



THE AIN SHOHAYOTA PROJECT GRANTS COMPETITION AS-2023-001-GRANTS REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Date of RFA Issue	14 November 2023			
Deadline for	24 December 2023 by 8 a.m. Dhaka time			
Concept Notes	via email: <u>asgrants@democracyinternational.com</u> with subject line: "AS-2023-001-			
	Grants"			
RFA Clarifications	To be submitted by 17 December 2023 at 8 a.m. Dhaka time			
Questions Due	via Email: asgrants@democracyinternational.com with subject line: "AS-2023-001-Grants"			
Pre-bid Meetings	22 November 2023 at 10 a.m. Dhaka time via zoom link:			
	https://democracyinternational.zoom.us/j/87031477497?pwd=6xgEIFkb3pzVMfp			
	<u>b7cbW6mBSwPOjjS</u>			
	Meeting ID: 870 3147 7497			
	Password: 740960			
	27 November 2023 at 3 p.m. Dhaka time via zoom link:			
	https://democracyinternational.zoom.us/j/85751431527?pwd=wgmDk4JtKfvg3Q6			
	euMvHStYmdbNBTK			
	Meeting ID: 857 5143 1527			
	Password: 785736			
	11 December 2023 at 1 p.m. Dhaka time via zoom link:			
	https://democracyinternational.zoom.us/j/85751431527?pwd=wgmDk4JtKfvg3Q6euMvHS			
	<u>tYmdbNBT</u>			
	Meeting ID: 899 0251 1134			
	Password: 606581			
	Notes can be requested by emailing <u>asgrants@democracyinternational.com</u> with			
	subject line: "AS-2023-001-Grants"			
Grant Value and	DI expects to fund grants between 150,000 – 215,000 USD and up to two years,			
Duration	depending on scope and location.			
Grant Purpose	To promote access to justice in selected districts in Bangladesh			
Grant Type	Fixed Amount Award (FAA) in English language			

Target Areas	Applications can only be submitted for one of eight following pre-determined				
	geographic areas:				
	A. Dhaka, Tangail, Gazipur, Brahmanbaria				
	B. Faridpur, Gopalganj, Madaripur, Shariatpur				
	C. Chattogram, Rangamati, Cox's Bazar, Feni				
	D. Jashore, Jhenaidah, Magura, Khulna				
	E. Barishal, Bhola, Jhalakathi, Patuakhali				
	F. Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Naogaon, Natore				
	G. Rangpur, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Dinajpur				
	H. Sylhet, Sunamganj, Habiganj, Netrokona				
Attachment	Concept Note Template				

1. BACKGROUND

Bangladesh has made great strides to improve access to justice over the past decade, including establishing government legal aid offices in every district of the country and at the Supreme Court. Still, a significant portion of the population, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized, are unaware of their rights or how to protect them. Further, even when people are aware of their rights and how to realize them, they tend to view the formal justice system as too time-consuming and expensive. The formal justice system is also strained by the current number of cases, raising concerns about whether an influx of new cases can be disposed of promptly. While many people may turn to more familiar local dispute resolution mechanisms to resolve their problems, there is little training or accountability of justice sector actors at the local level to ensure that issues are resolved in accordance with the laws of Bangladesh or in line with international human rights standards. As a result, many people are unable or unwilling to resolve their disputes, which inhibits peaceful, economic development and undermines well-intentioned national legal reform processes that are both underway and anticipated.

To address these challenges, the Ain Shohayota Project (the "Project"), a five-year Project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Democracy International (DI), aims to promote people-centered justice through increased public participation, inclusivity, and data-driven processes to improve performance of the justice system from the grassroots to high court levels. Working across 32 districts in Bangladesh, the Project is committed to ensuring that all citizens are able to resolve their disputes in a fair and timely manner regardless of their ability to pay by:

1. Raising awareness of rights and legal aid services – particularly among traditionally vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women, children, ethnic and religious minorities, people with disabilities, and members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex community (LGBTQI)-- so they can demand justice services and seek recourse when those services are not provided;

- 2. Promoting pro-bono legal services at the local and district levels; and
- 3. Building and Utilizing an Evidence-Base to Strengthen Justice Services.

DI is seeking qualified local organizations to partner with the Project in furtherance of these objectives, particularly through ensuring people are aware of their rights and know how to realize them; that people can access justice services at the local level through strengthened and expanded justice; and that the formal justice system can meet the needs of justice seekers – particularly by building the capacity of District Legal Aid Committees (DLAC) and justice sector actors to provide legal aid services for traditionally vulnerable and marginalized groups.

