



Issue Date: November 18, 2021
Deadline for Questions: November 29, 2021, by 16:00 Chisinau Time
Pre-Application Conference: December 15, 2021, from 10:00-12:00 Chisinau Time
Concept Papers Closing Date: January 11, 2021, by 16:00 Chisinau Local Time

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 98.001

Subject: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Number: 72011722RFA00001
Program Title: Moldova Civil Society Resiliency Activity

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Regional Contracting Office in USAID/Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova would like to announce a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) to implement Moldova Civil Society Resiliency Activity.

Eligibility for this award is restricted to Moldovan local organizations. USAID strongly encourages applicants to develop partnerships with other responsible and eligible organizations with complementary capabilities and experiences to develop concept papers in response to this NOFO and toward the achievement of results under the activity objectives. Eligible organizations interested in submitting a response are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of project sought (Section A), the application submission requirements (Sections C and D), and the evaluation process and review criteria (Section E). To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information required in this NOFO, and meet eligibility standards in Section C.

Competition for an award resulting from this NOFO will be conducted in two phases, per Section D:

- Phase I: Submission of concept papers by prospective applicants; and
- Phase II: Co-creation, and submission of a full application upon request.

Concept papers will be reviewed by USAID and only the organization that successfully completes the first phase will be invited to participate in the second phase of the competition. USAID reserves the right to forgo the co-creation process and request a full application from the phase I successful applicant.

Subject to the availability of funds and a risk assessment, an award will be made to that responsible applicant whose application best meet the objectives of this funding opportunity and the selection criteria contained herein. While one award is anticipated as a result of this NOFO, USAID reserves the right to fund more than one or none of the applications submitted.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NOFO and meet eligibility standards in Section C of this NOFO. This funding opportunity is posted on

www.grants.gov, and may be amended. It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this NOFO and to ensure that the NOFO has been received from the internet in its entirety.

The strict deadline for submission of the questions and concept papers is no later than the time mentioned above. Any questions concerning this NOFO should be submitted in writing to Ms. Lucia Sandefur, Acquisition & Assistance Specialist, via email at lsandefur@usaid.gov with a copy to dprodan@usaid.gov and moldovasolicitations@usaid.gov.

Responses to the questions will be made available to all applicants through an amendment to this NOFO and will be furnished at the pre-application conference as detailed below.

USAID/Moldova is planning on holding an online pre-application conference. This pre-application conference is for informational purposes only. At the conclusion of a presentation, attendees will have the opportunity to ask additional questions. The presentation and all questions and answers from the pre-application conference will be provided through an amendment to this notice posted to www.grants.gov.

The pre-application conference is scheduled for December 15, 2021 starting at 10:00AM, Chisinau time. Interested eligible organizations are requested to confirm their attendance to this meeting by sending an email to Lucia Sandefur and Dan Prodan at lsandefur@usaid.gov and dprodan@usaid.gov respectively, no later than November 29, 2021. The email must include the name of your organization, attendees and contact details, to include phone numbers and email addresses. Attendance is limited to two persons per organization.

Concept papers must be submitted electronically to the emails referenced above.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute any commitment on the part of the U.S. Government nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

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Brian K. Woody
Regional Agreement Officer

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SECTION A - PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Activity Title: CIVIL SOCIETY RESILIENCY ACTIVITY

I. Theory of Change

IF Moldovan civil society organizations are constituency driven and able to diversify their resources, THEN Moldovan civil society will become more resilient and better capacitated to advance democratic reforms.

II. Goal Statement

This activity aims to increase the resiliency of Moldovan civil society by enhancing the ability of civil society organizations (CSOs) to engage with constituents and diversify their resource base. The activity will broadly define civil society to include not only well-established, registered CSOs but also unregistered civic groups, issues-based groups and civic movements.

