

## Annual Program Statement

### I. SUMMARY

1. NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) NUMBER **216-6117-01-2020-053-APS**
2. NOFO ISSUE DATE **2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020**
3. NOFO TITLE **Support to Civil Society for Advancing Transparent, Efficient and Inclusive Governance and Improving the Rule of Law and Gender Equality**
4. MSI CLIENT AND PRIME AGREEMENT NUMBER **USAID/Sri Lanka, 720-383-18-CA-00002**
5. ANTICIPATED TYPE(S) OF AWARD **Fixed Amount Awards, Simplified Grants, In-Kind Grants**
6. MSI PROJECT NAME AND NUMBER **USAID/Sri Lanka's Increased Demand and Engagement for Accountability (IDEA), 216-6117-01.**
- 7A. SUBMISSION DUE DATE & TIME **On a rolling basis 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020 until 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021**
- 7B. QUESTIONS ACCEPTED UP TO (DATE & TIME) **Before 15<sup>th</sup> October for Applicants Conference and on a rolling basis thereafter until 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021**
- 7C. APPLICANTS CONFERENCE DATE AND LOCATION **20<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at IDEA Project Office. Prior registration via email required for attendance**
8. INITIAL PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE **Between December 2020 and March 2022, generally for a period of 9 – 12 months**
9. OPPORTUNITY FOR RENEWAL/CONTINUATION **Yes, Please refer to Section II.2.f.**
10. INTRODUCTION

IDEA is a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) project in Sri Lanka managed by Management Systems International (MSI). The purpose of the project is to ensure that Sri Lanka has a vibrant and diverse civil society that reinforces democratic values, empowers people to participate, and advocates for inclusive and people-centered approaches to development, governance, rule of law and gender equality. To achieve this, IDEA, funded by USAID through a Cooperative Agreement, supports civil society organizations in Sri Lanka to be more effective in their development, advocacy and outreach initiatives and their efforts to improve the enabling environment for their work. IDEA also strengthens the organizational

capacity and sustainability of civil society organizations in the country. IDEA strives to integrate gender equality, youth and diversity perspectives in its support.

This grants program is funded by USAID and is authorized in accordance with the Foreign Assistance Act. Issuance of this Annual Program Statement (APS) does not constitute an award commitment on the part of MSI/IDEA, nor does it commit MSI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. All grants to be awarded are subject to USAID approval. MSI reserves the right to fund all or none of the applications received. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

#### 11. NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) OBJECTIVES

Through this NOFO, IDEA seeks to support civil society organizations' work on (1) promoting efficient, transparent, inclusive and accountable governance; (2) improving rights protection through stronger rule of law; and (3) improving women's rights and gender equality. Please refer to Section III. Program Description for more details.

## II. INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

MSI will review applications on the basis of the criteria and instructions set forth in this document in order to submit for USAID approval. To be considered for award, applicants must respond to all of the requests and requirements of this NOFO to the best of their ability, including those which must be provided through MSI's online procurement system, GRUMP.

### 1. NOFO Contents

Applicants are advised to review this document and the information provided on MSI GRUMP, particularly the following GRUMP sections which are required for successful submission of applications.

- Prerequisites: All applicants interested in submitting proposals in response to this NOFO must review and accept the requirements listed in the "**Prerequisites**" section of this funding opportunity on MSI GRUMP.
- Submission: Please follow the instructions on MSI GRUMP to upload your completed concept paper via the "**Questions**" section of this opportunity on MSI GRUMP.
- Items: After uploading your application files in the "**Questions**" section, please enter the total estimated cost of the proposed intervention in the "**Items**" section.

If you need assistance in accessing MSI's online grants management system - GRUMP, please contact Mr. V.Sasikumar, the Grants Manager at [IDEAGrant@msi-inc.com](mailto:IDEAGrant@msi-inc.com)

**2. Award Information**

a) TYPES OF AWARDS

Subject to USAID approval, MSI anticipates awarding Fixed Amount Award grants (FAAs), Simplified Grants, In-Kind Grants or a hybrid of these grant types to meet the objectives detailed in the program description under Section III.

b) NUMBER AND SIZE OF AWARDS

Grants to be awarded under this NOFO may vary in size from USD 25,000 to a maximum of USD 90,000. A grant of a value lower or higher than this range may be considered based on the discretion of the Grant Evaluation Committee (GEC).

