

Request for Applications (RFA)

NISAAM

I. Introduction

Since our founding in 1993, Women for Women International (WfWI) has served more than 500,000 of the most economically, socially and politically excluded women in countries affected by conflict with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to be catalysts for change in their lives, families, and communities. The core of our work is a holistic, 12-month social and economic empowerment and skills training program that helps marginalized women overcome poverty, make healthy decisions, become leaders in their communities, and build local and global networks to advocate for their rights. Currently, WfWI has country offices in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Iraq, Palestine, Nigeria, and South Sudan, with independent Women for Women sister organizations in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Rwanda.

We contribute to improving the environment for women’s voice and participation by skilling grassroots women leaders to be Change Agents and advocate for the changes they want to see in their communities and beyond. We also amplify women’s voices to national and international decision-makers and work to influence policies, processes and agendas that impact women’s lives.

With support from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), WfWI-Iraq – Iraq is pleased to announce a call for applications from the national/local Women’s Rights Organizations (WROs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) across Iraq, including in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), to advance a localised Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda; sustain progress towards women’s rights and equality; and strengthen women’s full, equality and meaningful participation.

Project name: “Nisaa wa Al Salam” NISAAM.

WfWI-Iraq is seeking applications from grassroots, women-led, CSOs and WROs across all 19 governorates of Iraq and the KRI, to implement self-defined WPS plans, priorities, and goals, including institutional strengthening, core activities, programmatic work, and advocacy efforts.

This RFA will remain open until 20 October 16:00hrs Iraq time.

WfWI intends to award an estimated twelve grants under this RFA.

II. Project Design

A. Purpose and Desired Outcomes

The overarching purpose of this RFA is to fund projects which support efforts to advance women's rights, foster equality and promote women's meaningful participation in decision-making processes at local and national levels—paving the way for a sustainable and inclusive peace. This RFA contains all instructions and templates necessary to submit an initial application to be considered for funding.

Through this call for applications, WFWI-Iraq aims to provide flexible funding focused on enabling WROs and CSOs to define and deliver their self-defined priorities, that meet the identified needs of women and girls in the communities they serve. It will also focus on capacity sharing initiatives aimed at supporting WROs/CSOs to identify areas for growth and providing assistance to address them.

To ensure both comprehensive and strategic objectives are set across the WRO network, avoiding both overlap and duplication, this year we have collaboratively set themes for WROs to bid against. Themes, include climate change, female participation, gender-based violence, marginalised communities, Iraq WPS National Action Plan, and women's economic empowerment. Applications should incorporate at least one of the following themes. All bids should aim to address women's participation as a cross-cutting theme. Applications to complete an ongoing project or earlier WPS funded projects will not be selected.

- **Climate Resilience:** We welcome bids that strengthen and/or increase the role of women in promoting climate security and mitigation strategies and address the adverse drivers of climate change at community and national level, ensuring their voices are heard in addressing environmental challenges that affect their communities.
- **Gender Based Violence including Preventing Sexual Violence (PSV) and restorative justice:** We welcome bids that seek to highlight and prevent gender-based violence. Activities could include, but are not limited to, any one of a range of innovative approaches including the support to survivors of GBV, restorative justice practices, online programmes, as well as opportunities for men and boys to play a proactive role.
- **Iraq Women Peace and Security (WPS) and National Plan of Action (NAP):** We welcome bids that enable environments for women's meaning participation and improved capacity to progress the government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional government National Action Plans and WPS goals.
- **Marginalised communities:** We welcome bids that ensure women from marginalised communities can help shape the WPS agenda and have a voice, as well as increase their role and participation in peacebuilding and conflict prevention measures at both the community and national level.
- **Women Economic Empowerment:** We welcome bids that seek to drive women's economic autonomy and well-being through small transformative changes.

All bids should foster enabling environments for women's meaningful participation in decision making, to improve coordinated action and advance localised WPS agenda.

Collectively WROs and women led CSOs working on activities with shared outcomes will help strengthen coordination and further develop cross Iraq WRO network. This is one of our overall programmes aims, and we welcome bids that look to advance this coordination.

B. Community Participation and Involvement of Key Stakeholders

Enhancing women’s participation in all forms of decision-making, as well as public and political life, is one of WfWI’s main objectives. Therefore, WfWI encourages applicants to take an active, inclusive, participatory approach with their target communities. This approach encourages sharing information and experiences and collaborating with project participants and partners (CSOs, WROs, Government institutions women’s groups and local leaders) to focus on addressing common problems and assuring collective ownership of the project. Community involvement is encouraged at every step of the process, from the development of project ideas and project design, reviews to the monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Applicants are also encouraged to involve other key stakeholders in the project's design, implementation, review, monitoring, and evaluation and to show how it is feeding into a wider body of work and desired outcomes.

C. Target Population

Through this RFA, WfWI encourages applicants to work with the **most marginalized women impacted by the conflict**. Target populations could include refugees, internally displaced persons, and women in their home communities with little access to education and income generating opportunities. The targeted women could, for example, fall into the following categories:

- Women from minority groups.
- Women affected by conflict, displaced or returned to their places of origin after displacement.
- Marginalized women due to economic, social or other forms of exclusion.
- Women who are experiencing or survivors of domestic violence
- Women living in rural areas or urban informal settlements: Those in urban areas who face economic and social marginalization and have limited access to services.
- Elderly women: Older women who may face age-related vulnerabilities, lack of social support, and limited access to healthcare and economic opportunities.
- Female heads of households: Women who are the primary or sole providers for their families, including widows or single mothers, who may face unique economic and social challenges.
- Young women and adolescent girls: Particularly those who are at risk of early marriage, lack access to education, or are facing other age-specific vulnerabilities.
- Women with disabilities: Women who face additional barriers to participation due to physical, mental, or sensory disabilities, particularly in conflict-affected areas.