2. GRANT OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

As outlined above, the Project is seeking applications for promoting access to justice in selected districts in Bangladesh from qualified local Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGO-AB). The grants will be awarded and implemented in accordance with USAID and US Government regulations governing grants and DI's internal grant management policies.

The Project is looking to award subgrants to qualified organizations in eight pre-determined areas; a total of eight subgrants will be awarded:

Group	Districts		
Α	Dhaka, Tangail, Gazipur, Brahmanbaria		
В	Faridpur, Gopalganj, Madaripur, Shariatpur		
С	Chattogram, Rangamati, Cox's Bazar, Feni		
D	Jashore, Jhenaidah, Magura, Khulna		
E	Barishal, Bhola, Jhalakathi, Patuakhali		
F	Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Naogaon, Natore		
G	Rangpur, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Dinajpur		
Н	Sylhet, Sunamganj, Habiganj, Netrokona		

The subgrants will help the Project to advance its goals through the following three main objectives:

- 1. Ensure people are aware of their rights and know how to realize them;
- 2. Strengthen and expand justice pathways available at the local level; and
- 3. Build the capacity of justice sector actors to provide legal aid services, especially for traditionally vulnerable and marginalized groups.

All subgrant applications should address all three of the objectives, though equal resources do not need to be devoted to each objective. Specific guidance on each of the objectives is listed below. Applicants are encouraged to develop innovative ideas that address the specific objectives.

Objective 1: Ensure people are aware of their rights and know how to realize them.

In their proposal, the Applicant should specify:

- a. **On what rights they plan to raise awareness.** Topics for awareness raising on rights should include, but are not limited to, age of consent of marriage, inheritance, maintenance, land, and to be free from Gender Based Violence (GBV) and all forms of violence and modern-day slavery.
- b. The means for realizing rights they plan to use. This should include, but is not limited to, how to seek government legal aid services. The plan should go beyond simple awareness raising, but also to identify how to address possible challenges such as if a service provider is not available or unable to provide the requested service. Other means could include, but are not limited to, seeking services from the Local-level Legal Aid Committee, Village Court, or National Human Rights Commission.
- c. The awareness raising techniques they plan to use. The Applicant is encouraged to propose unique mechanisms for awareness raising on rights and how to realize them. Suggested activities include, but are not limited to, arranging public hearings or e-dialogues whereby community members are able to ask questions directly to District Legal Aid Officers, courtyard meetings, broadcasting recorded messages in communities ("mikings"), Public Service Announcement (PSA) broadcasts, community radio, and use of social media. The Applicant should also include an idea for how to support the celebration of National Legal Aid Day (April 28) in their working areas.
- d. The beneficiaries they plan to reach and how they will be identified. Examples could include, but are not limited to, reaching victims of GBV by holding legal aid awareness sessions at shelter homes or reaching the LGBTQI+ community by partnering with activists or supporters at the local level.

- e. Means to ensure the activities continue after the completion of the grant (sustainability measures). Activities could include, but are not limited to, holding Training of Trainer (ToT) events on legal aid awareness sessions with volunteer groups or Community Based Organizations (CBO), preparing and distributing materials that do not require sustained investment, and forming coalitions of legal aid seekers who can speak about their experiences.
- f. Expected outcomes. Examples of expected outcomes include, but are not limited to,
 - Survivors of domestic violence are aware of their legal rights and know how to pursue services from the District Legal Aid Office.
 - CBOs that focus on disability rights hold awareness sessions on access to legal aid services for people with disabilities.

Objective 2: Strengthen and expand justice pathways available at the local level.

In their proposal, the Applicant should specify:

- a. What justice pathways they plan to strengthen or expand. At a minimum, the Applicant should propose to strengthen Legal Aid Committees at the Union and Upazila levels. Applicants are welcome to propose other pathways, such as training volunteers or community leaders on basic advice or mediation services. Applicants exploring other pathways may consider conducting a pilot in a few areas rather than implementation across the full proposed working areas.
- b. The Activities they will use to strengthen of expand these pathways. Activities to strengthen these committees should include, but are not limited to, capacity building trainings on roles and responsibilities, sensitization training on how to work effectively with vulnerable and marginalized communities, and regular coordination meetings between the District, Upazila, and Union Legal Aid Committees.
- c. Means to ensure the justice pathways continue after the life of the grant (sustainability measures). Activities could include, but are not limited to, holding ToTs, developing materials on roles and responsibilities that do not require regular trainings, and encouraging community people to demand these services of their local leaders.
- d. Expected outcomes. Examples of expected outcomes include, but are not limited to,
 - Upazila and Union Legal Aid Committees hold bi-monthly meetings, engage in outreach activities, and correspond with the DLAC on a regular basis.
 - Community members request that female leaders trained in mediation resolve their petty disputes.