The number of grants to be issued will depend on the size of grants issued, the quality of grant applications received and the funding available.

c) STAGES OF SELECTION

This NOFO will follow a two-step selection process. Applicants must first submit a Concept Paper (Stage 1). Applicants who are selected based on the submitted Concept Paper will be invited to submit a full Grant Application (Stage 2). Details of each stage are provided in Section V that follows.

d) APPLICATION REVIEW AND AWARD

MSI anticipates reviewing Concept Papers roughly every six weeks under this NOFO. The tentative schedule of reviews are as follows.

Round	Open/Close date
Round 1	October 2, 2020 to October 30, 2020
Round 2	November 1, 2020 to December 10, 2020
Round 3	December 11, 2020 to January 20, 2021
Round 4	January 21, 2021 to February 15, 2021
Round 5	February 16, 2021 to March 31, 2021

e) EXPECTED PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE OF AWARD

Grants will generally be issued for a one-year duration, although grants may also be issued for up to fifteen months if the proposed intervention is ascertained to require a longer duration. Renewal grants may also be allowed per clause (f) below.

f) RENEWALS

Awards made under this NOFO may be eligible for renewal periodically, providing support for additional activities or milestones, if so determined by MSI and USAID. The overall period of the grant, including all renewals, shall not exceed the period of performance of the USAID cooperative agreement under which this NOFO and resulting awards shall be made.

MSI shall inform the Awardee at least 60 days before the end of the period of performance of the initial grant if the awardee is eligible to apply for a renewal grant. Funding of any renewal period or expansion of activities is contingent on the following:

- Availability of funds;
- Satisfactory progress towards meeting the award objectives;
- Submittal of required reports; and
- Compliance with the terms and conditions of the award, including the conditions for renewal.

If informed by MSI, the Awardee will submit a detailed workplan and detailed budget for the renewal period to be considered for the renewal opportunity.

g) CONSORTIUMS

Organizations may form consortiums to apply for a grant as long as there is a single primary organization to enter into binding contracts with MSI. MSI reserves the right to request and collect organization documents for all members of a consortium before awarding a grant.

**3. Eligibility Criteria for Award (Please review the “Prerequisites” Section online)**

a. ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

Applicants must be Sri Lankan organizations with a recent history of implementing activities in the focus areas of this NOFO. Applicants can be any organization with a legal personality in Sri Lanka that is not a public sector or a for-profit private sector institution. Eligible local organizations may be registered under a variety of statutes. They must also be responsible, law-abiding organizations with a record of business integrity. Grant funds awarded under this NOFO cannot be used towards any profit by grantees. Applicants can propose to work with smaller, locally based CSOs and community-based organizations to form a consortium, providing they meet the conditions described in section 2.g above.

b. INELIGIBLE ENTITIES

The following are not eligible for grant support: political parties or organizations; organizations that advocate, promote or espouse anti-democratic policies or illegal activities; faith-based

organizations whose programs and services discriminate based on religion, and whose main objective of the grant is of a religious nature; and any entity whose name appears on the:

1. List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Non-Procurement Programs (<https://www.sam.gov>);
2. Specially Designated Nationals List (<http://sdnsearch.ofac.treas.gov/Default.aspx>); and
3. The list established and maintained by the United Nations 1267 Committee with respect to individuals, groups, undertakings and other entities associated with Al-Qaida (<https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/sites/www.un.org.sc.suborg/files/1267.htm>).

c. ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- i. Activities that are eligible for funding include those that support the objectives stated in this NOFO and the goals of the IDEA Project. Any purchases or activities that are not necessary to accomplish the purposes of this NOFO are considered ineligible activities.
- ii. Execution of grant-funded activities must take place in Sri Lanka and all costs must be reasonable, allocable and allowable. Reasonable costs are those costs that are generally recognized as ordinary and necessary and would be incurred by a prudent person in the conduct of normal business. Allocable costs are those costs specifically linked to the execution of the activity, such as project staff salaries, experts' fees, trainings, meetings and seminars, publications, purchase and rental of equipment, office expenses, in-country travel, and other direct costs. Allowable costs are those costs which conform to any limitations in the grant award.
- iii. Specific cost items that are unallowable under a grant include: profit or fee; application preparation costs; payment of debts; political elections; fees for public and elected government officials; fines and penalties; creation of endowments; military equipment; surveillance equipment; commodities and services for support of police and other law enforcement activities; abortion equipment and services; luxury goods and gambling equipment; parties or "representation" expenses; purchases of restricted goods without prior USAID approval, such as agricultural commodities, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, used equipment, and fertilizer; and purchases of goods or services from any firm or individual whose name appears on the lists of Ineligible Entities above.
- iv. Project activities can only start after approval by USAID and signature of the grant agreement between the applicant and the IDEA project. Costs incurred before signing of the grant agreement will NOT be reimbursed, unless previously approved in writing by the MSI Director of Contracts and Grants or their designee.