III. Problem Statement

While citizen participation in decision-making processes has improved in recent years, the functionality and inclusiveness of democratic institutions (including CSOs) continues to face obstacles. CSOs, which should serve as a vehicle for amplifying citizen voices, struggle to establish connections with constituencies and mobilize domestic resources. This lack of societal grounding can decrease the legitimacy of organizations, making them more vulnerable to external and internal malign influence. In July 2021, the reform-oriented Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS) won a decisive majority of votes, enabling the Party to secure a legislative majority. The results of these elections may present new opportunities for CSOs to engage with the Moldovan government to advance democratic reforms. They may also offer increased opportunities for citizens to engage in CSO-led initiatives and strengthen the civil society enabling environment related to domestic resource mobilization. To capitalize on these new opportunities and increase their resiliency, Moldovan CSOs should explore new approaches to communicating to and engaging with constituents and mobilizing their domestic resource base. The new activity should prioritize a ‘bottom up’ approach to civil society assistance, or one that supports and empowers grassroots civil society organizations, including informal civic initiatives, that have or have the potential to establish close relationships with citizens on specific issues and mobilize local resources in support of their activities. Supported activities should be grounded in local needs and interests and particular attention should be given to promoting intra-sectoral cooperation between various civic entities, including formal and informal CSOs, issues-based and service provision organizations, advocacy and human rights groups, etc. The activity should address the below objectives which contribute to civil society resiliency in Moldova.

IV. Objectives

Objective 1: Constituency Engagement Enhanced

A majority of Moldovan CSOs struggle to establish and maintain relationships with constituents. CSOs overreliance on foreign donors for their survival has forced organizations to spend much of

their time and energy on proposal writing and donor reporting, rather than communicating their missions, objectives, and activities to citizens. This dependency has also encouraged CSOs to prioritize objectives that are not necessarily citizen driven and has prevented them from becoming more specialized, in an effort to quickly pivot to shifting donor priorities. Over the past two years, a growing number of Moldovan citizens have begun to create new initiative groups. The global COVID-19 pandemic intensified this development as many new informal groups were quickly stood up to respond to the new, previously unanticipated needs of Moldovan citizens. Many of these new initiative groups have been issues- based and represent an excellent opportunity for Moldovan citizens to mobilize around specific areas that are meaningful to them. These events provide a potential roadmap for more formal engagement of well-established CSOs with constituents. On the positive side, the recent establishment of Local Action Groups (LAGs) has contributed to improvements in CSO constituency engagement practices, as a basic tenet of the LAGs is to consult with citizens and engage them in the decision-making process. Another positive development is the increasing level of trust Moldovan citizens have in CSOs, which, over time, may result in an increase in citizen-engagement in CSO-led activities.

Support can seek to build relationships and networks between formal and informal groups, to help the latter to amplify their messaging and extend the reach and impact of their activities in an organic manner that is grounded in constituency building. The activity should consider successful examples of constituency identification and engagement best practices. The activity should also capacitate organizations to develop strong constituency outreach, communications, and engagement plans.

Objective 2: Domestic Resource Mobilization Increased

Moldovan CSOs dependence on external foreign funding remains significant. Researchers estimate that over 70% of CSOs annual revenue comes from foreign grants. This dependency on foreign funding effectively limits the sustainability and resiliency of the CSO sector. Despite this dependency, there have been positive trends in resource diversification in the past several years. Social entrepreneurship and crowdfunding initiatives are improving. Several national crowdfunding platforms are successfully collecting individual donations for social causes and support for community projects is of particular interest for many individuals who donate. CSOs are also increasingly engaging in economic and social enterprise activities. Citizens are growing increasingly confident in CSOs. According to the Institute for Public Policy's Barometer of Public Opinion (BPO) from June 2020, 29% of the population expressed confidence in NGOs, an increase from 19% in 2019, which may result in increased willingness among citizens to donate funding, volunteer their time, or seek out services from CSOs. CSOs are also eligible to receive funding via grants and service contracts directly through the public budget, which can represent an important source of income, especially when funding is competitively and transparently awarded. Engagement with the private sector and corporate social responsibility remains limited but represents an important potential area for engagement.