Objective 3: Build the capacity of justice sector actors to provide legal aid services, especially for traditionally vulnerable and marginalized groups.

In their proposal, the Applicant should specify:

a. Activities planned to build the capacity of justice sector actors. The Applicant is encouraged to identify ways to build the capacity of justice sector actors to provide legal aid services, with a focus on members of the DLAC and District Legal Aid Officers (DLAO). Activities could include, but are not limited to, facilitating regular meetings between i) the DLAC and Judges, Court Staff, and/or Panel Lawyers and/or ii) DLAOs and legal aid clients and/or CSOs.

- b. How these activities will benefit vulnerable and marginalized groups. This could include, but is not limited to, ensuring that DLAOs are aware of the problems faced by legal aid clients, promoting sensitization to court clerks on challenges legal aid seekers face, and ensuring that panel lawyers know how to work effectively with vulnerable and marginalized groups.
- c. Ways to ensure that these activities will continue to benefit vulnerable and marginalized groups after the completion of the grant (sustainability measures). This could include, but is not limited to, building an evidence-base of the impact of the interventions, engaging DLACs on the importance of regular coordination, and producing training materials that can be used without in-person trainings.
- e. Expected outcomes. Examples of expected outcomes include, but are not limited to,
 - Panel Lawyers are able to utilize a trauma-informed approach when working with victims of violent crime.
 - Bench clerks ensure that legal aid cases are called on the days they are listed for hearing.
 - DLAOs are able to resolve challenges faced by legal aid clients, such as warrants not being issued or their assigned lawyer not meeting with them on a regular basis.

Prior to finalizing the program description, DI will engage successful applicants in co-creation workshops to strengthen the strategic fit and refine the technical approach.

3. REPORTING AND DELIVERABLES

Following the identification of successful applications, grantees will work in close coordination and in full partnership with DI throughout the co-design and grant implementation process. The grantee shall keep DI appraised of progress and challenges and any suggested adjustments to the work plan. Additionally, the grantee shall submit the following deliverables to DI throughout the duration of the grant:

- Approved proposal, budget, activity workplan with timeline and final budget.
- Monthly progress reports, including i) a table of targeted events vs. achieved progress with an explanation of deviation and ii) 1-2 paragraph summary highlighting a representative event with at least three photographs. The summaries should include, date of the event, location, number of beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender), purpose, and any significant outcomes.
- Summaries, agendas, and participant attendance lists for every event conducted using grant funds.
- Clippings of media coverage, and sample communications products (if any) for activities conducted using grant fundings.
- Final report summarizing grantee's activities, any notable successes and challenges faced during implementation, any recommendations for possible follow-on grants of a similar nature or intent.
- Develop and submit other narrative updates/reports as requested.

This is an illustrative list, which may be further revised or expanded during the co-design session.

NOTE: As part of the negotiations with the successful applicant(s), DI and the grantee will define milestones and deliverables.

4. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Local CSOs or NGOs with a current and valid registration with the NGO-AB are welcome to apply. Additional legal registration with either the Department of Social Services or under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 is preferred. A copy of registration will be required with concept note submission, as outlined below. International NGOs are not eligible for funding under this Request for Applications, even if they have local offices in Bangladesh.

Group	Districts		
А	Dhaka, Tangail, Gazipur, Brahmanbaria		
В	Faridpur, Gopalganj, Madaripur, Shariatpur		
С	Chattogram, Rangamati, Cox's Bazar, Feni		
D	Jashore, Jhenaidah, Magura, Khulna		
E	Barishal, Bhola, Jhalakathi, Patuakhali		
F	Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Naogaon, Natore		
G	Rangpur, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Dinajpur		
Н	Sylhet, Sunamganj, Habiganj, Netrokona		

This Request for Application is restricted to the following geographic areas.

Applications can only be submitted for one of eight pre-determined geographic areas (labeled A-H). Applications must specify the geographic area for which they are applying. No additions, substitutions, or deletions to the pre-determined grouping will be accepted. It is not possible to amend the districts listed in each group. Applicants may apply for more than one geographic area but must submit a separate proposal for each area.

Applicants are not expected to cover all upazilas and unions in each district, but the selection process includes scope of geographic coverage.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

All application information will be reviewed by an internal review panel comprised of the Project's technical implementation staff. Applications will be evaluated against the merit review criteria in the table below.

