



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) # CEP-PG-02
Partnership Grants
Issued on January 22, 2018

The USAID Civic Engagement Project in Macedonia (CEP) invites civil society organizations (CSO) alliances in Macedonia to apply for Partnership Grants (PGs). The CSO alliances include legally registered and non-registered CSO coalitions, platforms, networks, and alliances comprised of at least five (5) member CSOs.

CEP is a five year USAID-funded program that works to achieve two objectives: (1) strengthen constructive engagement by CSOs on policies and issues of public concern; and (2) increase and sustain youth engagement in public life in Macedonia. CEP is implemented by East West Management Institute, Inc. (EWMII), in partnership with four local CSOs: Metamorphosis, Foundation for Internet and Society (Metamorphosis), the Association for Democratic Initiatives (ADI), the Foundation Open Society - Macedonia (FOSM), and the National Youth Council of Macedonia (NYCM). PGs are managed by Metamorphosis.

PGs' aim to support CSO alliances that work in the following **priority areas**:

1. Good Governance and/or Anti-Corruption;
2. Rule of Law and/or Human Rights;
3. Economic Growth and/or Local Economic Development;
4. Public Service Improvement;
5. Environment.

PGs will enable CSO alliances to:

- (i) become leaders in shaping and constructively engaging with priority 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.

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

- Support for or lobby on behalf of a particular political party;
- Religious activities;
- Humanitarian/charitable activities;
- Theoretical research;
- Sub-awards.

For more details on the unallowable costs under CEP, please consult Annex B – Budget Guidelines.

CEP Project **will also not accept or review** applications by:

- Lead organizations that are currently implementing CEP's Partnership Grants;
- Current recipients of CEP's Strategic Support Grants in the role of lead organization.

GRANT AWARDS

CEP plans to award up to **2 (two)** grants under this RfA. The maximum grant award for each proposal is **120,000 USD** covering activities that may last not less than 30 months and up to 36 months. Grant funds may be used only for activities directly related to the implementation of grant activities. CEP reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

CEP will give priority to CSO alliances that:

- Focus on the **priority areas of this RfA** and that are important to citizens in Macedonia;
- Have a proven track record of engaging in effective and successful joint actions related to the priority areas under this call for **at least the last three years**;
- Support multi-culturalism and inter-ethnic cooperation and take progressive stances vis-à-vis gender equality and social inclusion;
- 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 a 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 provide (in section J under chapter III Organizational Background in the Application Form) 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 CEP to ensure that accurate financial management and transparent bookkeeping systems are developed;
- Demonstrate understanding and commitment to **cooperate with a wide range of stakeholders**, including the media, private sector, think tanks, academia, and public institutions;
- **Demonstrate a clear and feasible sustainability plan** that increases the likelihood that CEP-funded activities will have lasting positive impact or will continue after the end of the grant;
- Are willing to commit to **substantial capacity development** of their CSO alliance with assistance by CEP;
- In the case of non-registered CSO alliances, **plan to engage staff from more than one CSO alliance member** in the implementation of the proposed project; and
- **Allocate relevant resources** for the needs of the CSO alliance and are willing to commit for the successful implementation of this project **at least one full-time staff member** of the CSO alliance.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

CSO alliances legally registered and non-registered CSO alliances operating in Macedonia are eligible to submit proposals in response to this RfA. In cases of non-registered CSO alliances, CEP will award the grant to one (lead applicant) 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 members 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 the CSO alliance that is not legally registered) should meet the following eligibility criteria:

- (i) Be a **Macedonian CSO alliance**, meaning that it is managed by a governing body the simple majority of which are citizens or lawful permanent residents of Macedonia;
- (ii) Have **at least five (5) CSO members** – individual (person) members of the CSO alliances do not count for the purpose of this criterion;
- (iii) Be registered for at least **three years** (if registered as an CSO alliance) or have joint activities for at least the past three years (if not registered) in the priority areas of this RFA;
- (iv) *Applicable only for non-registered CSO alliances* - Provide **relevant proof** for the existence of the CSO alliance, that could include: reports on joint initiatives by CSO alliance members submitted to respective donors; correspondence with donors or/and public institutions related to the CSO alliance's joint initiatives; minutes, list of participants, and pictures of the CSO Alliance's meetings, etc.;
- (v) *Applicable only for non-registered CSO alliances* - Provide a **Memorandum of Understanding** signed by all CSO members of the CSO alliance;
- (vi) The submitted project proposal duration **must be between 30 and 36 months**; and
- (vii) Have submitted and **completed all sections of the Application Form** for this RFA and deliver the full application package **in hard copy before the deadline** stated in the timeline of this RFA.