The legal enabling environment as it relates to domestic resource mobilization is improving, however weaknesses remain. Recent changes to the tax code, which enable citizens to direct up to 2 percent of their owed income tax to CSOs has motivated many groups to strengthen their outreach in an effort to persuade citizens to donate to them. These outreach efforts were proven

successful when in 2019, 20 percent more taxpayers supported CSOs through the tax mechanisms as compared to 2018. On the negative side, the current regulations do not encourage corporations to donate to CSOs and standardized tax reporting forms do not allow smaller, not VAT companies the opportunity to deduct charitable donations. The activity should assist CSOs to engage in a wide range of domestic resource mobilization activities, including in the above-mentioned areas of crowdfunding, social entrepreneurship, and public private partnership. Income generating and crowdfunding activities, regardless of the amount of funding they secure, help local organizations to develop crucial business management, communications, and accountability skills. At the same time, the activity should seek to improve the legal enabling environment to more actively promote public and private giving. Collectively, these activities should contribute to reducing CSO dependency on foreign donors and promote sustainability and resiliency of the sector.

Activities Under Objective 1 and Objective 2 should contribute to the following outcomes:

- CSOs capacity to connect with Moldovan citizens and relevant constituent groups to set priorities, raise resources, and implement activities increased;
- CSOs ability to mobilize domestic resources in response to community needs and citizen-driven priorities, including through social entrepreneurship and income generating activities, individual and private giving, GOM public funding, volunteerism and in-kind contributions, crowdfunding and corporate social responsibility campaigns improved;
- Legal enabling environment related to domestic resource mobilization improved;
- Intrasectoral partnerships between Moldovan private sector, government, and media aimed at advancing democratic development increased.

V. Alignment with USAID Strategic Priorities:

New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) The goal of the new Civil Society Resiliency Activity is to catalyze civic engagement and increase the resiliency of civil society organizations by helping them to strengthen their constituencies and diversify their resource base, which is in line with the vision of NPI. Specific interventions taking place under this activity will serve to strengthen the abilities of Moldovan civil society to plan, finance, and implement sustainable solutions to development challenges. To support this, USAID under the activity plans to prioritize efforts to promote assistance to new or underutilized organizations, including informal civic initiatives and grassroots civil society and to promote collaboration within the civil society sector.

Self-Reliance and Sustainability USAID is working to ensure its global policies, strategies, and program practices support partner countries to become more self-reliant and sustainable. This requires a prioritization on sustainability and local ownership and empowers local actors to plan, finance, and implement solutions to their country's development challenges. The goal of the new Civil Society Resiliency Activity, which is to increase the resiliency of CSOs and capacitate them to advance democratic reforms by helping them strengthen their constituencies and diversify their resources, promotes self-reliance and sustainability by increasing and more effectively using resources within Moldova to advance the development of the country. The new activity aims to strengthen the ability of CSOs to affect change in society by strengthening the relationships

between citizens and CSOs, which will contribute to improving Moldova's sustainability metrics on inclusive development.

Private Sector Engagement USAID's Private Sector Engagement Policy recognizes that partnerships with the private sector, as well as selective application of market-based approaches, is necessary to promoting sustainable development outcomes. It is important that civil society engage with the private sector when strengthening their capacities to plan, finance and implement solutions to development challenges. The new Civil Society Resiliency Activity will encourage CSOs to engage with the private sector, citizens and the government to serve as funders and active participants in advancing Moldova's democratic development.

VI. Relationship to Mission Strategy

The proposed activity (CSRA) supports USAID Moldova's recently approved CDCS and is aligned with U.S. Embassy Chisinau's Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) and the NSC's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance. USAID's goal for the strategy period 2020 – 2025 is that Moldova will be a competitive and democratic European country that resists malign influences while being powered by an aspiring citizenry and robust private sector partnerships. As part of this goal, "USAID will transition from emphasizing direct assistance to public institutions to catalyzing citizen engagement in their communities to drive demand for accountable governance and stronger democratic institutions."

