



To: All organizations wishing to support development initiatives in the Republic of Georgia

Subject: Request for Information (RFI)

Activity: Technical Assistance to support Elections and Political Processes (EPPs) Activities

Issuance Date: March 14, 2018

Closing Date: April 13, 2018

Closing Time: 18:00 Georgia time

USAID/Georgia has developed a Request for Information for the purpose of providing industry and stakeholders an opportunity to review, comment, and provide suggestions for improvement or clarification on the attached problem statement and questions. The Request for Information may lead to a formal solicitation or notice of funding opportunity for potential offerors. The Request for Information is provided in the following pages. In accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation 15.209(c), the following clause is incorporated into this RFI:

FAR 52.215-3 REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OR SOLICITATION FOR PLANNING PURPOSES (OCT 1997)

(a) The Government does not intend to award a contract on the basis of this solicitation or to otherwise pay for the information solicited except as an allowable cost under other contracts as provided in subsection 31.205-18, Bid and proposal costs, of the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

(b) Although “proposal” and “offeror” are used in this Request for Information, your response will be treated as information only. It shall not be used as a proposal.

(c) This solicitation is issued for the purpose of obtaining information from interested parties regarding the design process of USAID/Georgia’s new EPPs PAD and anticipated upcoming EPPs programing. (See details below and in attachment).

DISCLAIMER

This is a Request for Information (RFI) only. It is not a Request for Proposal, a Request for Quotation, an Invitation for Bids, a Solicitation, nor is it an indication that USAID/Georgia will contract for the items contained in this Notice. This RFI is an opportunity for USAID/Georgia to obtain information to inform the new PAD and anticipated activities. In accordance with FAR 15.201(e), responses to this notice are not offers and cannot be accepted by the U.S. Government to form a binding contract. Responses to this RFI are strictly voluntary and USAID will not pay respondents for information provided in response

to this RFI. Responses to this RFI will not be returned and respondents will not be notified of the result of the review. If a Solicitation or Notice of Funding Opportunity is issued, it will be announced on the Federal Business Opportunities website <http://www.fbo.gov> or <https://www.grants.gov>, as applicable, at a later date, and all interested parties must respond to that Solicitation or Notice of Funding Opportunity announcement separately from any response to this announcement. This RFI does not restrict the Government's acquisition approach on a future Solicitation or Notice of Funding Opportunity.

INSTRUCTIONS

Responses (comments, suggestions, and enhancements) to this RFI are due to the Regional Contracting Office identified below by **18:00hrs (Georgia time); April 13, 2018**. Respondents shall provide one (1) electronic copy of their response; Electronic submissions, in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat formats are acceptable. Please e-mail responses to rcocaucasus@usaid.gov. Please reference the e-mail with the subject title "Response to RFI-Solicitation 72011418R00007".

Thank you for your interest in USAID's activities.

Sincerely,

/s/

Justin Gunnoe
Regional Contracting Officer

Attachment 1: Elections and Political Processes Activities

USAID/Georgia Elections and Political Process Activities

USAID/Georgia's Office of Democracy, Governance and Social Development (DGSD) is designing its new Elections and Political Processes (EPPs) Project Appraisal Document (PAD) and related EPPs activities. To inform the design process, USAID/Georgia is requesting stakeholder feedback. Please review the preliminary Problem Statement below and respond to any or all of the specific questions listed on the following page.

Preliminary Problem Statement

Overarching Problem

Despite much progress made, Georgia's adolescent democracy remains fragile. Recent election results have challenged efforts at fostering a culture of political pluralism and have further polarized policy making. The ruling party's political supremacy threatens Georgia's long-term stability as the marginalized voices of the political minority have no effective avenue for opposition, thus risking the social and political upheaval of the past.

Sub-Problem One

Opposition political parties are weak, divided, and unable to challenge the dominance of the ruling party. Lack of intra-party democracy, weak organizational capacity, internecine fighting, personality-based party identities, low-level technical skills, and inadequate resources undercut opposition political party efforts to build constituencies, competitively contest elections, engage in meaningful issue-based debate, and effectively contribute to national and local policy formation.

Sub-Problem Two

Election-related laws (i.e. political party and campaign financing, media coverage, etc.) and practices (i.e. permissive environment for abuse of administrative resources, intimidation, and harassment; weak oversight; etc.) have tilted the electoral playing field against the opposition, thus weakening electoral competition and helping cement the ruling party's fix on political power.

Sub-Problem Three

The relatively inexperienced Georgian electorate is largely unknowledgeable about political and electoral processes. Having participated in its first democratic elections just 27 years ago, it is still coming to terms with the responsibility it bears in choosing government. The social contract between voter and representative remains weak as voters have limited understanding of government functions, do not consistently hold elected officials to account, and have low expectations for representatives. Equally, voters demand little issue-based substance from political parties and candidates, are susceptible to party personalities and populist campaign promises, and when-in-doubt gravitate toward the establishment electoral choice.

Problem of Inclusion

Georgian women and ethnic and religious minorities continue to be underrepresented in EPPs, thereby weakening the voice of a large and diverse segment of the population. At the same time, Georgian youth remain disinterested and disengaged in EPPs, relative to other Georgian age groups, risking entrenching poor civic habits and cultivating a politically absent generation.

Questions for Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholders are free to submit answers to any or all of the following questions:

1. Do you find the Problem Statement accurate and appropriately articulated? If not, what enhancements would you offer? What additional problems should be considered and/or what currently mentioned problems should be disregarded, and why?
2. A Problem Statement must be scoped to a level that is within USAID's manageable influence. Do you agree that the Problem to be addressed in the new EPPs PAD and activities is within USAID's ability to influence? If not, at what level would you define the problem such that USAID is able to effect meaningful change?
3. Given limited resources, what is the most important area to work on, or intervention needed, to address the Overarching Problem, and why? How would you rank and prioritize other areas of work, or interventions, according to their ability to address the defined problem?
4. What approaches or specific interventions have worked in other countries in the region, or other countries with a similar context, that can be implemented in Georgia to address the Overarching Problem?
5. What new and innovative approaches to "political party strengthening" could be employed in Georgia to address the Overarching Problem? How should these approaches be tailored to address the changing electoral system in the 2020 and 2024 Parliamentary Elections?
6. What new and innovative approaches to ensure "fairer and more competitive elections" could be effective in Georgia? How should these approaches be tailored to address the changing electoral system in the 2020 and 2024 Parliamentary Elections?
7. What new and innovative approaches could be employed to boost political representation by women and ethnic and religious minorities?
8. What new and innovative approaches could be employed to increase youth interest and participation in electoral and political processes?
9. What other problems, purposes, possible interventions, etc. should USAID/Georgia consider during its new EPPs PAD and activity design? Please feel free to offer any relevant information not solicited in the above questions.