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## Advancing Digital Democracy Activity

**Due:** 2024-11-18T21:00:00.000Z | **Total Funding:** N/A

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### Background

Over the past 30 years, digital technologies have driven economic growth but have also led to digital repression and democratic decline, with governments misusing technology to suppress human rights. The expanded role of tech companies has resulted in technology-facilitated gender-based violence and erosion of human rights. "Digital democracy" involves aligning technologies with democratic values, but governments lack skills to govern safely. The private sector struggles to embed rights-respecting practices due to lack of incentives and mandates. Civil society and consumer advocacy organizations face resource challenges in holding entities accountable. Global governance lacks a unified structure, resulting in inconsistent regulatory frameworks. The ADD Program aims to counter digital repression by supporting digital democracies, focusing on legal frameworks, private sector engagement, and civic engagement. Challenges include strengthening legal frameworks, building capacity, and supporting human rights defenders. Activities will involve multi-stakeholder coalitions and local solutions to safeguard democratic values and human rights.

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### Outcomes

Address global digital repression by strengthening digital democracy and aligning legal frameworks with human rights. Enhance government capacity to govern technology safely and engage private sector actors for rights-respecting practices. Support local tech companies in adopting democratic values, and establish multi-stakeholder coalitions for digital dialogue. Increase civic engagement and develop curricula for digital literacy. Ensure digital transformation incorporates human rights safeguards and promote locally-driven risk guidelines. Leverage partnerships for rights-respecting innovation and integrate gender and social inclusion considerations. Reduce digital divides, support human rights defenders in conflict contexts, and raise awareness of digital human rights risks. Emphasize cybersecurity resilience and incorporate environmental sustainability in digital growth efforts.

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### Activities and End Customers

The solicitation targets governments, private sector entities, civil society organizations, technologists, academia, and multilateral institutions to strengthen democratic values and human rights in digital ecosystems in USAID partner countries. It aims to spur rights-respecting digital innovation, assist governments in aligning legal frameworks with human rights, and engage the private sector to develop human rights-centered technologies. Civil society will be empowered for accountability, while technologists and academia will focus on ethical technology and workforce development. Multilateral institutions will address global digital governance. The ADD Program supports multi-stakeholder coalitions, stakeholder mapping, and political economy assessments. The ADD Academy offers training to enhance digital governance skills. Collaboration with local stakeholders ensures fit-for-purpose interventions, considering gender equality and ethical standards. Sub-objectives include fostering digital ecosystems, increasing resources for ethical digital services, and enhancing capacity for managing digital risks, with outcomes of strengthened institutions, increased ethical technology investments, and sustainable coalitions.

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## Target Location

Peru, South Africa, Armenia

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## Partnerships and Coordination

The solicitation involves governments, private sector, professional associations, academia, civil society, consumer organizations, and regional and multilateral organizations to prioritize digital governance, societies, and economies. Coordination includes developing ADD research capabilities, monitoring ADD Program performance, supporting Digital Ecosystem Country Assessments, facilitating workshops, and managing the ADD Academy. In ADD Focus Countries (Peru, South Africa, and Armenia), activities include stakeholder consultation, providing technical assistance for legal environments, guidance for human rights-aligned products, supporting multistakeholder platforms, and offering networking opportunities. Emphasizing local knowledge, power dynamics, and local ownership ensures sustainable partnerships. The stakeholders' impact includes building capacity for digital transformation, developing rights-respecting ecosystems, supporting human rights defenders, and fostering inclusive policymaking.

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## Eligibility

Offerors must submit a complete proposal with Standard Form 33, including blocks 12-18 and an original signature. They must be actively registered in SAM with a UEI number and not be debarred or ineligible for federal contracts. Offerors must have no unpaid federal taxes or felony convictions within the past 24 months and submit lobbying disclosures if applicable. Representations and certifications via SAM, including FAR 52.204-8, are required. Evidence of responsibility, subcontracting plans, past performance information, and a cost proposal with detailed budgets must be provided. Offerors must include a narrative on small business use, biographical data for key personnel, and letters of commitment. They must have a satisfactory record of past performance and complete FAR 52.204-24. Letters of commitment for subcontractors, joint venture agreements if applicable, and certificates of cost accounting practice changes must be submitted.

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## Timeline and Delivery

The pricing schedule includes Direct Costs, Indirect Costs, Fixed Fee, and Total Cost-Plus-Fixed-Fee, with costs marked TBD. Proposal timeline: RFP on October 9, 2024, and Phase One due November 18, 2024. The performance period is one year, starting TBD, with four option years. Services support the Advancing Digital Democracy initiative, focusing on digital democracies, human rights, and democratic values. Locally-led approaches and partnerships with U.S. Small Businesses are encouraged, emphasizing gender equality. Evaluation is in two phases: Phase One on Programmatic Approach and Institutional Capacity, Phase Two on Oral Presentation, Management Approach, and Past Performance. The contract type is Cost-Plus-Fixed-Fee Term, emphasizing cost realism. Proposals must include a summary budget, subcontractor commitments, and possibly a Subcontracting Plan. Electronic submission is required, with a technical proposal page limit. The Government may award contracts without discussions.

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## Submission Requirements

Proposals must be emailed to [drg-add@usaid.gov](mailto:drg-add@usaid.gov) by the deadlines. Phase One requires a 15-page proposal with a Cover Page, Programmatic Approach, Institutional Capacity, and two Illustrative Program Designs, using 12-point Times New Roman on A4 paper. Phase Two includes a Technical Proposal—comprising an Oral Technical Presentation, Management and Staffing Plan, and Contractor Performance Information—and a Cost Proposal with SF-33, costs, indirect costs, responsibility evidence, subcontractor commitments, and lobbying disclosure. Submit Biographical Data Sheets for key personnel. Participation in Phase One is necessary for Phase Two submission. Only an Advisory Notification will be provided after Phase One. Cost proposals are only required in Phase Two, and awards may occur without discussions. All submissions must be accessible to the Government.

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## Evaluation Criterion

Phase One evaluates Illustrative Designs and Programmatic Approach and Institutional Capacity, focusing on feasibility, innovation, long-term results, and understanding USAID's vision. Advisory notifications follow, indicating if Offerors progress to Phase Two or are unlikely to be competitive. Phase Two assesses Oral Presentation and Management Approach, focusing on innovation, cost-effectiveness, partnerships, staffing, management, and subgrants. Past Performance is crucial, more important than cost but less than other non-cost factors, evaluated on quality, cost control, schedule, and compliance. Offerors with no performance history receive a "neutral" rating. The Cost Proposal is evaluated for realism, reasonableness, understanding of work, and ability to perform, with cost realism analysis considered alongside Phases One and Two.

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## Template Sections

Cover Page - Programmatic Approach and Institutional Capacity - Illustrative Program Designs - Oral Technical Presentation - Management and Staffing Plan - Contractor Performance Information - Proposed Costs

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