EvalPartners Peer-to-Peer Grants Program
Strengthening the Role of VOPEs in Democratizing Learning and Evaluation: Democracy, Human Rights and Governance as a Showcase

Call for Proposals - 2018

EvalPartners received a grant from the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor of the United States Department for State for 2018-2019. The grant helps EvalPartners continue its global commitment to proactively support VOPEs and cover a new round of Peer to Peer (P2P) grants and Innovation Challenge partnerships, in addition to development of e-learning modules and VOPE toolkit sections on strengthening the role of Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs) in democratizing learning and evaluation using Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) as a showcase.

EvalPartners invites VOPEs to apply for Peer to Peer grants for implementation of partnership projects jointly developed by at least two VOPEs. The idea is to encourage two or more VOPEs to form mutually beneficial partnerships with each other to promote shared advice and learning.

1. Background Information

EvalPartners is an international initiative that aims to enhance the capacities of VOPEs to engage in a strategic and meaningful manner in national evaluation processes to be able to influence country-led evaluation systems. The expected outcomes of the initiative are three-fold:

- VOPEs are stronger. Their institutional and organizational capacities are enhanced;
- VOPEs are more influential. They are better able to play strategic roles in strengthening the enabling environment for evaluation within their countries, and so help to improve national evaluation systems and promote the use of evaluation evidence in developing policies geared towards effective, equitable and gender-responsive development results.
- VOPEs have sustainable strategies to enhance the evaluation skills, knowledge and capacities of their members, and of evaluators more widely, to manage and conduct credible and useful evaluations.

Core values of the initiative are spelled out in the Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020 and revolve around equity, gender equality, and social justice and on shared principles of partnership, innovation, inclusivity, and human rights.
2. EvalPartners Small Grants Program

The EvalPartners Small Grant Program is managed by the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE). In its previous four rounds, the program proactively involved national and regional VOPEs who are members of the IOCE and EvalPartners from more than 70 countries, through 60 different P2P partnerships in six thematic areas.\(^1\)

This year the Peer-to-Peer Grants Program will advance the Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020 with the theme of Strengthening the Role of VOPEs in Democratizing Learning and Evaluation: Democracy, Human Rights and Governance as a Showcase as explained in the section 8.

3. Selection Criteria

The program will prioritize projects that respond to following:

- Directly contribute to achievement of at least two objectives under this grant: i) building evaluation skills, ii) documenting local solutions iii. enhancing the use of DRG evaluations (please see annex 1 for details);

and at least one out of the two following criteria:

- Directly contribute to achievement of the EvalAgenda2020: stronger evaluators, stronger VOPEs and a better enabling environment for evaluation;
- Link to and operate in synergy with the activities of at least one EvalPartners networks/initiatives: EvalGender+, EVALSDGs, EvalIndigenous; EvalYouth; Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation.

4. Partnerships for P2P Proposals

As a learning organization, EvalPartners reviews periodically the criteria for partnership selection, in light of lessons learnt following the evaluation of previous rounds. Guidelines for the 2018-2019 round are as follows:

a. Project proposal should be jointly developed by at least two VOPEs.

b. **At least one** of those VOPEs should be from the Global South, that is be a national VOPE from the **ODA-eligible country** (The list of ODA-eligible countries is available at [http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC_List_ODA_Recipients2014to2017_flows_E.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC_List_ODA_Recipients2014to2017_flows_E.pdf)). Preference will be given to proposals that include Global South VOPEs that have not received EvalPartners funding previously. Partnerships may also include academic institutions, NGOs, private sector and government agencies. Note that only VOPEs are allowed to benefit financially from the grant.

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\(^1\) Developing evaluation culture; promoting evaluation policies and systems at the national and regional level; empowering VOPEs and developing their capacities; ethics and professionalization; promoting Equity Focused and Gender Responsive Evaluations; promoting networking among VOPEs.
c. In order to accommodate a maximum number of ideas, VOPEs and countries, a VOPE cannot be partner in more than two partnerships submitting proposals.
d. Applications can only be received from VOPEs that are registered on the IOCE database (see http://www.ioce.net/vope-registration), and that have updated their information in the past 12 months before the proposal is submitted. Any VOPEs that is not registered and/or did not update its information will disqualify the proposal.
e. VOPEs approved for grants must be Contributing Members of the IOCE (minimum USD 100 per year).
f. In assessing proposals, the EvalPartners Management Group will give consideration to the regional distribution of grants.
g. EvalPartners grants can be used as seed funding to mobilize more resources for comprehensive and continued interventions by applicants. Co-financing by other stakeholders is desired and will get preference in proposal review.