**4. Evaluation Criteria for Award**

STAGE 1: Concept Papers that are considered eligible, that conform to the requirements stated in this NOFO, and that are received by the Submission Due Date and Time will be evaluated for award on the basis of the Evaluation Criteria set forth below:

1. Relevance of the chosen issue(s) in the current context and the extent to which they are consistent with the IDEA project purpose and approach
2. Technical merit of the Concept Paper based on the following:
  - a) Clear and succinct description of the problem, proposed solution, and anticipated impact at policy and/or practice levels
  - b) Strategic fit with the NOFO program objectives and the organization’s own mandate and experience, including non-partisan approach to citizen engagement on priority themes targeted by the NOFO
  - c) Creativity and feasibility of the proposed technical approach with well-defined tasks and demonstrated organizational capability and reputation to implement the approach
  - d) Potential for innovation and strengthening civil society linkages vertically and/or horizontally on chosen policy/practice area

The pre-qualification decision will be made on a “pass/fail” basis. Best efforts will be made to notify applicants of the decision within 90 days of receiving their Concept Paper.

STAGE 2: Applicants whose Concept Papers are selected will be invited to submit a full technical and cost application.

MSI’s Grant Evaluation Committee will review and evaluate each technical application based on the criteria described below.

<b>Responsiveness of the Technical Approach</b>		<b>Points awarded</b>
Relevance of the activity to IDEA objectives	<p>Demonstrated understanding of this NOFO, IDEA’s goals, and challenges and opportunities as described under Program Description in this document.</p> <p>Implementation Plan: relevance of issue(s), detailed, results-oriented implementation plan with realistic timeline, logical sequence of tasks, and well-defined results contributing to NOFO objectives.</p> <p>Performance Monitoring Plan: sound approach to monitoring and evaluation, with clear indicators and targets.</p> <p>Sustainability: does the project present a realistic approach that will be able to contribute to NOFO objectives after proposed activities are completed.</p>	30

<b>Responsiveness of the Technical Approach</b>		<b>Points awarded</b>
Integration of cross cutting priorities	<p>Networking - Does the proposal contain collaborative approaches and activities at national, regional and/or local levels that support activities for one or more of IDEA's identified sub-issues</p> <p>Gender mainstreaming - Does the proposal demonstrate how gender considerations have been incorporated in the needs analysis, problem definition, design and implementation plan of the proposed intervention.</p>	30
	Innovation - Does the proposal use innovative information communication technology to amplify the project's impact beyond immediate beneficiaries, including how the applicant will use communication, traditional and new media and public campaigns.	
<b>Organizational Experience and Capability</b>		
Experience and capability	Demonstrated experience (with references) in conducting activities relevant to those being proposed.	15
Past performance	Past Performance References: demonstrated prior experience in successfully implementing donor funded activities, including descriptions of previous relevant projects and results achieved, and contact information for their funders.	15
<b>Proposed Personnel and Management Plan</b>		
Team structure	Qualified team of key personnel offering the right mix of skills and expertise to ensure successful project implementation, with well-defined roles and responsibilities and clear reporting relationships.	10

## 5. Application Format and Submission Requirements

Applicants should respond fully to this NOFO and prepare the Concept Paper using the templates attached with this NOFO and also accessible via MSI GRUMP's online "**Buyer Attachments**" section.

### a. CONCEPT Paper – STAGE 1

Applicants shall submit a short concept paper in the template provided as Annex I to this NOFO also accessible under the "**Buyer Attachments**" section along with an overall cost estimate and a list of their Board Members and Key Staff. All sections provided in the template must be completed in full. Any incomplete sections may result in the rejection of application. Applicants

must demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the objectives and goals of the Grants Program and take into account requirements of the Program Description (Section III) and the evaluation criteria (section 4) found in this NOFO.

