as appropriate, to help them partner with government interlocutors to deepen reform. DRL seeks a program approach that prioritizes opportunities for sub-grants and other methods of support to address needs identified by local beneficiaries. Ideal program design would include a broad range of civil society stakeholders that seek legal and policy reforms to strengthen human rights and promote transparent and accountable government. Programs can support targeted organizational capacity building to assist civil society actors in carrying out program activities. Competitive projects will address challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic in project design and activities. Creative ideas for working in a complex operating environment are welcome.

All programs should aim to have impact that leads to reforms and should have the potential for sustainability beyond DRL resources. DRL's preference is to avoid duplicating past efforts by supporting new and creative approaches. This does not exclude from consideration projects that

improve upon or expand existing successful projects in a new and complementary way. Programs should seek to include groups that can bring perspectives based on their religion, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation and gender identity. Programs should be demand-driven and locally led to the extent possible. DRL requires all programs to be non-discriminatory and expects implementers to include strategies for integration of individuals/organizations regardless of religion, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation and gender identity.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.