III. Funding Level

The maximum amount of funding available per applicant under this RFA is [IQD 69,430,000]. The budget must be prepared in Iraqi Dinar and be based on activities described in the application.

The total budget amount will be paid in a series of instalments, including an initial start-up advance and subsequent instalments based on deliverables that show the completion of a set of activities. The expected deliverables and payment instalments will be determined by the selected organization and WfWI and will be included in the sub-grant agreement.

WfWI intends to award an estimated twelve grants under this RFA.

IV. Duration

The implementation period should cover a period of **5 months**, with an estimated start-date of **November 1st 2024**. **The project implementation end date should not exceed March 31st, 2025**.

We understand that this is a short timeframe for delivery and will remain realistic on delivery. We therefore welcome suitable project plans, including small-scale interventions, with robust and effective deliverables.

Eligibility Criteria

In order to receive funding under this RFA, an organization must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- The organization's vision, mission, and values must align with principles of inclusion and the advancement of WPS objectives in Iraq. The organization must be a national non-governmental organization officially registered with the government in Iraq or Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
- Priority will be given to women-led and women rights organizations.
- The organization must be able to demonstrate that it has received funding from an external source in the past two years and is receiving support from the community in which it is working.
- The organization must have experience in implementing projects related to the themes listed out under section II.
- The organisation must demonstrate their capacity to manage grants or include in their proposal self-identified areas in which they require capacity strengthening support to be addressed during the delivery of this project.
- Upon receipt of the completed application materials, WfWI will screen applications to assess conformity with the eligibility criteria described above and will carry out further due diligence checks.

V. Application Submission

1. Application Process

To apply for a grant, the organization must submit an application package that includes a proposal and timeline, a detailed budget with narrative description, and a self-completed eligibility checklist. Applications should be submitted in English, however, please note that the next round of bids can be submitted in both English and Arabic. Applications for the next round of bids will be announced in 2025, applications will be welcomed from organisations who are not successful in the first round of bids.

2. Proposal and Timeline (guidelines and template attached -Annex 1)

- Detailed contact information for the organization
- Summary of context and gender analysis
- Project Information (goal, outcomes, outputs, activities, targets and indicators)
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- Project partners and key stakeholders
- Project Personnel
- Management Capacity (including past projects)
- Timeline

3. **Detailed Budget and with narrative description (guidelines and template attached -Annex II)**
4. **Partner Eligibility Checklist. Template attached(Annex III)**
5. **Provide copies of:**
 - NGO Registration Certificate
 - Recent audited financial report or statement of annual budget

VI. Submission Deadline and Method

Applications need to be submitted by email in electronic and PDF versions to nisaam@womenforwomen.org

Applications must be received no later than 20 October 16:00hrs, Iraq time.

Applications submitted after 20th October 16:00hrs, Iraq time, or submitted through other channels will not be considered. After the initial submission, WfWI may contact the organization to ask questions for clarification, make suggestions for revisions, and/or request additional organizational materials as part of a due- diligence process and corroboration of the eligibility checklist.

VII. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the criteria below.

Application Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Organizational capacity and past experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the organization possess the relevant experience to implement the proposed project? • Does the organization propose a strong plan, including staffing, to implement the project? • Is the organization part of a wider network of organizations, or willing to be? • Is the organization legally capable of implementing project activities and accessing the target communities? • Is the organization physical present in the same governorate where the project is implemented? 	25 points
Project design and strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the anticipated results and outcomes linked to the overall goal? • Do the target communities meet the specified characteristics? • Are the benefits to the target population clearly articulated? • Does the proposed initiative identify a clear problem, need, or opportunity to address through the project? • Is the proposed project design likely to achieve the stated goal and results? • Does the project design take into account existing interventions and explain how it will complement them? • Does the project design include a participatory community approach? • Does the strategy lay out a feasible method to implement the project? • Does the project align with the WPS agenda? And specific themes identified? 	50 points
M&E plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the organization propose a M&E plan that will help measure project success? • Does the organization demonstrate accountability to its target population through appropriate feedback and reporting mechanisms? 	10 points
Cost effectiveness of proposed budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the budget cost-effective? • Are all budget items clearly described? • Is the program cost in the range of 70% of the total budget? 	15 points
Total	100 points

VIII. Program Monitoring

Once grants have been awarded, WfWI-Iraq will maintain an oversight and monitoring role throughout the grant period, which may include site visits, periodic conference calls, as well as triangulating with other key stakeholders in [19 governorates of Iraq]. As per capacity needs identified through the RFA, WfWI will provide grant management support and technical assistance to the grant recipients.

IX. I Reporting

Grantees will be expected to provide periodic narrative and financial reports showing progress against planned activities and budgeted expenses. The narrative and financial reporting schedule will be included in the grant agreement. Grantees will also be encouraged to provide case stories and testimonials of project participants who have given their informed consent to share.

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