



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) # CEP-SSG-01

Strategic Support Grants

Issued on December 14, 2016

The USAID Civic Engagement Project in Macedonia (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Project’) invites civil society organizations (CSO) in Macedonia to apply for Strategic Support Grants (SSGs).

The Civic Engagement Project (CEP) is a five year USAID-funded program that contributes to achieve two objectives: (1) strengthened influence of CSOs on policies and programs related to priority issues of citizen concern; and (2) increased and sustained youth engagement in public life in Macedonia. The Project is implemented by East West Management Institute (EWMI), in partnership with four local CSOs: the Foundation for Internet and Society “Metamorphosis” (Metamorphosis), the Association for Democratic Initiatives (ADI), the Foundation for Open Society in Macedonia (FOSM), and the National Youth Council of Macedonia (NYCM). The Strategic Support Grants will be managed by Metamorphosis.

The aim of the Strategic Support Grants (SSGs) is to support CSOs, including think tanks, that work in the following **priority areas**: good governance, public service improvement, rule of law, anti-corruption, human rights, economic growth, business enabling environment, and monitoring and oversight of public institutions.

SSGs will enable CSOs to:

- (i) plan and implement long term interventions, including policy analysis, public education and civic engagement, advocacy campaigns, engaging constructively with government actors and institutions, and monitoring public policies, programs, and budgets;
- (ii) be proactive in representing citizens' concerns and initiating activities in the priority areas listed in the paragraph above;
- (iii) invest in their capacity development, in particular in enhancing their impact, engaging broader segments of the society, and becoming financially stable; and
- (iv) participate in local, regional, or international networking events (capped funding).

Prior to signing a grant agreement, the Project will assist the winning applicants to develop or update their Strategic Plans and Capacity Development Plans. The final program description of the SSG agreements with the winning applicants will reflect a large section of the action items from these two plans.

The Project **will not accept or** review applications that include the following activities:

- Support for or lobbying on behalf of a particular political party;
- Religious activities;
- Humanitarian/charitable activities;
- Theoretical research;
- Capital expenditures, including construction activities.

GRANT AWARDS

The Project plans to award up to **7 (seven)** grants under this RfA. The maximum grant award for each proposal is **120,000 USD** covering activities that may last up to 3 (three) years. Grant funds may be used only for activities directly related to the implementation of the Grant. The Project reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

The Project will give priority to CSOs, including think tanks, that:

- Focus on priority issues of concern to citizens in Macedonia including: good governance, public service improvement, rule of law, anti-corruption, human rights, economic growth, business enabling environment, and monitoring and oversight of public institutions;
- Have a proven track record of engaging in effective and successful interventions related to the above-listed priority issues for at least the last three years;
- Have a proven track record of implementing projects that benefit communities and stakeholders in two or more regions of Macedonia;
- Support multi-culturalism and inter-ethnic cooperation and take progressive stances vis-à-vis gender equality and social inclusion;
- Demonstrate understanding and commitment to cooperate with a wide range of stakeholders, including the media, private sector, think tanks and academia, and public institutions;
- Are willing to commit to substantial capacity development of their CSO with assistance by the Project; and
- Are insufficiently supported by other USAID programs or other donors.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

CSOs legally registered in Macedonia are eligible to submit proposals in response to this RfA. Applicant CSOs should meet the following criteria:

- Be a Macedonian CSO, meaning that it is managed by a governing body the majority of who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of Macedonia;
- Have at least three years of substantial experience in undertaking actions in the areas of good governance, public service improvement, rule of law, anti-corruption, human rights, economic growth, business enabling environment, and monitoring and oversight of public institutions - as a rule, the Project will not provide “start-up” funding, although the Project may make a rare exception if sufficient evidence is presented to show that the CSO’s leadership has adequate prior experience and the CSO is capable of filling a niche that has been underserved in the past;
- Have a governance structure that ensures proper rotation of leadership and delegation of power, including, at least, a Board of Directors, a Chairperson, and an Executive Director. The same individual should not hold the position of the Board Chairperson and Executive Director. If this criterion is not met, the applicant must submit a proposed reform process that will work towards meeting these standards.
- Have a transparent system of bookkeeping that complies with the Macedonian legislation and International Accounting Standards (IAS). If such a system is not in place, upon grant award, the grantee must work closely with the Project office to ensure that accurate financial management and transparent bookkeeping systems are developed.
- Must not be a debtor of the Government of Macedonia and must have cancelled any debt to the state or arranged for debt collection by the state prior to receiving the first disbursement of grant funds by the Project.
- Must operate as an independent non-politically affiliated organization.
- Must not be debarred, suspended, excluded or otherwise ineligible to receive US Federal funding.

Civil servants, political appointees, members of the current parliament, staff of public broadcasting companies, and/or leaders of political parties cannot participate in a grant project as a director or as grant-remunerated participant.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

The Project will accept proposals only in English. Applications can be mailed, e-mailed, or hand-delivered to the relevant address (see below) in Skopje. Faxed applications will not be accepted.

Applicants must submit the following documents:

- A copy of the Application Form and a Project Budget;
- A copy of the organization’s Annual Report, both financial and technical (if available) or indicate an internet link where these documents can be found;
- A letter of support from relevant public institution(s) or media if the applicant plans to work with public officials or media staff.

Before making the final decision, the Project may request additional documentation such as:

- A copy of the organization’s most recent registration document;

- Auditor's report;
- Financial statements (Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss, Cash Flow); and
- The organization's policies.

Submitted proposals must be the original and sole work of the applicant organization. Plagiarism will result in disqualification from the grant competition.