**b. TECHNICAL APPLICATION – STAGE 2**

If selected in STAGE 1, the Applicant will be invited to submit a full technical and cost application in STAGE 2. MSI will convene a meeting of all applicants who have been recommended to move forward to STAGE 2, provide the application forms for the full technical and price application, and brief them on the process for submission. The technical application in STAGE 2 shall be submitted using the prescribed template in the “**Buyer Attachment**” section in GRUMP and will be the principal document used to assess the technical components of the proposal against the selection criteria.

**c. COST APPLICATION – STAGE 2**

As a part of STAGE 2, the cost application shall be submitted as a Microsoft Excel file using the templates provided. All grants will be awarded in local currency ONLY. Cost applications must include the total cost necessary for the implementation of the intervention the applicant is proposing. Detailed budget notes should describe each proposed budget line item -- including the basis for each price, an explanation of unit rates and the number of units proposed, and a justification for why the line item is needed. The GEC should be able to identify from the cost proposal a direct link to the proposed activities.

The cost application must be presented in Excel, showing calculations and formulas. For successful applicants to establish cost/price reasonableness, they may be asked to provide evidence and supporting documentation for the costs to be incurred and budget items. Evidence that may be requested includes pay slips, employment contracts, lease agreements, and/or the organization's internal policies.

All costs budgeted must be reasonable, necessary to the proposed project, and allowable (no interest expense, fines, penalties, alcohol or entertainment). No profit or fee can be included in the budget nor paid for with grant funds.

The budget may include the following categories of costs:

- I. Personnel: Salaries, Wages and Fringe/Benefits. This covers salaries and fees for personnel involved in project implementation. For regular staff, information must be provided on specific roles/responsibilities on the project, salary, and percentage of time the person will be working on the project. For short-term consultants, information must be provided on specific services to be rendered, daily or hourly rate, and number of days/hours to be worked on the project. Any associated taxes required by local laws must be included in the salary and fee rates. Social benefits/fringe must be shown in a

separate budget line. Biographical data sheets are required for staff included in the budget (using the form found at <https://www.usaid.gov/forms/aid-1420-17>). Applicants may be required to provide supporting documentation justifying salaries or rates (such as pay slips and/or employment contracts).

- II. Travel and Transportation. Applicants should justify any in-country travel budgeted and provide detailed information on the kind of travel, purpose, and associated expenses (e.g., origin and destination of travel, type of transportation).
- III. Supplies/Equipment. Applicants should estimate expenses for supplies and general equipment maintenance during the period of the project (e.g., pens, paper, cartridges). If the applicant requests that office equipment be purchased or leased (e.g., computers, printers, telephones, fax machines, copiers), the applicant must provide detailed explanations of the kind of equipment needed and how it will be used for the purpose of the project (note that the purchase of used equipment is not authorized).
- IV. Other Direct Costs (ODCs). This category includes other costs associated with implementation of the project that are not included in any other cost category specified above, such as training workshops or conferences; office/facility rent; communication and post-office expenses; photocopying, printing, and publishing; translation costs; bank charges; and other expenses essential for project implementation. The budget notes should provide as many details as possible. For example, costs related to training workshops should specify the expected number of participants, duration of the training, location of the training, site costs per participant or per day, etc.

Applicants should feel free to propose alternate and/or additional line items and costs that accurately reflect project activities. Budget line items must show unit type, unit price, and number of units, and must be justified in the budget notes, including the basis of the costs (e.g., quotes were obtained, costs are actual currently incurred costs of the organization) and how the costs further project objectives.

Detailed requirements for allowable costs are provided in the applicable U.S. Government “Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations: A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 303,” which can be found at <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>. All the sums indicated in the budget must include associated taxes.

#### **d. SUBMISSION**

Applicants must submit their Technical Application separately from their Cost Application by uploading each in the “Questions” section of MSI GRUMP.

## **6. Other Application Guidelines and Notices**

The following conditions, guidelines and notices are included to assist applicants in preparing a competent application. All of them should be reflected in the submission.

### **a) Pre-Award Surveys**

If selected in Stage 2, applicants shall be required to go through a Pre-Award Survey and submit sufficient evidence of capacity and responsibility for MSI to make an affirmative determination of applicant's capacity to complete the activities being proposed and make a recommendation to USAID. The information submitted should substantiate that the applicant:

1. Has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the award. Has well established relationships with accredited banking institutions and access to accounting services as well as legal services.
2. Has the ability to comply with the award conditions, including the proposed delivery or performance schedule, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the applicant.
3. Has the ability to manage funds effectively.
4. Has a satisfactory record of performance on the management and implementation of projects similar to the proposed project.
5. Has a history of excellent client relationships and has performed its work with the highest degree of integrity and business ethics.
6. Otherwise has a good reputation and is qualified and eligible to receive a grant under applicable laws and regulations.

