



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

RFI NUMBER: 72049725RFI00002

ISSUANCE DATE: November 14, 2024

RESPONSE DUE DATE & TIME: November 28, 2024, at 8:00 AM, Jakarta Time

RESPONSE EMAIL ADDRESS: indonesia.oaa@usaid.gov

PROJECT TITLE: Civil Society Strengthening for Accountability (CSS4A) Activity

The United States Agency for International Development Mission in Indonesia (USAID/Indonesia) posts this Request for Information (RFI) to inform and seek feedback from potentially interested parties about an anticipated activity. The working title of the activity is **Civil Society Strengthening for Accountability Activity (CSS4A)**. The anticipated activity is envisioned to be multi-year, with a ceiling of \$10 million, and will be implemented in Indonesia. The geographic focus of this activity will be USAID/Indonesia's priority provinces, with potential expansion to other regions based on development opportunity and potential.

This anticipated activity seeks to bolster civil society organizations' (CSOs) technical and organizational capacities to strengthen inclusive and accountable democratic governance through an empowered and active civil society.

USAID will jointly co-create objectives in various thematic areas, including transparent political processes, anti-corruption, people-centered justice, and economic empowerment/service delivery for marginalized groups, particularly transgender communities and persons with disabilities. Over the course of the activity, USAID may incorporate additional themes and priorities, as required by USAID funding sources and requirements.

USAID intends to fund a consortium of organizations, led by a single organization as the prime, which may be either a U.S. or non-U.S. organization. This prime will provide subgrants to local and community organizations that promote non-violent collective action. The goal is to support efforts that uphold the Indonesian government's commitment to provide equal services for all, including in the justice sector. Civil society organizations are both change-makers themselves and can empower the communities where they operate. As catalysts for change, organizations play a crucial role in an effective and inclusive democracy through the advancement of civil rights, the promotion of justice, and the ability to provide oversight and advocacy to drive critical reforms that benefit the population and safeguard marginalized populations.

This Request for Information (RFI) is issued solely for information gathering purposes.

This RFI will provide interested organizations an opportunity to:

- Contribute information and provide suggestions to inform USAID's planned activity; and
- Recommend approaches on how to better partner with local organizations, including but not limited to community-based organizations or informal organizations, to address the needs of Indonesia's civil society.

The release of this RFI is not to be construed as a commitment by the U.S. Government to issue any notice of funding opportunity or solicitation or ultimately make an award on the basis of this RFI. If USAID/Indonesia issues any future funding opportunity, it will be posted on www.grants.gov or www.sam.gov. It is the potential applicant's/offeror's responsibility to monitor this site for the release of any synopsis or solicitation. Responding to this RFI will not provide any advantage to or preclude any firm or organization if USAID issues a subsequent solicitation or funding opportunity.

USAID may use any information provided without incurring any obligation. USAID reserves the right to or not to incorporate any, some, or none of the comments received from this RFI into any subsequent solicitations or other documents. No basis for claims against the U.S. Government shall arise as a result of a response to this RFI or from the Government's use of such information.

Respondents are advised that USAID is under no obligation to acknowledge receipt, answer questions, or provide feedback to respondents with respect to any information provided. Any information submitted in response to this notice is voluntary. USAID is not responsible for any costs incurred in responding to this RFI nor will funding be made available prior to any award. Respondents are responsible for all costs incurred prior to award.

Please see Attachment 2 of this RFI for further instructions.

Thank you for your time and assistance. We appreciate your thoughts, contributions, and interest in this activity. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

/s/

Brian Chang
Agreement Officer
USAID/Indonesia

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Activity Description
- Attachment 2: Response Form (with questions)
- Attachment 3: Capabilities Statement

Attachment 1 - Activity Description

Preliminary Activity Title: Civil Society Strengthening for Accountability (CSS4A)
Period of Performance: Up to five years
Anticipated Funding: USD 10 million
Instrument Type: Justice, Rights, and Security APS Addendum

I. BACKGROUND

Across the world, including in Indonesia, civil society organizations (CSOs) face increasing challenges due to shrinking civic spaces. Indonesia has experienced democratic backsliding, marked by the weakening of key accountability institutions like the Anti-corruption Commission and Constitutional Court. There have also been observations of growing government oversight of civil society activities. Efforts to extend political influence, including through alliances and familial ties, have been a part of the political landscape. Recent judicial decisions have impacted these efforts, leading to increased discussions and responses from civil society groups.

Additionally, the Government of Indonesia (GOI) has implemented policies that direct international aid to be channeled primarily through local, registered non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This shift is seen as part of a broader trend in government–civil society relations, characterized by more structured oversight. CSOs have faced challenges in advocating on complex issues such as corruption, transparency, environmental governance, and rights of minority groups. Furthermore, there have been reports of CSOs encountering incidents related to cybersecurity and digital monitoring.

