



**Advancing Women's Right of Access to Information in Bangladesh Project
Terms of Reference – Local Civil Society Partner Organizations**

(Dinajpur and Netrokona Districts)

Request for Applications (RFA)

BACKGROUND:

Access to information (ATI) is a fundamental right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is critical for exercising basic socio-economic and political rights. Access to information can ensure that social services reach the most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations, support true governmental accountability and encourage greater responsiveness, facilitate more meaningful citizen participation in governance, and support citizens' exercise of other human rights. Yet in many countries, one-half of the population—women—are limited in their full enjoyment of the right of access to information and its benefits.

Since 2016, The Carter Center, in collaboration with local partners and the support of the Cabinet Division and Information Commission, has been implementing programming to advance women's right to information in Bangladesh. These efforts have targeted the areas of Dhaka, Khagrachari, Satkhira, Sylhet, and Rajshahi and have focused on supporting local and national government and civil society to raise awareness of the right-to-information (RTI) and the disproportional challenges women face in exercising that right.

On March 22, 2023, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded the Center the *Advancing Women's Right of Access to Information in Bangladesh (AWRTI)* project. The project aims to promote women's access to information so they can participate in decision-making that affects their lives and demand accountability from the Government of Bangladesh (GOB). This five-year project will be carried out in three phases in Dhaka and across ten districts of Bangladesh, including Khagrachari, Satkhira, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Khulna, Moulvibazar, Naogaon, Rangamati, Dinajpur, and Netrokona.

In phase one, AWRTI built on the previous RTI interventions that The Carter Center, in partnership with USAID/Bangladesh and local partners, implemented in Dhaka, Khagrachari, Satkhira, Sylhet, and Rajshahi. Beginning in October 2024, AWRTI will enter its second phase and expand its RTI programming into Dinajpur and Netrokona districts, focusing on reaching women and marginalized communities. To that end, The Carter Center seeks to support one local civil society organization (CSO) each in Dinajpur and Netrokona to implement programming that supports women's RTI in three upazilas in each district through awareness raising, capacity building, and technical support to women who seek support in requesting information.

More information about programming efforts can be found at: [AWRTI Factsheet](#)

GOAL:

AWRTI aims to increase public-led accountability to reduce corruption in Bangladesh by advancing a meaningful right of access to information for women in the 10 target districts. The Center will select

local CSOs in Dinajpur and Netrokona districts, with a preference for those already supporting Dalit and other marginalized women, and support them in expanding AWRTI programming to those districts. Together, the Center's AWRTI programming aims to achieve the following mutually reinforcing intermediate results:

Intermediate Result 1: A strengthened legal and policy environment has enabled more sustainable access to information for women;

Intermediate Result 2: National and target local government leaders have more effectively and equitably provided information to women in target districts; and,

Intermediate Result 3: Through support from civil society organizations, information liaisons, and youth in target districts, women have advanced their use of the right to access information.

Collectively, achieving these objectives will result in greater use by women of their RTI. Given the importance of sustainability and solidifying previous gains, the Center and its partners will use best practices, provide youth with opportunities to innovate their own solutions, and provide communities with the tools to tackle climate change collectively.

RFA OBJECTIVE:

To identify and select two local partners that will support the activities of the AWRTI project in the districts of Dinajpur or Netrokona. Interested organizations should **only** apply for **one** of the two listed districts (**i.e. Dinajpur or Netrokona**).

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:

In consultation with The Carter Center, the selected local civil society organizations will:

- Identify upazilas and unions and intended beneficiary groups to target with AWRTI interventions. The Center proposes Dinajpur Sadar, Birol, and Kaharol Upazilas in Dinajpur District and Netrokona Sadar, Durgapur, and Kolmakanda Upazilas in Netrokona District.
- Identify project staff to work closely with the Center in developing and implementing programming under these terms of reference.
- Conduct awareness-raising interventions that address gender-based asymmetries in access to information, including the following:
 - Engage relevant local organizations, such as those focused on supporting women's socio-economic and human rights, particularly as they intersect with climate change, to raise awareness about the value of RTI for women;
 - Implement their own activities to raise awareness of the value of RTI for women;
 - Educate local government officials, elected community leaders, and other relevant individuals on their roles and responsibilities in supporting and facilitating women's RTI, the obstacles women face in exercising their RTI, and how to mitigate those obstacles; and,
 - Develop creative media messaging campaigns and strategies that create awareness about RTI and how to access government services and hold elected officials accountable.
- Conduct capacity-development interventions that address gender-based asymmetries in access to information, including the following:
 - Identify relevant local government officials, organizations, and community leaders, such as those responsible for or focused on supporting women's socio-