Specifically, CSRA falls under CDCS Development Objective 1: Strengthened Participatory Democracy, IR 1.1: Citizen Engagement Catalyzed; Sub-IR 1.1.3: Constituent engagement and financial viability improved.

VII. Mandatory Cross-Cutting Considerations

Gender

USAID's 2019 gender assessment found that there is relative consensus among experts that the most pressing gender issues in Moldova include women's economic empowerment, the high incidence of domestic violence (DV), the interconnected issues of migration and trafficking in persons (TIP), and the relatively low level of female representation in political parties and elected office. These same areas have also been identified as issues of concern in the gender assessment conducted by USAID Moldova in 2011, a fact that indicates relative stagnation of the sector of gender equality, women empowerment and combating violence against women. This stagnation has occurred despite significant multimillion-dollar donor investments in the sector and a legislative focus of the Government of Moldova (GOM) on improvement of the regulatory framework surrounding the above-mentioned issues. There is a small group of active "women's NGOs" that are high in capacity and consistently active in addressing gender issues, but they struggle with sustainability and are almost completely dependent on donor funding. Applicants should consider gender dimensions of their approach, especially with regard to engaging constituents.

Sustainability and Self-Reliance

Financial viability continues to be the weakest dimension of CSO sustainability in Moldova. The formal CSO sector remains heavily dependent on foreign grants, and it is estimated that such grants account for more than 70 percent of annual revenues of officially registered Moldovan organizations. Crowdfunding for CSO activities has grown in recent years and demonstrates a potential area for further growth and sectoral sustainability. Starting in 2020, LAGs have been able to benefit from funding from the public budget and in February 2020, with funds being allocated to LAGs on a project proposal basis. Additionally, in recent years several actions were taken to improve the process of funding CSOs from the public budget. For example, the State Chancellery is expected to approve a development framework published by Institutum Virtutes Civilis, which outlines a model for financing projects of non-commercial organizations by central and local public authorities. The activity is expected to increase domestic resources mobilization for civil society, which will contribute to the overall sustainability and self-reliance of the sector.

Many CSOs fail to effectively communicate and involve Moldovan citizens in their activities. This lack of constituency engagement undermines the legitimacy of CSOS, which impacts their long term sustainability. The activity will work with CSOs to effectively communicate and engage with citizens, thereby increasing their legitimacy and sustainability.

In 2017, USAID reaffirmed its commitment to working with a diverse array of partners, including civil society, to advance the principles of self-reliance and locally sustained development. This activity will advance these efforts in a number of ways. For example, the activity will improve several fundamental sub-sectors of civil society development which are fundamental for long term sustainability: constituency engagement and domestic resource mobilization. Additionally, by instituting the demand-driven, co-creation approach which is envisioned under this NOFO, the activity will empower civil society to determine their own organizational weaknesses/ needs and propose activities that address these weaknesses. Lastly, the activity will be implemented by Moldovan organizations, which will help strengthen the internal project management capacity of the implementing partner(s) and empower them to self-identify their own development solutions as they relate to improving constituency engagement and strengthening domestic resource mobilization.

[END OF SECTION A]

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimated Total Funding Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID intends to award one assistance award pursuant to this NOFO. **Subject to funding availability, USAID/ Moldova intends to provide up to \$1,500,000 in total USAID funding over no more than a five-year period.** During implementation, the award may include one or more phases or checkpoints where the continuation of funding may depend on an evaluation or formal review of program progress. These phases, if any, will be determined through the co-creation and full application process. While one award is anticipated as a result of this NOFO, USAID reserves the right to fund none of the applications submitted.

2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

Applicants may propose the necessary period of performance, which is not to exceed five-years from the effective date of the award. The estimated start date is **TBD**.