In addition, applicant CSO alliances:

- **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 alliance/organization**;
- Must **not be debarred, suspended, excluded or otherwise ineligible** to receive US Federal funding; and
- Must be able to provide its **DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number** and should be registered on the website: www.SAM.gov prior to signing the grant agreement.

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, however, 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 a grant-remunerated participants.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Upon signing the grant agreement, CEP will provide capacity development assistance (CDA) to the winning applicants. At the beginning, CEP will conduct capacity assessment of the CSO

alliance using two tools: Organizational and Advocacy Capacity Assessment (OACA) and Net-Map Analysis. OACA methodology uses a semi-structured interview format with managing bodies and staff of the CSO alliance and a desk review of the alliance's documents. Net-Map analysis is an in-depth analysis of the CSO alliance's inner workings and processes and is crucial in designing strategies and identifying actions to strengthen the network from within. The OACA and Net-Map reports will summarize the assessment's findings, provide the respective CSO alliance with a clear and concrete analysis of its strengths and gaps and recommend key strategies to address the gaps.

Building upon the awarded proposal and the results of OACA and Net-Map, within two months following the assessments, CEP will assist the CSO alliance to develop (or update when this plan exists) their Strategic Plan (SP), Capacity Development Plan (CDP), and Annual Work Plan (AWP). This process will be as participatory as possible, including CSO alliance members, staff members, board members, volunteers, beneficiaries, etc.

CEP will provide long-term support to the grantees based on the adopted SP and CDP. CEP will make available leading local experts to serve as mentors to the respective CSO alliance for the entire duration of the grant. In addition to this, CSO alliance' management and staff will participate in peer learning and networking activities such as: CEP's Quarterly Grantee Meetings, CSO Learning Circles, Best Practices and Innovation Events, in-country exchange visits, exchange visits with peers abroad, Annual CSO Weeks, training workshops, and other capacity development activities.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

CEP will accept proposals only in English. Applications can be mailed or hand-delivered to Metamorphosis office. **E-mailed and faxed applications will not be accepted.** Applicants must submit **five printed copies** of their application and supporting documentations as well as **one CD or USB flash drive containing all documents submitted in hard-copy.**

Applicants must submit the following documents:

- 1) **Five printed copies** of the Application Form and the Project Budget. At least one of the copies must contain the original stamp and signature;
- 2) **Five copies of Budget notes** added to the Project Budget;
- 3) **Five copies** of submitted letters of support from relevant public institution(s), media or CSOs, in cases when the applicant plans to work with public officials, media, or other CSOs;
- 4) **Five copies** of the Annual Financial Report or final account of the legally registered CSO alliance; or of the lead CSO applicant in case of the non-registered CSO alliance;
- 5) **Five copies** of the organization's registration document not older than six months, issued by the Central Register of the Republic of Macedonia (from the registered CSO alliance or the lead CSO applicant for the non-registered CSO alliance);
- 6) **Five copies** of the organizational chart/structure of the CSO alliance;
- 7) *Applicable only for non-registered CSO alliances* - **Five copies of proof** of the CSO alliance past activities in the last three years, that could include: reports on joint initiatives by CSO alliance members submitted to respective donors; correspondence with donors or/and public institutions related to the CSO

alliance's joint initiatives; minutes, list of participants, and pictures of the CSO Alliance's meetings, etc.;

- 8) *Applicable only for non-registered CSO alliances* - **Five copies** of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by **ALL** CSO members of the alliance; and
- 9) **One CD or USB** containing all documents submitted in hard-copy.

