



**INNOVATION
FOR CHANGE**
MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

Call for Proposals

Become an I4C MENA Hub Partner

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1. Background

The Innovation for Change Middle East and North Africa Hub (I4C MENA) is announcing a call for proposals to engage further regional civil society organizations in the Hub efforts for an enabling and innovative civil society environment in the MENA region.

While the I4C MENA Hub is entering its fifth year of implementation of programs addressing civic space issues in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, different partnerships continue to be launched with innovative advocacy networks and organizations to fulfill the Hub's mandate in building a resilient and strengthened civil society environment in the region. Since 2017, the MENA Hub entered into successful partnerships with different regional organizations to build a collaborative, innovative network of activists, technologists, and CSOs working together to protect civic space through i) developing and launching different technology solutions addressing CSOs resourcing, government accountability, and civil society knowledge management in the MENA region; ii) piloting policy advocacy coalitions and campaigns aiming at enhancing crowdfunding and data privacy legislation; iii) strengthening journalists, CSOs and activists digital security and advocacy capacities through subgrants and training.

Through this call, the MENA Hub aims to carry out further work to consolidate and build upon knowledge and practices from its previous implementation phases by leveraging technology and innovation for human rights, building and strengthening digital advocacy and security at a grassroots level, and improving legal, policy and regulatory frameworks that impact civic space in the MENA region.

2. Areas of focus

The submitted proposals can cover one or more of the following areas:

1. Addressing civic space issues through innovative and groundbreaking methodologies;
2. Contributing efforts to consolidate democracy and reform and spreading the culture of human rights, the rule of law, good governance, and sustainable development;
3. Strengthening coordination and networking between CSOs to work collectively on monitoring government commitments in issues related to freedom of expression, assembly and association, local governance, NGOs law, and human rights;
4. Strengthening CSOs, activists, and journalists capacities in digital security and policy advocacy;
5. Contributing and working towards reforming the legislative environment incubating the work of civil society institutions according to international standards and best practices;



6. Enhancing CSOs capacities in observing human rights and misinformation;
7. Promoting media freedom and freedom of expression through country-tailored advocacy campaigns;
8. Developing a strengthened and collaborative community of CSOs with increased capacities in financial sustainability;
9. Countering the criminalization and defamation of civic actors and civil society.

4. Overall goal

The overall goal of this call consists of empowering and strengthening civil society action in protecting human rights and civic spaces through innovative advocacy tactics in the MENA region.

5. Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this call are:

1. Strengthening civil society policy advocacy capacity in leading policy advocacy efforts and for an improved civil society enabling environment in the MENA region;
2. Building coalitions that encourage coordination and joint action, and providing practical solidarity and support in the face of attacks and threats in the region;
3. Strengthening CSOs, journalists, and youth capacity in evidence-based reporting and monitoring of human rights issues in the region;

6. Countries of focus

Due to geographical funding scope limitations, below is the list of countries that can be covered through the programs proposed for the present call:

- Morocco
- Mauritania
- Tunisia
- Algeria
- Libya
- Sudan
- Lebanon
- Palestine
- Yemen
- Iraq

7. Eligibility

The I4C MENA Hub call for proposals is open to civil society organizations from the MENA region. You are also eligible to apply if you have answered “Yes” to each of the following questions:

1. If you are applying as an organization, is your organization registered and based in the MENA region?
2. Is your idea or project tied to your local community or a community to which you have a connection?



3. Does your organization have proven experience in managing programs and grants?
4. Will your project contribute to a positive impact on the regional civic space?
5. Are you committed to implementing your program in a partnership approach and making an impact?

8. Program principles

The submitted application should anchor and demonstrate the following principles:

- **Coalition building and capacity-strengthening:** the program will be rooted in partnership and networking as guiding principles. The Hub also provides a capacity development plan for its partner organizations to build on their existing skills and enhance their internal capacities.
- **Contextualization and security:** the security of the target beneficiaries is the utmost priority of the Hub. As a civil society network, we understand the realities of the targeted beneficiaries, and we encourage the applicants to work on programs with articulate security considerations and a localization approach to inform the program milestones and implementation.
- **Human-centered approach through co-design:** design thinking enables the development of programs and processes that are truly designed by people, for people. This methodology and similar concepts of participatory development are underutilized and often poorly executed to respond to Human Rights challenges. For this purpose, the applicants are encouraged to develop solutions incorporating design thinking and co-creation approaches. By creating empathy with target beneficiaries, design thinking reframes challenges in a way that enables civil society to respond to real needs and brings people together to contribute to a shared solution.

9. Subgranting

Applicants shall also propose financial support to third parties (sub-granting) to help include small organizations and nascent communities in the proposed programs.

10. Inclusion considerations

- Ensuring an equal gender inclusion;
- Engaging youth;
- Engaging vulnerable communities;
- Taking into account the needs and challenges of targeted groups;
- Encouraging the constitution and capacity-building of local organizations and networks;
- Working in partnership with other organizations.

11. Key stakeholder groups

Key stakeholders are civil society organizations, activists, journalists working on human rights and shrinking civic space issues in the MENA region. The key stakeholder groups are representatives of civil society in the region and who should also be consulted to articulate the design specifications of the submissions.



12. Expected outcomes

The proposed call shall strengthen the hub's efforts in addressing online and offline shrinking civic space challenges in the region. The larger program outcomes shall support CSOs and activists in building coalitions and initiatives to expand civic spaces and fundamental freedoms through policy advocacy, innovation, and capacity building for key actors.

13. Funding information

Grant Mechanism: Cost reimbursable grants

Funding Source: USAID

Anticipated Number of grant/awards: Up to 5 prime grants

Anticipated award amount per grant: \$100,000 - \$200,000 USD

14. Timeline

To be defined upon the confirmation of the funding cycle length.

15. Application process

1. **Submissions evaluation:** we will evaluate the submitted programs' relevance to the scope of the call, the reputation of the applicants in the countries in question, and the effectiveness of their proposed programs.
2. **Shortlisting:** following the evaluation of the applications, we will reach out to the shortlisted applicants to discuss their proposed interventions with our board members.
3. **Decision:** following the one-on-one calls with the applicants, we will inform the applicants of the selection process results.
4. **Donor clearance:** the MENA Hub will share the list of the selected partners with the donor for a final clearance step.
5. **Co-design:** applicants will go through a co-design process with the Hub team to further articulate their interventions.
6. **Seeking donor approval:** the partners with the support of the Hub team will submit the needed documentation for donor approval to unlock the funding.
7. **Approval:** the donor approval is granted, and the partners are set to start implementing the program.

16. Selection criteria

I4C MENA's Board of Directors is essential to our ability to identify civil society needs in the MENA region and select reliable regional partners. The MENA Hub assesses applications against the following core criteria:

1. Strong organizational experience and credibility in managing grants and programs;
2. Compliance with eligibility requirements and application procedures;



3. Relevance of the proposed program, including the pertinence of the proposed methodology/design, the feasibility of the project (e.g., activities are targeted to achieve stated results, and anticipated outcomes are realistic and attainable);
4. Rigorous evidence of impact on improving the civil society enabling environment in the MENA region;
5. Cost-effectiveness of the program in improving the civil society enabling environment in the MENA region;
6. Potential for scale and sustainability;
7. Demonstrated commitment of the applicant to promote fundamental freedoms and rights;
8. Preference will be given to I4C MENA network members provided that they meet the conditions outlined above.

17. Application deadline

Applications may be submitted until March 5, 2022.

18. Link to the application form

<https://bit.ly/I4CMENA-CallForProposals-Form>