3. Substantial Involvement

USAID intends to award a cooperative agreement. The Agreement Officer may determine the general nature of the award type of the specific award type, depending on the nature of the project, to facilitate co-creation under Phase II. Potential applications should note that USAID policy prohibits the payment of fee/ profit to the prime recipient under assistance instruments.

Please note that any agreement will be between USAID and only one organization as the prime/ lead partner(s), which must be clear from the concept/ application.

Per ADS 303.3.11 “Substantial Involvement and Cooperative Agreements,” USAID expects substantial involvement in the following areas, which may be tailored/updated during the co-creation phase:

- Review and approval of the Recipient’s Implementation Plans.
- Approval of Specified key Personnel.
- Agency and Recipient Collaboration or Joint Participation.

4. Authorized Geographic Code

The authorized geographic code for procurement of goods and services under this award is 937 and 110. Code 937 is defined as the United States, the cooperating/country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, and excluding prohibited sources. Code 110 is defined as the United States, the independent states of the former Soviet Union, or developing country, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source.

5. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient(s) and under the subject Activity is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support. The successful Recipient(s) will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objective and the efficient and effective administration of the award through the application of sound management practices. The Recipient(s) will assume responsibility for administering Federal funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreement, program objectives, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award.

6. Selection of Instrument

USAID/Moldova has determined there are sufficient resources and potential local organizations that have the capacity to implement the activity and meet the agency needs. Per the program description of the Civil Society Resiliency Activity and the types of skills needed to achieve the outcomes, it was determined that an assistance mechanism would be the best fit for co-creation.

[END OF SECTION B]

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

USAID encourages applications from potential new partners. USAID will not accept applications from individuals. The eligibility requirements below apply to the Prime Applicant:

Any local (Moldovan) non-governmental or commercial organizations in Moldova, who are able to respond to the NOFO, are eligible to apply under this NOFO.

USAID defines a local organization as one that:

- Is organized under the laws of the recipient Moldova;
- Has its principal place of business or operations in Moldova;
- Is majority-owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of Moldova or is managed by the governing body, the majority of whose members are citizens or lawful permanent residents of Moldova; and
- Is not controlled by a foreign entity or by an individual or individuals who are not citizens or permanent residents of Moldova.

The term “control” or “controlled by” in the above definition means having a majority ownership or beneficially interest, or the power, either directly or indirectly, whether exercised or exercisable, to control the election, appointment, or tenure of the organization’s managers or a majority of the organization’s governing body by any means, e.g., ownership, contract, or operation of law. The term “foreign entity” means an organization that fail to meet any part of the “local organization” definition.

Local organizations must meet the definition for local organization, as defined above, in Moldova.

Applicants must have established financial management, monitoring and evaluation processes, internal control systems, and policies and procedures that comply with established U.S. Government standards, laws, and regulations. The Recipient must be a responsible entity. The AO may determine a pre-award survey is required to conduct an examination that will determine whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award. Pre-award surveys are time-consuming and award decisions are based on the survey findings.

To be eligible for award of an assistance instrument, in addition to other conditions of this NOFO, organizations must have a commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries and adherence to equal opportunity employment practices. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation.

Applicants are reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibits transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism.

It is the legal responsibility of the Recipient to ensure compliance with these Executive Orders and laws. This provision must be included in all sub-awards issued under this assistance instrument.

2. Partnering

All applications are expected to demonstrate capacity to address the problem statement and programmatic elements listed in Section A of this NOFO. It is possible that one organization alone may have all the skills necessary to pursue the program objectives. However, interested organizations may choose to partner with other organizations and form a partnership as a means of demonstrating capacity to meet all Activity objectives. USAID highly encourages applicants to develop partnerships with other responsible and eligible organizations with complementary capabilities and experiences that can help achieve the results of this Activity's objectives.

3. Responsibility Determination

The successful applicant will be subject to a responsibility determination assessment (Pre-award Survey) by the AO. The Recipient must be a responsible entity. The AO may determine a pre-award survey is required to conduct an examination that will determine whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award. Depending on the result of the risk assessment, the AO will decide to execute the award, not execute the award, or award with “specific conditions”.