- economic and human rights and access to social services, particularly as they intersect with climate-change issues;
- Support those groups with capacity-development training that results in the incorporation of women’s RTI and related topics into their official public messaging and advocacy;
- Support local government officials and elected community leaders with capacity-development training to improve their ability to proactively disclose and respond to information requests with gender sensitivity.
- Identify and train youth to act as information champions who raise awareness about the transformative power of RTI for women and the importance of climate change and serve women and other community members as facilitators of government information requests.
- Coordinate with the Center’s staff to advance effective collaboration between the government and civil society around women and RTI in target districts, as necessary.
- Support the Center in coordinating with its district-based information liaisons (“Tottho Bondhus”) in the Dinajpur and Netrokona districts, who will assist women in submitting information requests and proactively disclose information.
- Submit project narrative and financial reports that include:
 - Monthly narrative report;
 - Monthly financial report;
 - Monthly monitoring, evaluation, and learning coversheets and supporting documentation; and,
 - Other reports and information as requested.
- Ensure compliance with all donor requirements as established in a subgrant agreement, *including but not limited to* branding and marking, submitting required prior approvals, and submitting required prior notification.
- Support field visits from the Center and USAID staff.
- Maintain frequent and clear communication with the Center’s program staff based in Dhaka.

TIMEFRAME:

The Carter Center will conduct this phase of the AWRTI project over 39 months, starting October 1, 2024 and ending approximately December 31, 2027. The Carter Center will determine the duration of this sub-grant in coordination with the selected recipient but seeks to begin programming as quickly as possible. The Carter Center will provide subgrants to the selected CSO(s) annually based on funding availability.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

1. Local CSOs that are based or have a presence in the specified districts, Dinajpur (3 Upazilas) and/or Netrokona (3 Upazilas);
2. Local CSOs with experience in women’s empowerment, access to information, governance, and accountability; and,
3. Local CSOs that have NGOAB registration.

BUDGET CEILING:

The proposed amounts below are illustrative.

District 1: Dinajpur USD 133,000.00

Year 1 (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025): USD 39,000

Year 2 (October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026): USD 39,000
 Year 3 (October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027): USD 39,000
 Year 4 (October 1, 2027 – December 31, 2027): USD 16,000

District 2: Netrokona USD 133,000.00

Year 1 (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025): USD 39,000
 Year 2 (October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026): USD 39,000
 Year 3 (October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027): USD 39,000
 Year 4 (October 1, 2027 – December 31, 2027): USD 16,000

EVALUATION:

Applications will first be reviewed according to the threshold questions below to determine if they qualify for full evaluation according to the criteria listed. Any application that does not clearly meet these threshold requirements will be rejected.

- 1) Does the proposal clearly align with the goals and intermediate results of the AWRTI project and include a focus on climate change?
- 2) Does the proposal provide evidence of a bank statement and certificate?

Applications that meet the threshold requirements will be reviewed according to the criteria below:

| SL. No | Evaluation Criteria | Score |
|----------|--|------------|
| 1 | Organizational Profile | |
| 1.1 | Organizational background, management, and governance structure | 10 |
| 1.2 | Organizational network, reputation, and experience working in relevant areas | 15 |
| 2 | Proposed Concept Detail | |
| 2.1 | Key Activities | 15 |
| 2.2 | Risk Analysis and Mitigation Strategies | 5 |
| 2.3 | Target groups, geographic areas | 10 |
| 2.4 | Monitoring and Evaluation plan | 10 |
| 2.5 | Sustainability | 5 |
| 2.6 | Expected results | 10 |
| 3 | Finance | |
| 3.1 | Budget | 20 |
| | TOTAL | 100 |

SUBMISSION DETAILS:

Applicants should submit their documents to <https://filerequestpro.com/up/the-carter-center-bangladesh-local-cso-partner-dinajpur-and-netrokona-districts-request-for-applications> no later than **July 31, 2024**.

Applications should include:

- A narrative proposal, including but not limited to:

- Background understanding of the issue of women’s right of access to information;
 - A program design overview and details of proposed activities, including identified beneficiary groups, an implementation timeline, and named lead project personnel;
 - Identified working areas for the programming;
 - A risk analysis, including mitigation strategies;
 - A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, including specific targets reached through each proposed activity; and,
 - Organizational qualifications to lead this work, including dates and budget amount of three most recently implemented, donor-supported programs.
- A budget, detailing line item and activity costs, including staff allocation, for the suggested time period;
 - A budget narrative, explaining proposed costs;
 - An organizational UEI number (if available);
 - Proof of SAM registration (if available);
 - TIN Certificate and Proof of NGO Registration; and
 - Evidence of bank statement/certificate.

For any questions, direct emails to ruleoflawbangladesh@cartercenter.org.

REQUIREMENTS:

The successful local civil society organization(s) will be required to complete a pre-award survey from The Carter Center, obtain a UEI number (if applicable), and complete registration within the System for Award Management (SAM) (if applicable) prior to issuance of any funding from The Carter Center. Requirements for obtaining a UEI number and completing SAM registration only apply to organizations who do not already meet these conditions.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: [Proposal Template \(Click here\)](#)

Attachment B: [Detailed Budget and Gantt Chart Template \(click here\)](#)