5. Grant Funding Allocations

The maximum amount of a grant is USD 10,000. Proposals actively including a VOPE from an ODA-eligible country that has not received EvalPartners grant support in the last two P2P rounds will receive 5 bonus points to its final score. Under this call for proposals, EvalPartners expect to allocate the total of USD 80,000.

6. Eligible Project Expenses

Grants can be used to cover the following expenses:

- Travel (both land and air economy class fair) (boarding passes must be submitted);
- Daily subsistence allowances including hotel accommodations
- Terminal expenses and local transportation;
- Visa costs (including vaccination if required);
- Travel-related insurance;
- Hire of premises and equipment for project events;
- Purchase of supplies for project events;
- Translation/interpretation expenses;
- Communication expenses;
- Production of information and communication materials, including printable and websites;
- Bank fees,
- IOCE membership fees;
- International travel handling fees – up to USD 100 per round trip per person.

If project events are organized within a framework of a conference or other similar event organized by one of the participating VOPEs, project funding cannot be applied to cover registration fees for the representatives of the visiting partner VOPE and/or academic institution.

EvalPartners encourages VOPEs to seek mutually beneficial partnerships with local NGOs and educational institutions that can provide facilities for project events free of charge, provide secretariat support for events, help to recruit students as volunteers to support the events.
As the audit procedures on IOCE accounts are becoming more stringent, VOPEs are also requested to follow transparent financial management procedures, by requesting 3 offers for services-related expenses, providing justification that the airfares or hotels are lower or equivalent to those offered by commercial providers at the time of engaging expenses (for example running a search on www.expedia.com for airfares and www.booking.com for hotels and keeping evidence as a screen shot or pdf file with date).

7. Ineligible Project Expenses

Grants cannot be used to cover salaries of VOPE staff and expert fees, purchase of equipment, e.g. computers and IT equipment, and rent of offices for VOPE secretariats. No administrative fees can be included in the project budget. Partners are not allowed to benefit financially from the grant.

8. What Do We Intend to Achieve Through P2P Support?

EvalPartners encourage applicants to consider following focus areas of the program while taking the EvalAgenda2020 broad themes into consideration. Since a substantive part of EvalPartners resources is allocated to the Peer-to-Peer grants, the proposals will be assessed based on their compliance with DRG focus areas and EvalAgenda2020, and hence applicants should clearly indicate their contributions to them.

Proposals could focus on one or more areas including, but not limited to:

- **Evaluation skills development** for local activists, civil society organizations, evaluation practitioners and/or members of VOPEs through in-person or virtual training, workshops, or mentorship. Activities may include but are not limited to: building or strengthening the understanding and application of innovative, but rigorous, approaches and methods that are appropriate for monitoring and evaluating DRG programs in conflict and fragile states, or in complicated or complex environments.

- **Organization of peer learning or exchanges** to document and share best practices in implementing, monitoring, and evaluating DRG programs in conflict and fragile states, or in complicated or complex environments. Activities may include, but are not limited to: peer-to-peer learning exchanges to support interaction among activists, civil society organizations and evaluation practitioners from different countries or regions with the aim of sharing and documenting creative solutions to conducting M&E; developing or improving in-person or virtual communities of practice for those interested in seeking creative approaches in the implementation and evaluation of DRG programs; exchanges organizing local evaluation practitioners and experts in other fields (e.g., data science, social impact) to find creative opportunities to build skills and learn new ways to monitor and evaluate programs.

- **Information dissemination** showcasing how organizations and evaluators can use research and evaluative evidence to learn how to improve democracy, human rights and governance outcomes, illustrating how local solutions can be used to inform policy making and program designing. Activities may include, but are not limited to: researching and documenting how international and local organizations effectively implement and evaluate DRG programs; documenting effective monitoring, evaluation and learning.
approaches; and disseminating these findings through in-person or virtual meetings, conferences or briefings.