4. Cost Sharing of Matching

Applicants may, at their discretion, offer cost share, which shall be in accordance with 2 CFR 200.306. It will not be used in applicant selection.

[END OF SECTION C]

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency Point of Contact

Name: Lucia Sandefur

Title: Acquisition and Assistance Specialist

Email: lsandefur@usaid.gov and moldovasolicitations@usaid.gov

The above contact information is only for informational purposes. The NOFO itself and any subsequent amendments can be found at www.grants.gov. All applications must be submitted according to instructions contained in this NOFO.

2. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this NOFO should be submitted electronically via email to lsandefur@usaid.gov, with a copy to dprodan@usaid.gov and moldovasolicitations@usaid.gov no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. This is intended to provide sufficient time to address the questions during the pre-application conference and incorporate the questions and answers as an amendment to this solicitation. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this funding opportunity will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment to this NOFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicant.

3. General Content and Form of Application

The applications for this funding opportunity will be processed in two phases:

Phase I: Submission of concept papers by prospective Applicants; and selection of the apparently Successful Applicant;

Phase II: Co-Creation with the Apparently Successful Applicant; submission of a full application and negotiation of award.

Phase 1 - Concept Paper:

The Applicants must submit concept papers in response to the Moldova Civil Society Resiliency Activity's purpose and objectives as stated in the Program Description, following the guidelines outlined in this NOFO.

4. **Concept Paper Format:** Applicants should submit only the information and materials requested. Concept Papers MUST be written in the English language and submitted electronically via e-mail.

Applicants should submit Concept Papers using the Concept Paper template included as Attachment I to this addendum.

The subject line for Concept Paper email submission must include the following subject line: “Civil Society Resiliency Activity, NOFO No. 72011722RFA00001”.

Concept Papers shall not exceed six (6) pages, using 1” page margins with 12-point font. Applicants may use other than 11-12 font size for text in graphs, charts, tables, and text boxes, so long as the text is legible. USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted. USAID reserves the right not to review any concept papers that fail to follow these instructions.

Prime Applicants must submit as a part of their concept paper, which is not included in the 6-page limit:

Summary budget using:

- SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-construction Programs
- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
- Copy of the Applicant organization’s formal registration as evidence of valid legal status.
- Copy of the Applicant organization’s Tax Verification Certificate.
- Evidence that the Applicant fulfills the Local Entity Eligibility requirements.
- Evidence of commitment of key partners, such as a letter from the partner

Concept Papers must be submitted by the deadline in order to be considered. All papers received by the deadline will be reviewed according to the criteria in Section E.

Phase 2 – Co-creation/Full Application:

This phase will be facilitated by USAID which will consist of a co-creation process involving ONLY the successful applicant and their respective selected strategic partners. Please note that USAID may, at its option, choose to invite any apparently successful applicant to skip directly to the submission of a full application.

The invited applicant will be given the opportunity to co-create a program description with USAID, and other stakeholders (if any) during the co-creation process.

During co-creation, USAID expects dedicated discussions on how the proposed approaches would lead to achievement of project objectives. Co-creation after a concept paper is reviewed allows USAID and the proposed partner to clarify the objectives and approach outlined in the concept paper and confirm shared values. During co-creation, the prospective applicant, partner(s), and the USAID team will refine a situation model and theory of change, and discuss how to develop indicators to support monitoring, adaptive management, evaluation, learning and inclusiveness. If co-creation results in a mutually acceptable concept, USAID will request a full application.

Following a successful co-creation process, the applicant will be invited to submit a full technical and cost application through a formal written request from USAID. **Applicants should not prepare full applications without first receiving USAID’s invitation to do so.**

USAID’s Agreement Officer will engage in a final review, award negotiation, responsibility determination, cost/price evaluation, and other steps as needed prior to award. USAID may request additional information from the applicant(s) concerning its technical approach, organizational

capacity, management structure and past performance, cost application and representations and certifications. USAID may cancel the negotiation(s) and award process at no cost to the Government.