CSOs play a vital role in supporting democratic principles in Indonesia. They act as advocates for the public interest, to promote transparency, and to ensure participatory governance. Their contributions strengthen checks and balances, making them essential for a functioning democracy. Investing in CSOs not only enhances democracy and accountability but also protects the rights of all citizens, including women, children, and minority communities. Furthermore, CSOs contribute to sustainable development, environmental conservation, and responsible resource management. By amplifying diverse voices, they help build a more accountable and inclusive governance system.

Despite their importance, CSOs in Indonesia operate in what is classified as an "obstructed" environment by the Civicus Monitor, highlighting restrictions on freedoms of association, assembly, and expression. Journalists and activists face challenges. Laws like the Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE) Law have been applied in ways that can limit open discourse. Additionally, electoral regulations and various political dynamics, including the influence of dynastic ties and ongoing discussions about military reform, present complexities for the democratic process. Corruption remains a concern across multiple sectors, and transparency is sometimes constrained by exemptions in information-sharing policies.

While digital technology creates opportunities for broader civic engagement, it can also be misused, leading to concerns about surveillance, misinformation, and restricted

access. CSOs face challenges in effectively leveraging digital tools to enhance their efforts. Moreover, internal factors such as organizational dynamics, limited pathways and safe spaces for emerging leaders, and fragmented advocacy efforts can reduce the overall impact of CSOs. Strengthening civil society's capacity, fostering diverse and inclusive leadership, and enhancing advocacy and coalition-building are vital for addressing these challenges and reinforcing democratic practices in Indonesia.

II. DEVELOPMENT HYPOTHESIS

IF civil society organizations, and their organizational skills and resiliency are strengthened, and **IF** CSOs' technical capacity for oversight of and engagement with government on solutions-focused reforms is developed, and **IF** CSOs foster opportunities to educate citizens on their rights, mobilize diverse coalitions, and advocate for impactful reforms, **THEN** civil society will more effectively drive inclusive governance and public accountability, safeguarding democratic reforms that protect constitutional rights, foster transparent governance, and uphold citizen's political rights.

III. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Capacity strengthening for civil society is a central aspect of this initiative. It will include institutional development, in areas such as financial management, internal governance and inclusion, human resource development, leadership, advocacy, strategic communication, and select technical areas, including the use of digital/technology as well as data review and analysis. Capacity-building will be cross-cutting across the intermediate results (IRs) and will be based on the CSOs' needs to achieve the expected results in the thematic areas of: transparent political processes, anti-corruption, people-centered justice, and economic empowerment/service delivery for marginalized groups, in particular transgender communities and persons with disabilities. This initiative will be implemented based on principles such as gender and inclusive development, youth inclusion (including young women and girls), 'do no harm,' child protection, and advancing local leadership. USAID will co-create with the apparently successful applicant to ultimately elevate locally-led approaches and strengthen and expand existing space, platforms, and networks of support for social movements.

Goal: Strengthen inclusive and accountable democratic governance through an empowered and active civil society.

The ultimate goal of this initiative is to strengthen and protect inclusive and accountable democratic governance through an empowered and active civil society. A robust social contract between government and the public must link service delivery with the protection of political rights, enabling civic actors to demand accountability.

Objective: A stronger civil society drives effective and inclusive accountability to protect civil rights, uphold justice, and enhance resilience.

This will be achieved by strengthening the capacity, agency, resilience, and impact of civil society organizations and other civic actors as catalysts for change. USAID will focus on

strengthening civil society to promote an inclusive democracy, guaranteeing that “no one is left behind” while fostering non-violent collective action.¹ Additionally, CSOs will be equipped with the tools, knowledge, skills, and resources to support their efforts in monitoring government actions, promoting transparency, and encouraging ethical governance practices.

IR1. Strengthen civil society organizations’ capacity to catalyze civic activism and bolster resiliency.

Emerging research indicates that while public participation is crucial for democracy, strong institutions capable of delivering tangible results for citizens are equally important. This IR focuses on building institutional capacity and advancing active civic engagement through education on civic processes and building networks among civic actors. These networks will promote shared understanding, collaboration, diverse representation, and coordinate advocacy efforts. With a strong emphasis on gender equity, social inclusion, and youth engagement, it aims to empower women, young people, and marginalized groups as key stakeholders in advocacy and decision-making. It also aims to develop resilient social movements, securing the sustainability of these networks beyond the project's conclusion. By investing in institutional capacity building, creating inclusive platforms, and protecting freedoms of expression, assembly, and association, the IR strengthens collaboration between CSOs, youth groups, gender-focused organizations, government entities, and other stakeholders, enhancing resilience and democratic processes.

IR2. Enhance civil society organizations’ viability to demand accountability and advance people-centered reforms.