### **b) Language**

Applicants shall provide all proposal documentation in English, Sinhala or Tamil. If submitting a concept paper in Sinhala or Tamil, it is recommended that it be submitted in PDF format.

### **c) Source and Nationality (USAID)**

The USAID authorized geographic code for the procurement of goods and services under the IDEA Cooperative Agreement is 937 (the United States, the recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source). A current list of eligible countries and further information on Source and Nationality may be found at [www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/310](http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/310).

Applicants must agree that no services will be rendered through a service provider in any foreign policy restricted country or any designated “prohibited source.”

**d) Modification and Withdrawal of NOFO**

MSI reserves the right to modify by written notice the terms of this NOFO at any time in its sole discretion. MSI also reserves the right to withdraw this NOFO at any time—with or without statement of cause—prior to actual award.

**e) SAM AND DUNS REGISTRATIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR AWARDS ABOVE USD 25,000**

Before receiving an award, the winning applicant must be registered with the U.S. Government at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). Instructions to register can be found at [https://www.sam.gov/SAM/SAM\\_Guide/SAM\\_User\\_Guide.htm](https://www.sam.gov/SAM/SAM_Guide/SAM_User_Guide.htm). Additionally, the successful applicant must register for a Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) “Data Universal Numbering System” number (DUNS#). Instructions to obtain a DUNS number can be found at <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1871/SAM%20Application%20procedure.pdf>. Both registrations are free of charge. An exception to this requirement can only be made by MSI’s Director of Contracts and Grants Management.

**f) USAID (Donor) REQUIRED FLOW-DOWN CLAUSES**

The winning applicant will be required to comply with the following USAID (donor) required rules and regulations:

- I. Any resulting award will be subject to the Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations at USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) 303mab. Copies of the provisions may be found at: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mav> or are available on request.
- II. The following U.S. Government-issued documents shall serve as the primary reference for any questions regarding policies, procedures, and allowable costs, not specifically addressed elsewhere in this Award:
- III. 2 CFR 200, Subpart E, Cost Principles (available at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part200-subpartE.pdf>) or 48 CFR part 31 (available at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title48-vol1/pdf/CFR-2011-title48-vol1-part31.pdf>), as applicable
- IV. 2 CFR 200, Subpart F, Audit Requirements (available at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part200-subpartF.pdf>), as applicable.

Applicants are encouraged to review these required rules and regulations to ensure that they will be able to comply with them if an award is made.

**g) PRE-AWARD CERTIFICATIONS**

Successful applicants before receiving any USAID grants are expected to provide certifications as required by U.S. legislation. A copy of all certifications can be found for review at <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mav.pdf>. Consequently, the applicants are required to familiarize themselves with the following:

- I. Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals.
- II. Certification Regarding Support to Terrorists.
- III. Certification Regarding Trafficking in Persons.
- IV. Certification Regarding Lobbying.

## 7. Questions

Any questions or clarifications must be submitted via the "**Q&A Board**" in MSI GRUMP, by the due date for questions/clarifications listed in the "Summary" menu tab. Responses to questions received shall be shared with all interested parties via the Q&A Board forum.

## 8. Applicant Conference

A Q&A session for prospective applicants will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020, at the IDEA Office from 10 AM Colombo time. If your organization wishes to attend the sessions, please RSVP to Mr. V.Sasikumar, Grants Manager at [IDEAGrant@msi-inc.com](mailto:IDEAGrant@msi-inc.com) no later than 5 PM on 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2020. Please note that attendance at this conference is not mandatory. Meeting notes from the Applicants Conference will become a part of this NOFO and will be posted under the "**Buyer Attachments**" in GRUMP within 48 hours of the conference. Applicants are expected to familiarize themselves with this additional information when preparing their submissions.