	Evaluation Criteria			
Strategy and technical	The proposed activities align with the objectives of this RFA	15		
approach (40 points)	The proposed activities are likely to produce the desired results	10		
	Scope of geographic coverage (depth of number of unions and upazilas covered)	5		
	The targeted beneficiaries are clearly defined and there is a plan for how they will be reached.	10		
Sustainability and inclusion (20	The proposed activities promote inclusivity and diversity	10		
points)	There is a feasible and innovative plan to promote the continuation of the activities after the end of the grant period (i.e sustainability and mitigating risks)	10		

Organizational	Demonstrated ability that they have the organizational	30
capacity and	capacity to carry out these types of activities, such as	
expertise (40	past experience and/or through key experts that will be	
points)	involved in the implementation of the grant.	
	The approach builds on previous successes and lessons	10
	learned	

Applicants with the highest-scoring Concept Note for each geographical area will be invited to participate in a co-design process with the Project team. Following the co-design session, they will be invited to prepare a final proposal and budget. During the co-design meeting, DI will share all aspects of the budget and budget notes that will be required at the full application stage.

The final proposal, budget and budget notes will be scored on an "acceptable/unacceptable" scale. An acceptable proposal will meet the following criteria:

- All costs are allowable, allocable and reasonable.
- Final proposal incorporates feedback and edits shared in the co-design session.
- The activities outline in the final proposal work towards the program objectives as outlined in the RFA and are considered feasible, effective and comprehensive.
- The scope, target area and period of performance are reasonable.

Final proposals that do not meet these criteria will be considered unacceptable. In the event that a final proposal and budget is deemed unacceptable by the Project, the next highest rated Concept Note focused in the same target area will be invited to participate in the co-design process. All Grants are subject to approval by DI and USAID.

6. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

The Concept Note must be submitted in English language using Times New Roman Font Size 12 according to the format provided in Annex A.

The submission is due by email by Eight o'clock in the morning on 24 December 2023 with "AS-2023-001-Grants" as the subject line at: <u>asgrants@democracyinternational.com</u>

Optional pre-bid meetings will be held according to the below schedule. Notes from the pre-bid meeting can be requested via <u>asgrants@democracyinternational.com</u> with "AS-2023-001-Grants" as the subject line.

27 November 2023 at 3 p.m. Dhaka time via zoom link: https://democracyinternational.zoom.us/j/85751431527?pwd=wgmDk4JtKfvg3Q6euMvHStYmdbNBTK
Meeting ID: 857 5143 1527
Password: 785736
11 December 2023 at 1 p.m. Dhaka time via zoom link: https://democracyinternational.zoom.us/j/85751431527?pwd=wgmDk4JtKfvg3Q6euMvHStYmdbNBTK
Meeting ID: 899 0251 1134
Password: 606581 Questions can be submitted by email to <u>ASgrants@democracyinternational.com</u> by 8 am on 17 December 2023. A written response will be provided by 5 pm on 20 December 2023.

The Concept Note template can be found in Annex A of this RFA. Full applications and associated scoring criteria will only be provided to select applicants based on the scoring of the submitted Concept Note. Full applications will include budget and budget notes. A detailed budget and budget note template will be provided to applicants.

7. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE AND FUNDING

The Applicant should propose activities to be implemented beginning in early 2024 for a duration of two years (with the possibility of extension). The funding range per grant is expected to be 150,000 – 215,000 USD. All proposed costs must be reasonable and justified.

8. ADMINISTRATION OF THE AWARD

Awards to U.S. organizations will be administered in accordance with 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 700, USAID Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations. For non-U.S. organizations, USAID Standard Provisions for non-U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations would apply.

Applicants may obtain copies of the referenced material at the following websites:

o 2CFR200:

http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl

• Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental Recipients:

http://usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303mab.pdf

Covered Telecommunications:

 In General, Grantees must not utilize award funds, including directly, indirectly, cost-share or grantee contribution, or with program income, to purchase telecommunications equipment prohibited under Section 889(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) (Pub. L. 115-232). The legislation specifically covers certain telecommunications equipment and services produced or provided by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation, Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, or Dahua Technology Company (or any of their subsidiary or affiliate).

ANNEX A. CONCEPT NOTE GUIDELINE

The Concept Note must be written in English using Times New Roman font size 12. The budget summary should be submitted using the template outlined below as an excel workbook.

