**INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

UN Women is in the process of mapping and identifying civil society organizations as potential Responsible Parties to provide protection services for women human right defenders.

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| **Introduction**  Background/context for required services/results.  Afghanistan is one of the world’s most complex crises where the humanitarian crisis is compounded by the economic crisis and an unprecedented women’s rights crisis is unfolding leading to a mental health crisis, affecting Afghan people especially women and girls. Notably, as Afghan people grapple with the devastating effects of conflict, increasing poverty, economic decline and natural disasters, Afghan women and girls continue to be disproportionately and devastatingly affected.    Evidence shows that women’s civil society organizations are a key driver of gender equality gains globally. After August 2021, space for women’s civil society has shrunk dramatically, especially after 24 December 2022 when de facto authorities banned Afghan women from working in international and national non-governmental organizations. As civic space continues to shrink, many organizations providing protection support services and safe spaces to women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and leaders have shut their doors due to associated risks and lack of funding. This absence of protection services, and safe houses has increased the challenges faced by women leaders and women human rights defenders in Afghanistan. They reside under an extremely challenging climate marked by increasing gender-specific restrictions, as well as shrinking civic space and repercussions – including threats, intimidation, and detention – that prevents them from advocating for and working towards improving women’s rights and well-being.  To support and scale protection services provided by civil society organizations for women and girls who act to promote or protect human rights and people of all genders and/or work to advance rights related to gender equality – collectively known as “women human rights defenders” (WHRDs), UN Women is seeking to map women-led and/or gender focused organizations working in the space. This mapping will be used to identify ways to expand support to organizations providing protection services for WHRDs.  General overview of services required/results.  The aim of the Expression of Interest is to **map the current landscape and** **identify potential women-led and/or gender-focused organizations** at the provincial or national level that have the capacity to directly provide protection services and/or safe houses for women human rights defenders.  The Expression of Interest (EOI) is accepting profiles of **women-led and/or gender-focused organizations\*** at the provincial or national-level that have the capacity to provide the following types of services (but not necessarily limited to):   1. Identifying WHRDs at-risk via assessing and documenting their risk/threat factors. 2. Providing safe houses to WHRDs at-risk and their dependents. 3. Providing a range of support services for WHRDs at-risk, including but not limited to, legal, health, psycho-social support, and counselling. 4. Providing safety (rapid response and digital security) training to help mitigate risks facing at-risk WHRDs. |
| **Description of required services/results**  The applicants are expected to cover at least one of the following areas of programming (but not limited to this):   * Provide immediate support and protection to WHRDs. * Provide emergency internal relocation funds and/or emergency safety net funds to support WHRDs. * Provide psychosocial, handling distress, and digital security training to support continuation of advocacy for human rights in Afghanistan. * Provide Afghan WHRDs and their dependents in Afghanistan with financial and diplomatic support through referral mechanisms for internal relocation. * Support in reaching out to the community of WHRDs to collect their views, needs and perspectives on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan to develop strategies/learnings to navigate through existing and emerging challenges and thereby facilitate advancement of women’s rights in Afghanistan. * Build the capacity of other women-led and/or gender focused CSOs that are supporting WHRDs.   Applications should include the following information:   * Name of organization * Women-led\* (Y/N) * Breakdown of staff, disaggregated by role and sex * Areas of operation * Year of establishment * Previous experience/current activities (including type of protection services provided for WHRDs including areas of programming described above) * Proposed activities for 1 year * Training/capacity needs (if any) * How the CSO is navigating restrictions impacting WHRDs. * Partnerships with other organizations – national or international – supporting WHRDs and/or similar work.   **UN Women will prioritize Expressions of Interest:**   * Submitted by civil society organizations **legally established and operating** in Afghanistan. * Submitted by **women-led and/or gender focused organizations.** * **Directly benefitting vulnerable Afghan women who act to promote or protect human rights and people of all genders or work to advance rights related to gender equality.** * Submitted by Afghan organizations with proven expertise and experience in advancing women’s rights and promoting gender equality in Afghanistan.   \*Women-led organizations are those that are able to demonstrate that they are governed and led by women, where a minimum of 51 per cent of leadership positions in various decision-making levels, including in management, senior management and board levels are held by women.  \*Gender-focused organizations are those whose official mission and vision reflects commitment to pursuing gender equality, women’s rights and the empowerment of women and girls and have demonstrated experience of working on women’s rights/gender equality in the past. These organizations should also be able to demonstrate that women have occupied leadership positions (currently or in the past) which may have changed due to current restrictions imposed by the DFA. |
| **Timeframe:**  Start date and end date for completion of required services/results  January 2024 –June 2025 |
| **Competencies:**  Technical/functional competencies required   * Demonstrated experience supporting WHRDs in Afghanistan. * Ability to manage and mitigate risks related to sensitive areas of programming. * Ability to undertake regular monitoring, including collection of baseline and end line data to measure impact. * Organizational capacity to deliver expected results in current context (governance and management competencies, and financial and administrative competency). * Relevance of the mandate and the role of the organization to implement expected results and to contribute to the sustainability of intended results. * Partners must demonstrate commitment to ethical and safe programming and clearly dedicated to advancing women’s rights and gender equality in Afghanistan.   1. Other competencies, which while not required, can be an asset for the performance of services.   N/A |

Those interested in participating in the process should forward their expression of interest to **UN Women - Afghanistan Country Office, UNOCA Compound, Jalalabad Road, Kabul** by **28 October 2023** enclosing the information listed below. Applications can also be sent to the following email ID: [anum.aftab@unwomen.org](mailto:anum.aftab@unwomen.org)

Apart from the details under section “Description of required services/results”, please ensure the following details are shared with the applications:

* Full legal name and address of applying organization.
* Copy of valid legal registration in the country.
* Mandate or mission statement of organization.
* Statement of organization’s expertise in the relevant area.
* Description of the organization’s existing operations in the subject matter area, including how long the operations have been carried out.

Upon receipt of the above information from prospective Responsible Parties, UN Women will review applicants for placement on a short-list of potential Responsible Parties.Placement on this shortlist does not guarantee a partnership with UN Women. Through a Call for Proposals (CfP) detailing the scope of work, short-listed candidates may be invited to submit formal proposals (using the standard UN Women Call for Proposals template) to become a Responsible Party. They will thereby be requested to accept the terms and conditions outlined in the UN Women Partner Agreement Template, or to include their reservations or objections thereto.

Note:

Due to the high volume of communications, UN Women is not in a position to confirm receipt of completed expressions of interest. Please ensure that your applications are not more than 5 pages long.