This IR focuses on empowering civil society organizations to oversee government actions and advance reforms that prioritize people-centered justice (PCJ). This initiative aims to enhance the technical capacity of CSOs to monitor government commitments and guarantee that policies reflect the needs and legal challenges of everyday citizens. Additionally, it will leverage Indonesia’s commitments under international frameworks such as the Justice Action Coalition and Open Government Partnership to encourage greater engagement with the GOI if needed. By applying a [PCJ approach](#), the initiative will foster collaboration among individuals, communities, justice system actors, and government officials to develop more accessible, efficient, and innovative policies and processes. CSOs will drive these priorities, informed by community engagement, and supported by data and evidence.

[END OF ATTACHMENT 1]

¹<https://www.usaid.gov/democracy/document/nonviolent-collective-action-democratic-development-primer>

Attachment 2 - Response Form

USAID/Indonesia seeks to collect feedback from all stakeholders and interested parties on the following questions in relation to the Activity Description (Attachment 1).

USAID values concise, issue-specific comments. Interested respondents are invited to provide no more than five (5) pages of comments/responses to the questions, in Calibri font, 12 pt, using the response form below.

All comments must be submitted electronically via email to indonesia.oaa@usaid.gov, with the subject of **"RFI 72049725RFI00002: Civil Society Strengthening for Accountability (CSS4A)"**, no later than the date/time stated in the cover letter above. Please be reminded that you will only receive an electronic confirmation acknowledging receipt of your response. No feedback or debrief will be provided on comments received. Phone calls or hardcopy responses will not be accepted.

USAID is currently exploring whether it may be appropriate to restrict eligibility to entities that satisfy any of the following criteria:

1. Local Entity, which means an individual, a corporation, a nonprofit organization, or another body of persons that:
 - (1) is legally organized under the laws of;
 - (2) has as its principal place of business or operations in;and
 - (3) is
 - (A) majority owned by individuals, who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of; and
 - (B) managed by a governing body the majority of who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of a country receiving assistance.
- OR
2. Organizations that have received less than \$25 million in USAID funding, at any tier, over the past five years.

USAID requests organizations that meet the above criteria to submit a capabilities statement in response to the request set forth in Attachment 3. The information provided will be used to help identify whether there are adequate local, new or underutilized local entities that possess the capability to provide the technical assistance described in Attachment 1. No final decision regarding limiting eligibility has been made.

[REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK]

RESPONSE FORM
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) NO. 72049725RFI00002

General Information

Name of Organization: _____

Contact Person:

Name: _____

Position Title: _____

Email Address: _____

Type of Organization:

_____ US Organization, Large Business

_____ US Organization, Small Business

_____ Indonesian Organization

_____ Other - Please indicate: _____

Questions

(Please note that you are not obliged to answer all questions. Respondents may provide responses to one, some, or all of the questions below).

1. What is needed to strengthen civil society to foster an ecosystem of accountability?
2. What specific openings or windows of opportunity currently exist to support civil society engagement in Indonesia?
3. What challenges are civil society organizations experiencing in the face of closing civic spaces and how are the threats most often experienced?
4. Are there other factors, recommendations, or considerations USAID should consider that would strengthen this activity?
5. Are there any technical approaches for addressing civil society engagement (digital, legal, advocacy) that can be leveraged through this activity?
6. How can/should the activity effectively engage the Government of Indonesia and/or the private sector on the issues faced by civil society?
7. What strategies should this activity use to ensure gender justice and social inclusion of marginalized communities throughout its project cycle?

[END OF ATTACHMENT 2]

Attachment 3 - Capabilities Statement

CAPABILITIES STATEMENT FORM
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) NO. 72049725RFI00002

[Please note that the Capabilities Statement is limited to a maximum of three (3) pages only]

1. General Information

Name of Organization: _____

Contact Person Name: _____

Position Title: _____

Email Address: _____

1. Type of Organization: (please check as appropriate)

- ☐ Local Entity
- ☐ Local Entity that has received less than \$25 million of USAID funding
- ☐ Locally Established Entity that has received less than \$25 million of USAID funding
- ☐ US Organization that has received less than \$25 million of USAID funding in the past five years
- ☐ US Small or Disadvantaged Business that has received less than \$25 million of USAID funding in the past five years

2. A capability statement demonstrating areas of focus and the ability to undertake governance activities or some of the illustrative activities to achieve the desired results described in Attachment 1, including experience:

- a. Improving citizen engagement and civil society advocacy and oversight
- b. Addressing key local governance challenges around local government accountability and transparency
- c. Working closely with local champions to advance governance reform
- d. Nurturing governance best practices for greater sustainability
- e. Leveraging local resources to address local development challenges

3. Please list your relevant past performance as a prime contractor or major subcontractor; nature of work/scope related to similar programs; and recent-ongoing work performed during the past five years related to the subject matter.

[END OF REQUEST FOR INFORMATION]