

Call for Proposals

Promoting Internet Freedoms in Southeast Asia - Malaysia

The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) is pleased to invite proposals for a grant as part of its program to advance international and regional norms to protect the exercise of the freedoms of association, assembly and expression online. A grant of up to \$44,000 USD is available for a project meeting the criteria discussed below. The project timeframe is from August 2022 – July 2023 (12 months).

Applications are due by August 5, 2022.

Background

ICNL is implementing the Promoting Internet Freedom in Southeast Asia (IFSEA) program, which seeks to overcome restrictions to exercising fundamental freedoms on the internet in Cambodia, Malaysia, and Timor-Leste by combining ICNL's legal expertise and global network with exceptional regional partners. ICNL's regional partner will lead the undertaking of baseline studies on internet freedoms for each of the program countries, and will be supported in this initiative by country partners in each country. Country partners will also undertake activities as outlined below. Governments in Southeast Asia have been placing legal restrictions on the ability of citizens to exercise the freedoms of association, assembly and expression online. These restrictions take many forms, from criminal defamation and lèse majesté laws to prohibiting "offensive" or "insulting" content. Malaysia became the first country in the region to enact an "Anti-Fake News" law in April 2018. This law criminalizes the online publication of any data or report that is "wholly or partially false." Although the Pakatan Harapan government promised to repeal the law, efforts to do so have been blocked by the opposition-led Senate. As a result of these restrictive laws, dozens of human rights defenders, journalists and other civil society leaders have been prosecuted or jailed, and a culture of self-censorship now exists. These incidents continue to take place amidst a sharp decline in civic freedoms experienced by Malaysia and other countries in the region in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, there are also opportunities for reform, such as the government's voluntary commitments as part of its bid for a seat on the Human Rights Council to review existing laws that impacts rights online and offline in consultation with the National Human

Rights Commission and other groups. Additionally, on August 30, 2021, Malaysia's newly appointed Minister of Communications and Multimedia emphasized in a public statement that access to internet facilities must be considered a human right and stated that internet access would be a priority for his ministry. This project will take advantage of this and other opportunities to work with parliamentarians, government actors and civil society to revise laws as promised during the election campaign and Malaysia's third cycle of the UPR.

As part of the IFSEA program, ICNL seeks to partner with a Malaysia-based organization to strengthen regional and domestic advocacy promoting internet freedoms. While the partner may engage in a variety of activities designed to meet the grant's objective, the selected applicant will be expected to:

1. Hold one "town hall" with citizens, specifically from marginalized communities, to understand how restrictions to fundamental freedoms online negatively impact people's lives and livelihoods. The "town hall" should be a 1 or 2-day meeting, or a series of half-day/full day events in different provinces/regions. [Please include contingency plans to host "virtual" event(s) in case of health and safety concerns due to the COVID-19 pandemic.] Participants of the events must include women, marginalized communities, grassroots leaders, civil society leaders (including labor leaders), human rights defenders, as well as academics, lawyers, and/or parliamentarians or government officials (only if appropriate).
2. Assist project partners by identifying participants to attend a Regional Workshop held with parliamentarians from the target countries, project partners, and leading civil society organizations. The purpose of the event will be to introduce the results from the project's baseline research and advocacy materials, as well as to strategize and share lessons learned about how to advocate for better regional and domestic protections to internet freedoms.
3. Coordinate and lead efforts to contribute to upcoming Universal Period Review (UPR) and other United Nations (UN) submissions focusing on internet freedoms.
4. Contribute to other project objectives, such as, reviewing and providing input on base-line study of internet freedoms in Malaysia, tool-kit for parliamentarians and other knowledge-products, and work with other sub-grantees, as needed.

Application Instructions

To apply for a grant, applicants must submit the following items **in English**:

- Application coversheet (see below).
- Proposal (see below).
- Line-item budget (no more than \$44,000 USD).
- Background of organizational expertise (1 page).
- Resumes/CVs of staff to be engaged in the project.
- Copy of notarized registration certificate confirming the legal entity status of the applicant.

Content of Proposal

In *two pages or less*, please describe your proposed activities. The proposal should include a proposed activity plan with specific goals and a timeline, recognizing that the time frame for grant activities is August 2022 – July 2023 (12 months).

Please also attach a [line-item budget](#), [budget narrative](#), and a background of [organizational expertise](#) (which do not count toward the 2-page limit for the proposal).

Eligibility Requirements

Open to any non-profit or civil society organization registered in Malaysia. Applicants are also encouraged to form a consortium.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following factors:

- Compliance with eligibility requirements and application procedures.
- Demonstrated commitment of the applicant to improving civic space and internet freedoms.
- Quality of proposed project, including the project's innovations, the proposed methodology/design, and feasibility of the project (e.g., activities are targeted to achieve stated results, and anticipated results are realistic and attainable).
- Likelihood that the proposed project will enhance internet freedoms.
- Proposed budget and value for money.
- Inclusion of reasonable indicators to measure project success.

Terms of Reference

The grant recipient will be required to submit a final report on the use of funds, activities conducted, and outcomes of their projects prior to receiving their final grant disbursement. All project activities must take place between August 2022 and July 2023.

Deadline

Applicants should submit their applications no later than August 5, 2022; applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the deadline. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

How to Apply

Please complete the coversheet and submit it, along with your proposal and other application documents, to asia@icnl.org. Please ensure that the subject of your email is "IFSEA Malaysia Application 2022."

Application Coversheet

Full Name:

Position:

Organization:

Mailing Address Line 1:

Mailing Address Line 2:

Mailing Address Line 3:

Country:

Email Address:

Telephone Number:

Fax Number:

Click on the boxes below to indicate that you have properly completed the application.

- ☐ I have attached a proposal that is no more than two pages in length.
- ☐ I have attached a line-item budget of no more than \$44,000.
- ☐ I have attached a background of organizational expertise that is no more than one page in length.