



## **REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) # CEP-PG-01**

### **Partnership Grants**

*Issued on November 18, 2016*

The USAID Civic Engagement Project in Macedonia (hereinafter referred to as 'the Project') invites civil society organizations (CSO) alliances in Macedonia to apply for Partnership Grants. The CSO alliances include legally registered and not registered CSO coalitions, platforms, networks, and alliances comprised of more than five member CSOs.

The Civic Engagement Project is a five year USAID-funded program 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 Partnership for Change Grants will be managed by Metamorphosis.

The aim of the Partnership Grants is to support CSO alliances to: (i) become leaders in shaping and constructively engaging in issues of public concern; (ii) enhance their capacity to engage citizens, media, government institutions and other stakeholders in advancing the public's wellbeing ; and (iii) strengthen their institutional capacity.

Grant activities could include:

- Advocacy, monitoring, public policy analysis, and public education initiatives in the following 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; and
- CSO alliances' capacity development activities, that could include establishing and providing membership services to CSO alliance members; expanding the CSO alliances with a variety of stakeholders, including regionally-based CSOs, CSOs that represent socially excluded groups, the private sector, media, and/or academia; working constantly, persistently, and creatively to engage citizens and various constituencies, e.g., media, private sector, and the government, in all aspects of the CSO alliances' work;

and strengthening CSO alliances' networking with relevant stakeholders in South East Europe and beyond.

Prior to signing a grant agreement, the Project will assist the winning applicants to develop or update their Strategic Plan and a Capacity Development Plan. The final program description of the Partnership Grant agreement with the winning applicants will reflect a large section of the action items included in 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 2 (two) grants under this RfA. The maximum grant award for each proposal is 120,000 USD, and is for activities lasting 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 CSO alliances 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 five or more CSO members and a proven track record of engaging in joint actions at least for the last three years;
- 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 to advance reforms;
- Are willing to commit to substantial capacity development of their CSO alliance; and
- Are insufficiently supported by other USAID programs or other donors.

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

CSO alliances legally registered in Macedonia or not-registered are eligible to submit proposals in response to this RfA. The Project will award grants to CSO alliances that are not legally registered to a CSO that is a member of the respective CSO alliance, based on a

Memorandum of Understanding that is signed by all the respective CSO alliance members prior to the grant award.

The criteria listed below apply to the secretariat/coordinating body of the legally registered CSO alliances and the CSO alliance member that will manage the grant on behalf of the CSO alliances that are not legally registered.

Applicant CSO alliances (or the legally registered CSO that will manage the grant on behalf of a CSO alliance that is not legally registered) should meet the following criteria:

- Have at least 5 CSO members - individual (person) members of CSO alliances do not count for the purposes of this criterion;
- Have at least three years of undertaking joint actions - 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 alliance’s leadership has adequate prior experience and the CSO alliance 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 or CSO Alliance Coordinator. The same individual should not hold the position of the Board Chairperson and Executive Director/CSO Alliance Coordinator. 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 the Project grant funds.
- Must operate as an independent non-politically affiliated organization.
- Must not be debarred, suspended, excluded or otherwise ineligible to receive U.S. Government funding.

**Note:** CEP’s local implementing partners – Metamorphosis, ADI, FOSM, and NYCM - are members of several leading CSO alliances in Macedonia. These CSO alliances are eligible to apply for Partnership Grants, but CEP’s implementing partners will not receive any direct or indirect funding as part of a potential grant award by CEP to any of these CSO alliances.

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 Project office 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 select strategic priority reforms that the applicant plans to work on in the next three years, as well as the applicant's planned capacity development activities of the respective CSO alliance;
- Relevance of the proposed Program Description to priority issues, 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 foreign 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 throughout Macedonia;
- 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	November 18, 2016
Deadline for submitting clarification questions to the Project	November 28, 2016
Date when the Project will issue clarifications or/and organize an Information Session for interested applicants	December 1, 2016
<b>DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS</b>	<b>16:30, DECEMBER 23, 2016</b>
Evaluation of proposals	January 16, 2017
Grant award notification to successful applicants	January 25, 2017
Working with the two successful applicants to assess their advocacy and organizational capacity needs, and develop or update their Strategic Plan and Capacity Development Plan	February 1 – March 31, 2017
Grant agreement signing	<b>MARCH 31, 2017</b>
<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](http://www.metamorphosis.org.mk). Alternatively, please contact the Project’s Grants Manager -Gordana Mirchikj, at [gmirchikj@ewmi.org](mailto:gmirchikj@ewmi.org) for an application form.

**Clarifications:** Applicants should submit clarification questions by the deadline listed above via email to the Project’s Grants Manager - Gordana Mirchikj, at [gmirchikj@ewmi.org](mailto:gmirchikj@ewmi.org). The Project will issue clarifications to all interested organizations via e-mail and on [www.metamorphosis.org.mk](http://www.metamorphosis.org.mk).

**Proposals:** Applicants should submit their proposal and required documents via e-mail to the Project’s Grants Manager- Gordana Mirchikj, at [gmirchikj@ewmi.org](mailto:gmirchikj@ewmi.org). E-mails must have “RfA # CEP-PG-01:Partnership 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 considered to be the date and time of the application, not the time the when the envelope is mailed. The mail should be delivered to Metamorphosis’ office by **16:30, December 23, 2016**.

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