Applicants selected for awards will be subject to a pre-award risk assessment conducted by CEP to ascertain whether the applicant has the minimum management capabilities required to handle US government funds. Therefore, before making the final decision, CEP may request additional documentation, such as, but not limited to:

- Auditor's report;
- Financial statements (Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss, Cash Flow);
- The most recent alliance/organizational Strategic Plan (if available); and alliance/organization's policies.

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

CEP 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 CEP 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.

CEP will assess proposals based on the following criteria:

I. Technical Approach – 75% of the total score

a. Project Design and Feasibility – 30%

- The degree to which the application is responsive to this RfA and adequately addresses CEP'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;
- The potential of the proposed actions to successfully and efficiently achieve the objectives outlined in the application's Program Description;
- Clear articulation of tangible results and/or impact of the proposed actions;
- Clear demonstration of citizens' interest in the problem that the application's Program Description addresses, as explained in the application—In other words, is there evidence that the proposal will trigger action or work that the community wants? Will it make a difference in the community it purports to aid or resolve the issue it addresses?;

b. Geography – 5%

- The extent of the proposed Program Description’s focus in engaging citizens in CSO-led activities at the community, municipal, regional or country level;
 - Extent to which the proposed Program Description plans to engage remote or underserved communities.
- c. *Beneficiaries – 10%*
- 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 LGBTI community, and/or 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, private sector and citizens to better achieve the application’s 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 the application’s Program Description goals.
- e) *Sustainability and Impact – 20%*
- The extent to which the proposed actions introduce innovative, potentially replicable, and self-sustaining approaches;
 - The level of coordination with local, national or international stakeholders and institutions that enhance the impact and sustainability of CEP-funded activities;
 - The extent to which applicants can demonstrate existing or likely co-funding from external (i.e., municipalities, private sector, community) sources or own-sources;
 - The plan for ensuring that the proposed solution(s) will be sustained once the grant funding expires.
 - Clear articulation of tangible results and/or impact of the proposed actions – In other words, does the activity support *citizens*, either individually or as organized groups, interacting with the public sector, either national or locally, to strengthen mechanisms for inclusion, accountability and participation in order to enhance citizens’ role in shaping public policies, community development or improving public services;
 - Reliable quantitative and qualitative indicators for measuring and evaluating the proposed actions’ impact;

II. Organizational, Technical and Management Capability and Past Performance – 25% of the total score

a. *Technical and Management Capacity – 10%*

- 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 the proposed personnel; and
 - The provision for appropriate monitoring, evaluation, and reporting mechanisms and staff.
- b. *Organizational Capability – 5%*
- 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 and budget notes 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	January 22, 2018
Info Sessions Schedule	January 31 – February 9, 2018
Deadline for submitting clarification requests to CEP	February 12, 2018
Date by which CEP will issue clarifications or/and organize an Information Session for interested applicants	February 15, 2018
DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS	16:00, FEBRUARY 20, 2018
Evaluation of proposals	March 15, 2018
Grant award notification to successful applicants	March 26, 2018
Grant agreement signing	May 2, 2018
Earliest starting date for grant-supported activities	May 3, 2018
Working with the successful applicants to conduct OACA and Net Mapping, and develop and/or update their Strategic Plan and Capacity Development Plan	May – October, 2018
<i>Please note that evaluation and award dates are subject to change</i>	

CONTACT INFORMATION

Application Form: To download the application form, please find the RfA announcement at the following link: www.metamorphosis.org.mk or visit CEP Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/CEPMacedonia/>. Alternatively, please contact Metamorphosis

Grants Coordinator, Ms. Marija Panchevska, at marijap@metamorphosis.org.mk for the application package.

Clarifications: Applicants should submit clarification requests by the deadline listed above via email to Metamorphosis' Grants Coordinator, Ms. Marija Panchevska, at marijap@metamorphosis.org.mk. CEP will issue clarifications to all interested organizations via e-mail and on www.metamorphosis.org.mk.

Proposals: Applicants should submit the printed application and required documents in a sealed envelope to the following address:

**Metamorphosis Foundation
Apostol Guslarot 40
Skopje, Macedonia
Attn: Marija Panchevska.**

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 **16:00, February 20, 2018.**

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