## 9. Method of Submission

All documents must be submitted electronically via the MSI GRUMP system. If you need assistance in accessing the online system, or encounter technical problems in uploading to the GRUMP system please contact Mr. V.Sasikumar, Grants Manager at [IDEAGrant@msi-inc.com](mailto:IDEAGrant@msi-inc.com). The following documents are the minimum required documents for the Stage 1 application package. Please use this section as a checklist to ensure that all listed documents are submitted in electronic form to the "**Questions**" section in MSI GRUMP. Additional documents can be provided using "**Supplier Attachments**" in MSI GRUMP.

1. Annex I Concept Paper
2. Annex II List of Board Members and Key Staff of organization

## 10. Fraud Reporting

Should any person demand/request consideration in exchange of this NOFO or promises successful selection in exchange for consideration, please contact [ethics@msi-inc.com](mailto:ethics@msi-inc.com).

### III. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for grants is issued on behalf of the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) IDEA project in Sri Lanka. IDEA is managed by Management Systems International (MSI). The purpose of the project is to ensure that Sri Lanka has a vibrant and diverse civil society that reinforces democratic values, empowers people to participate, and advocates for inclusive and people-centered approaches to development, governance, rule of law and gender equality. To achieve this, IDEA project supports civil society organizations in Sri Lanka to be more effective in their development, advocacy and outreach initiatives and their efforts to improve the enabling environment for their work. IDEA also strengthens the organizational capacity and sustainability of civil society organizations in the country. The program strives to integrate gender equality, youth and diversity perspectives in its support.

Following the recent decisive elections, the new government has set forth its priorities in a national policy framework. The policy framework emphasizes, among other things, an efficient country free from corruption, people-centric economic development and sustainable environmental management. Regarding governance, it aspires to an efficient and transparent public service that is responsive to people at all levels and is committed to achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs). It proposes to achieve national unity and reconciliation through democratic governance. This includes a new constitution that fulfills peoples wishes, electoral reforms and strengthening the independence of the judiciary. It also proposes a national land commission to prepare a land use policy. On social protection, the policy identifies the need to ensure the social and economic rights of differently abled people. The policy aims to protect the rule of law through legal reforms aligned with international standards and improving the administration of justice. In order to empower women economically and socially, it targets the reduction of all types of sexual and gender-based violence. Sri Lankan civil society organizations have been engaged in all these areas in the past and are expected to be involved both collaboratively and critically with the government in the future.

#### a. Thematic Areas

In this context, grants awarded under this NOFO will support civil society organizations' work on (1) promoting efficient, transparent, inclusive and accountable governance; (2) improving rights protection through stronger rule of law; and (3) improving women's rights and gender equality. Within these themes, IDEA will focus on the following sub-themes.

- (1) Promoting efficient, transparent, inclusive and accountable governance
  - Fostering transparency in public affairs by building on initiatives like right to information (RTI) and open government partnership (OGP), including by ensuring that awareness and use of these mechanisms becomes more broad-based and their benefits are felt by many citizens, particularly women and youth.
  - Fighting corruption and promoting transparency and accountability in public finance and public procurement processes at local and national levels and encouraging greater engagement with institutions like the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC).

- Promoting the active participation of citizens in constitutional reform processes initiated and lead by the government, including by building greater awareness of issues and provisions. Ensuring a constitution that strengthens fundamental rights, reflects the aspirations of all people, and strengthens Sri Lanka as a vibrant democracy. Disseminating research and analysis for more informed citizen engagement.
  - Promoting a culture of “clean politics.” Promoting electoral reforms that are inclusive and gender-sensitive and that ensure better democratic practices and outcomes for all citizens.
  - Supporting the realization of people-centered economic development. Promoting inclusive economic and development policy formulation and implementation where the voices of marginalized groups are heard and incorporated into decision-making and worker rights are respected.
  - Safeguarding environment and natural resources and working towards sustainable development through awareness and advocacy.
  - Encouraging the greater participation, visibility, inclusion and safety of women and disadvantaged groups in governance and development initiatives (contributing to SDG#5).
- 2) Improving rights protection through stronger rule of law (contributing to SDG #16)
- Ensuring the promotion and protection of the fundamental rights of citizens, including due process and equality before law. Rights include civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights.
  - Improving the access of affected individuals to independent and effective redress mechanisms, such as the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL), National Police Commission (NPC), Right to Information Commission, and the judiciary.
  - Countering hate speech and misinformation in mainstream and social media.
  - Ensuring that all citizens have civic documentation and that all communities including the LGBTIQ communities are able to exercise their rights without discrimination, including freedom of religious belief and language rights, per the constitution.
  - Addressing the differential impact of rights violations on women and making the protection and promotion of rights gender sensitive through analysis and grounded advocacy.
- 3) Improving women’s rights and gender equality (contributing to SDG #5)
- Addressing sexual and gender-based violence in public and private spheres, through joint structures and forums that bring together government and civil society stakeholders.
  - Ensuring women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership in the political sphere, particularly at local government levels.
  - Advocating for legislation that promotes gender equality, particularly with reference to discriminatory laws and policies.
  - Increasing awareness of safe migration and measures against trafficking in persons.