The Project will retain all materials and documents submitted by applicants. It will not use this information for purposes other than proposal review and will not share it with other persons or institutions, except when required by Macedonian law or requested by USAID.

Please note that in line with our donor coordination efforts, we will share the names of the applicants and a short description of their respective projects with other Macedonian and international programs that support CSOs in Macedonia.

EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

The selection process will be administered by a Grants Review Committee (GRC) established by the Project for the purpose of this RfA. If an application is short-listed for potential funding, the respective applicant may be requested to provide additional information.

The Project will assess proposals based on the following criteria:

I. Technical Approach– 60% of the total score

a. Project Design and Feasibility– 25%

- The degree to which the application is responsive to this RfA and adequately addresses the Project's main objectives related both to the priority areas that the applicant plans to work on in the next three years, as well as the applicant's planned organizational capacity development activities;
- Relevance of the proposed Program Description to priority areas, as identified in this RfA;
- The potential of the proposed actions to successfully and efficiently achieve the objectives outlined in the application's Program Description;
- The extent to which the proposed actions introduces innovative and potentially replicable approaches;
- The level of coordination of the proposed Program Description with other USAID or other international programs of technical assistance and training;
- Citizen interest in the problem that the proposed Program Description addresses, as explained in the application;
- Reliable quantitative and qualitative indicators for measuring and evaluating the proposed actions' impact;
- The plan for ensuring that the proposed solution(s) will be sustained once the grant funding expires.

b. Geography– 5%

- The extent of the proposed Program Description's focus in engaging citizens in CSO-led activities at the regional or country level;
- Extent to which the proposed Program Description plans to engage remote or underserved communities.

c. Beneficiaries– 20%

- The level and nature of proposed actions to ensure large-scale engagement of citizens: generate awareness, support for advocacy, and/or other activities involving citizens;
- The level and nature of proposed actions to encourage volunteerism, as well as youth engagement;
- The level and nature of proposed actions to include girls, women, ethnic and religious minorities, people with disabilities, the LGBT community, and other marginalized groups in the proposed activities.

d. *Collaborative Posture*– 10%

- The level and nature of proposed actions to ensure cooperation among CSOs, public institutions, media, and citizens to better achieve the proposed Program Description’s goal;
- The level and nature of proposed actions to ensure collaboration among CSOs in sharing expertise and resources to implement innovative advocacy, civic engagement, and technology approaches in fulfilling proposed Program Description goals.

II. Organizational, Technical and Management Capability and Past Performance– 40% of the total score

a. *Technical and Management Capacity*– 20%

The technical and managerial capacity of the applicant to successfully carry out Program Description implementation on a timely basis, and to produce the targeted results. This includes an evaluation of:

- The track record and demonstrated commitment of the applicant to implement proposed activities and demonstrated ability to work well with other organizations and partners;
- The experience and expertise of the management team and proposed personnel; and
- The provision for appropriate monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms and staff.

b. *Organizational Capability* – 10%

- The general financial strength of the applicant;
- The organizational structure and good governance practices of the applicant;

c. *Past Performance*– 10%

- Past performance in achieving positive results when implementing activities similar to those proposed;
- Experience working with USAID/other donor funds and ability to meet reporting and accountability requirements;
- Demonstrated ability to gather and analyze data on program outcomes.

III. Cost Effectiveness (*will be reviewed for consistency and allowability but will not be an evaluation factor*)

- The budget must be (i) complete and fully documented, (ii) reasonable, and (iii) allocated to appropriate budget categories.
- The budget must demonstrate a clear and direct relationship between proposed activities and the proposed use of funds;

- Proposed expenditures must be allowable and allocable to the proposed Program Description.

TIMELINE

RfA launch date	December 14, 2016
Deadline for submitting clarification requests to the Project	December 22, 2016
Date when the Project will issue clarifications or/and organize an Information Session for interested applicants	December 28, 2016
DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS	16:30, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2017
Evaluation of proposals	February 24, 2017
Grant award notification to successful applicants	March 6, 2017
Working with the successful applicants to assess their advocacy and organizational capacity needs, and develop or update their Strategic Plan and Capacity Development Plan	March 13 – May 12, 2017
Grant agreement signing	MAY 22, 2017
<i>Please note that evaluation and award dates are subject to change</i>	

CONTACT INFORMATION

Application Form: To download the application form, please see the RfA announcement at www.metamorphosis.org.mk. Alternatively, please contact the Metamorphosis Grants Manager—Ms. Qendresa Sulejmani, at qendresa@metamorphosis.org.mk for an application form.

Clarifications: Applicants should submit clarification requests by the deadline listed above via email to Metamorphosis Grants Manager – Ms. Qendresa Sulejmani, at qendresa@metamorphosis.org.mk. The Project will issue clarifications to all interested organizations via e-mail and on www.metamorphosis.org.mk.

Proposals: Applicants should submit their proposal and required documents via e-mail to the Metamorphosis Grants Manager – Ms. Qendresa Sulejmani, at qendresa@metamorphosis.org.mk. E-mails must have “RfA # CEP-SSG-01:Strategic Support Grants” in the subject line.

Alternatively, applicants may submit the printed application in a sealed envelope to:

Metamorphosis, Apostol Guslarot 40, Skopje, att: Ms. Cvetanka Shaurek. Should you choose to mail the hard copy of the proposal, please note that the time when the sealed envelope is delivered to Metamorphosis will be taken into consideration and not the time the when the envelope is mailed. The mail should be delivered to Metamorphosis’ office by **16:30, January 25, 2017**.

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