The Concept Note consists of the following four parts:

- 1. Cover Page
- 2. Technical Description
- 3. Summary Budget
- 4. Attachment

CONCEPT NOTE PART 1: COVER PAGE

a. Full Legal Name (As per registration certificate, in Bangla) and in English					
b. Address					
c. Email Addresses (s)					
d. Telephone Number(s	s)	e. Web Address			
f. Authorized Signatory (Person who can legally	γ (Title, email address, pho bind the organization)	ne number)			
Name:					
Title:					
Email address:					
Phone number:					
of the organization. Attach a	of the organization. Attach a copy of the organization's registration or legal incorporation documents to the application. Also note whether the organization holds any additional registrations, such as with the Department of				
 Professional References: Provide three (3) references: Name, contact number, email address and the nature of the relationship. 					
Reference 1 Reference 2 Reference 3					
Name					
Contact Number					
Email					
Nature of Relationship					

i. Organizational Background

Introduce us to your organization. Include your date of establishment, vision, mission, goals, and any other information that will help us understand your organization (limit 1 page).

j. Structure and Personnel

Provide a description of the structure of the organization. List board members and key staff (for example, Executive Director, Head of Finance, Head of Programming), and their experience with similar activities. If no similar experience, please write "none".

Time with the Organization	Name of Key Staff or Board Member	Role/Function	Experience with similar activities

CONCEPT NOTE PART 2: TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

a. Grant Activity Title

b. Location:

Please tick in which location you plan to apply (Grouping A - H). Note that the district grouping cannot be modified. An organization must only select one grouping per application. Organizations wanting to apply for more than one grouping should submit one application for each grouping.

Grouping	Districts	Please tick ONE below	
А	Dhaka, Tangail, Gazipur, Brahmanbaria	our, Brahmanbaria	
В	Faridpur, Gopalganj, Madaripur, Shariatpur		
С	Chattogram, Rangamati, Cox's Bazar, Feni		
D	Jashore, Jhenaidah, Magura, Khulna		
E	Barishal, Bhola, Jhalakathi, Patuakhali		
F	Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Naogaon, Natore		
G	Rangpur, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Dinajpur		
Н	Sylhet, Sunamganj, Habiganj, Netrokona		

c. Number of Unions and Upazilas

Please list the number of unions and upazilas you intend to cover in each of the four districts selected above.

d. **Period of Performance** Indicate the duration of the proposed grant

e. Program Overview

Describe how the proposal will impact the community and beneficiaries. Clearly specify grant goals, objectives, approach to promote inclusivity, and expected outputs/results. (Limit 1 page)

f. Proposed Activities under Objective 1: "People are aware of their rights and understand how to realize them".

Include i) on what rights you plan to focus, ii) on what means to realize rights you plan to focus, iii) the activities you propose to realize those rights, iv) the beneficiaries you plan to reach and how they will be identified, v) sustainability measures, and vi) expected outcomes. (limit 1 page)

g. Proposed Activities under Objective 2: "Justice pathways available at the local level are strengthened and expanded".

Include i) the pathways that you will strengthen and/or expand, ii) activities you will use to strengthen and/or expand those justice pathways, iii) sustainability measures, and iv) expected outcomes. (limit 1 page)

h.	Activities under Objective 3: "The capacity of justice sector actors to provide legal aid services is
	strengthened, especially for traditionally vulnerable and marginalized groups".
Inc	lude i) planned activities, ii) how these activities will benefit vulnerable and marginalized groups, iii) sustainability
me	asures, and iv) expected outcomes. (limit ½ page)

i. **Potential Risks** What risks do you foresee, and how will you minimize them? (limit ½ page)

j.	Interest			
Wh	y is your organizat	ion interested in thi	s funding opportunity?	(limit ½ page)

k. Past Performance

Why do you think that your organization is qualified to undertake this grant? Include past performance to the greatest extent possible. (limit ½ page)

CONCEPT NOTE PART 3: SUMMARY BUDGET

The summary budget below must be completed in USD and BDT. Applicants may use the table below or copy the table into excel and submit as an attachment. For the summary budget, please provide an estimated total for each budget category and a total estimated cost for the award. All costs must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Financial proposals will be judged based on the best value determination for price. A detailed budget will be finalized with the Project if the proposal is selected for the co-design phase.

	Summary Budget				
Serial	Category	Cost (BDT)	Cost (USD) Use 109.96 as exchange rate	Brief explanation of costs	
1	Personnel / Labor				
2	Equipment & Supplies				
3	Travel and Transportation				
4	Other Direct Costs – Activity costs, including venue rental, refreshments, materials, etc				
5	Other Direct Costs – Other (i.e. rent, utilities, and administrative costs)				
6	TOTAL (lines 1-5)				

CONCEPT NOTE PART 4: ATTACHMENTS

The following attachment must be included:

• Attachment 1: Copy of current and valid registration with NGO-AB