Applicants can propose initiatives that address any one of the above areas, or more than one area. Grants in these thematic areas may also have components that complement government efforts in COVID-19 recovery. These include interventions in the areas of risk communication, emergency response to local flare ups, recovery support to vulnerable communities, capacity building of first responders, and general coordination support to response and recovery efforts.

Applications should identify anticipated impact in these thematic areas in terms of achieving changes in policies, practices, knowledge, attitudes and/or behaviors.

## **b. Approaches and Activities**

This NOFO is designed to support civil society's efforts to empower people to deepen democratic values of citizen participation and advocate for an inclusive and people-centered approach to development, governance, rule of law and gender equality. To achieve this IDEA will seek to support both national and local CSOs and CSO networks under each thematic issue so that together they can work on their priorities in a strategic manner. Applicants are therefore encouraged to network with like-minded organizations and engage government institutions where applicable to increase their impact and widen their reach.

Applicants are also encouraged to adopt approaches that integrate the following:

- (1) Strategic gender analysis – taking gender considerations in design of activities and M&E systems in the given issue(s).
- (2) STIP – Activities are strongly encouraged to focus on integrating science, technology, innovation and partnerships (STIP) approaches to enhance the effectiveness of CSO advocacy on the sub-themes. These may include activities like hackathons, innovation hubs and improved social media usage for advocacy, and partnerships, such as with the private sector or academia, that can bring in unique skills or perspectives.
- (3) Conflict sensitivity–Activities should be designed and delivered so that they do not cause or exacerbate tensions or grievances. Systems should be in place to analyze and monitor the local context and adjust strategies and activities as necessary to ensure this.
- (4) Inclusiveness - Engagement of marginalized groups including women, persons with disabilities, and minority ethnic and religious communities in order to facilitate inclusion and participation in the chosen geographic area and issue.

Grants will support civil society organizations and their constituents to: Foster citizen activism; collaborate more effectively with each other and with government and private sector stakeholders; produce a sound evidence base for advocacy; make efficient use of new technologies and strategies for outreach and communication to broaden their support base; and engage proactively and productively with the government on its national policy framework, its reform priorities in governance, rule of law and women's rights, and its goal of achieving the SDGs.

Illustrative activities that civil society organizations can be supported to achieve their objectives include, but are not limited to:

- Mobilize diverse citizens, create peoples' forums, provide civic education and catalyze local/national level action around one or more of the issues described above.

- Adopt innovative communication approaches toward shared policy advocacy goals. This includes traditional media, social media and other information and communication technology (ICT) approaches.
- Strengthen individual activists/champions and networks/collectives and foster space for them to work effectively and collaboratively in advocating on chosen issues.
- Organize to access independent commissions and the judiciary on relevant issues.
- Create forums and opportunities that bring together multiple stakeholders including the government and civil society representatives to work through issues.
- Undertake quality data generation, research and analysis to inform policy advocacy and Encourage innovative approaches in civil society activism.
- Promote the inclusion and engagement of diverse and marginalized groups, especially women, youth, persons with disabilities, and minority ethnic and religious communities.

#### **d. Gender and Diversity Considerations**

All applications must demonstrate how gender considerations have been incorporated in the needs analysis, problem definition, design and implementation plan of the proposed intervention. Applicants are expected to ensure that stakeholder consultations, if used to identify proposed interventions, represent a variety of viewpoints, involve a broad cross-section of actors, and reflect gender, age and, where applicable, ethnic/religious balance.

#### **e. Geographic focus**

This NOFO solicits applications for interventions that will predominantly be implemented in areas outside of the Colombo District. A key objective of this NOFO is to support and foster civil society activism and collective efforts on development, governance, rule of law and women's rights in different parts of the Island. As such the geographic location of the applying organization and location of the activities proposed will be taken into consideration when making selections.