- **Supporting human rights advocates and/or evaluators** to advocate for the use of evidence-based policies, including research and evaluative findings, to better inform national and international agendas on human rights. Activities may include but are not limited to: organizing workshops and activities to develop agendas; organizing learning exchanges between advocates and VOPEs, where evaluation practitioners build advocacy skills and advocates build skills to interpret and use data.

- **Developing tools and guidelines** illustrating approaches and methods that small, grassroots organizations, networks or social movements can use to monitor and evaluate their social change initiatives (DRG-related in particular), especially in instances where external evaluation support is not feasible. Activities may include but are not limited to: building or strengthening M&E skills among small, grassroots organizations through in-person or virtual training series; testing innovative evaluation approaches and methods to understand whether activists and human rights practitioners can use them; and documenting lessons learned.

Proposals that are led by VOPEs with strong support and participation from civil society, local organizations and evaluation practitioners will be most welcome. Where appropriate, proposals should explain how civil society, local organizations, or evaluation practitioners have been involved in the proposal development process.

### 9. How to Submit a Proposal

Each partnership should identify a single person (a project manager) who will be responsible for all project-related communication with IOCE. The proposal should be submitted by the project manager to coordinator@evalpartners.org with copy to lynn@ioce.net and treasurer@ioce.net

EvalPartners strongly encourages applications that are managed by one of the partner VOPEs from the Global South submitting the proposal. In case this is not possible, partnerships can entrust the administration of the project to a Managing Partner, which should be a local not-for-profit organization that will be responsible for financial and administrative management of the grant.

### 10. Language

All project proposals should be submitted in English. In case of a grant award, all reports will have to be prepared in English. Activities can take place in local languages though, but reports and outputs need to be translated to English.

### 11. Timeframe

The deadline for proposal submission is March 5, 2018 midnight GMT-12. The summary table indicating winning proposals will be published no later than March 31, 2018.

VOPEs shall plan to complete their projects by 31 December 2018.
12. Support to Applicants

Please direct your questions to Asela Kalugampitiya at coordinator@evalpartners.org with copy to Lynn Burgess at lynn@ioce.net

13. Proposal Review Process

VOPEs that seek to benefit from small grant funding shall also take responsibility in participating in proposal review process. Each applicant should propose two peer reviewers in the proposal. Proposals without reviewers’ names are not accepted. If the peer reviewers fail to deliver reviews in a timely manner, their proposal will be disqualified from the call.

The proposals will be reviewed as per following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Maximum Points</th>
<th>Proposed range of points to be given</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Overall quality of the proposal</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Excellent (15-12)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good (11-8)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adequate (7-4)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poor (3-0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Relevance of the project to DRG project objectives and Agenda’2020</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Excellent (25-19)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good (18-13)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adequate (12-7)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poor (6-0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Feasibility of the project proposal</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Excellent (20-15)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good (14-10)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Adequate (9-5)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Poor (4-0)</td>
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<td>4. Internal coherence of the work plan with the objectives of the project</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Excellent (20-15)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good (14-10)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Adequate (9-5)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poor (4-0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Sustainability of changes created by the project</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Excellent (20-15)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Good (14-10)</td>
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<td>Adequate (9-5)</td>
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<td>Poor (4-0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>

The proposal review will involve peer reviewers from applicants (blind review) and external independent reviewers. The average of the all reviews will be taken in to consideration for final ranking and selection.

The final results will be also subject to final validation by the EvalPartners Management Group to guarantee equity and balanced regional representation

14. Reporting Requirements

VOPEs in receipt of grant support will be required to submit narrative and financial reports at the mid-term and end of the project following the templates provided by IOCE.

They will also be required to provide information about project milestones (e.g. announcements of the forthcoming events, news about completed events with photos, testimonies, etc.).
Annex 1: Objectives of the program

There are three main objectives as follows in this initiative which can be addressed in proposals under focus areas while taking the EvalAgenda2020 broad themes in to consideration. EvalPartners seek proposals that will build the evidence base on what works and why related to democracy, human rights and governance (DRG) funding, as well as documenting methods and approaches to help activists, civil society organizations, and evaluation practitioners improve the monitoring and evaluation of DRG programs. Proposals should aim to develop publicly available reports, briefs, toolkits, manuals, frameworks or other deliverables. Projects and deliverables should aim to (1) outline research and evaluative evidence that show how DRG practitioners, human rights defenders and civil society can improve the implementation of DRG programs in restrictive environments, or (2) document how innovative methods and approaches can be used to improve M&E for DRG programs and (3) enhance the use of these reports for effective decision and policy making.

Objectives

Building evaluation skills: EvalPartners encourages VOPEs to propose concepts that seek to support and build skills for those interested in evaluating democracy, human rights and governance programs, including, but not limited to activists, civil society organizations, and evaluation practitioners. As DRG funding often occurs in complex environments, and in situations that require innovation and re-design during program implementation, standard evaluation approaches, tools or methods may not be appropriate for monitoring and evaluating DRG outcomes. Support and training should focus on the ways in which creative, but rigorous, methods can be used to evaluate social change initiatives in complicated and complex environments. In this context, the use of the term “rigorous approaches and methods” is not meant to limit proposals to training or advocacy promoting the use of randomized controlled trials (RCTs).

Documenting local solutions: Project concepts may also focus on documenting and sharing local solutions to program implementation, monitoring and evaluation of DRG programs in complicated or complex environments. Successful applications will document (1) how activists and local organizations successfully implemented creative approaches to improve democracy, human rights and governance outcomes, or (2) how activists, local organizations and evaluation practitioners successfully monitor and evaluate democracy, human rights and governance outcomes. Project activities should aim to understand how and why certain program approaches may be seen as more feasible than others, as well as documenting the successes and challenges of using particular M&E approaches or methods in certain environments.

Enhancing the use of DRG evaluations: The EvalPartners Theory of Change is built on the assumption that high-quality and value-driven evaluation can improve the design and implementation of how development programs track their progress, make mid-course corrections and assess final outcomes and impacts with a view to social learning across policies, programs and initiatives. As such, promoting the use of DRG evaluations is central to this call.
Annex 2: EvalAgenda2020 Priorities

1. The enabling environment for evaluation includes:

   - All sectors of society understand and appreciate the value of evaluation
   - Evaluation is explicitly required or encouraged in national evaluation policies and other governance and regulatory instruments
   - Sufficient resources are allocated for evaluation, at all levels
   - Credible, accessible data systems and repositories for evaluation findings are readily available
   - Stakeholders are eager to receive and utilize evaluation information
   - Evaluation receives due recognition as a profession
   - The ownership of public sector evaluations rests with national governments based on their distinctive needs and priorities and with full participation of the civil society and the private sector

2. Institutional capacities includes:

   - A sufficient number of relevant institutions, including but not limited to Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs); government agencies, Civil Society organizations (CSOs), academia and institutions that generate and share relevant data exist to develop and support evaluators and evaluation
   - These institutions are capable of appreciating and facilitating quality evaluations
   - These institutions are skilled at collaborating with other relevant and involved institutions
   - These institutions are able to resource quality data generation and evaluations as required, make information readily accessible and are ready to follow-up on evaluation findings and recommendations
   - These institutions are able to continually evolve and develop as the evaluation field advances
   - Academic institutions have the capacity to carry out evaluation research and run professional courses in evaluation

3. Individual capacities for evaluation includes:

   - Developing individual capacity for evaluation will be relevant not only to evaluators, but also to commissioners and users of evaluation
   - Commissioners and users of evaluation will have a sound understanding of the value of evaluation, processes for conducting high quality, impartial evaluations; and more commitment to using evaluation findings and recommendations
   - Sufficient numbers of qualified evaluators, drawn from a diversity of relevant disciplines, are available to conduct high quality evaluations in all countries and all subject areas
   - These evaluators have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to make appropriate use of generally accepted evaluation principles, theories, methods and approaches
Evaluators have integrated the values discussed above and are culturally sensitive.

Evaluators continually learn and improve their capabilities.

4. Inter-linkages among these first three dimensions. The vision of strong inter-linkages among these first three dimensions is that:

- Governments, parliamentarians, VOPEs, the United Nations, foundations, civil society, private sector and other interested groups dedicate resources to joint ventures in the conduct of evaluations, in innovation in the field of evaluation and evaluation capacity building.
- A common set of terms exists in all languages to disseminate and share evaluation knowledge.
- Multiple partners in evaluation regularly attend national and international learning opportunities.
- The “No one left behind” principle stated in the SDGs is embedded as a key value that goes across three building blocks of evaluation system – enabling environment, institutional capacities and individual capacities for evaluation.