[END OF SECTION D]

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

The merit review criteria prescribed here are tailored to the requirements of this particular NOFO. Applicants should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify significant matters which the Applicants should address in their concept papers, and (b) set the standard against which all concept papers will be evaluated.

Technical and other factors will be evaluated relative to each other, as described here and prescribed by the concept paper template (see Attachment 1). The concept paper will be reviewed by a Selection Committee (SC) using the criteria described in this section.

2. Review and Selection Process

The concept paper and full application will be reviewed by USAID personnel against the eligibility criteria under section C and the merit review criteria as provided below. The decision to issue an award vest with the Agreement Officer.

Merit Review Criteria

PHASE 1 – CONCEPT PAPER REVIEW PROCESS

USAID will conduct a merit review of all concept papers received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO. Concept papers will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the following criteria shown in descending order of importance:

- 1) Soundness of the proposed approach as well as sustainability of the results in achieving the outcomes of the Civil Society Resiliency Activity. This means the extent to which:**
 - a. The Applicant demonstrates how the Moldovan context informs the proposed approach and supports the choice of the approach with relevant, credible evidence.
 - b. The Applicant provides a clear, logical explanation of how the proposed approach will contribute to all the Activity's outcomes provided in the Program Description, yield local ownership and sustainability, as well as address the two challenges of constituency engagement, and domestic resources mobilization.
 - c. The Applicant provides a clear, logical plan on how it will collaborate with the relevant stakeholders such as the Government of Moldova, private sector, media and diaspora groups, and regional/ smaller/ newer civic initiatives.
- 2) Capacity of the Applicant to implement the proposed approach and to achieve the Activity's outcomes. This means the extent to which:**

- a. The summative expertise (that of the Applicant and partners, if applicable) is sufficient for achieving the activity outcomes which includes experience relevant to their proposed approach.

PHASE 2 – FULL APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

In co-creation, the Apparently Successful Applicant(s) will collaborate with USAID to develop the program(s) in further detail, which may include, but be not limited to, the following areas:

- The methodology and approach of how the Applicant will engage and manage the proposed partners and divide work in order to optimize the assistance.
- How the implementation of the proposed interventions reflect the achievement of locally-led and sustainable development outcomes promote a more sustainable civil society sector in Moldova.
- How the Applicant will assess the effectiveness of the proposed interventions, and plan for the application of lessons learned, and adapting work appropriately.
- Developing and submitting a final Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MELP).
- The future viability of interventions demonstrating local ownership and leadership, including exploring opportunities to leverage resources from other local key stakeholders.
- Developing the Applicant's Management and Mobilization Plan (MMP). The MMP must include a discussion of project oversight and the proposed short-term and long-term personnel identified or expected to be used to implement the activity.
- The Applicant's proposed personnel, including position requirements and responsibilities, and designation of Key Personnel. USAID may require the Curriculum Vitae (CV) and reference contacts for all key personnel.

a. Merit Review Criteria

USAID will conduct a merit review of the full application if USAID invites the Apparently Successful Applicant(s) to submit a full application after a successful co-creation, in descending order. **Do not submit a full application unless explicitly invited by USAID/ Moldova.**

1) Soundness of the proposed approach and targeted issues as well as sustainability of the results in achieving the outcomes of the Activity. This means the extent to which:

- a. The Applicant demonstrates that the proposed approach in interventions to achieving the outcomes specified in the Program Description are feasible, innovative, locally owned, and synergistically address the two objectives described in Section A of the NOFO.

2) Capacity of the Applicant to implement the proposed approach and to achieve the outcomes of the Activity. This means the extent to which:

- a. The extent to which the proposed management structure supports the technical approach and convincingly demonstrates the ability to successfully achieve the Activity's objectives.
- b. The quality and appropriateness of the proposed key personnel, and the extent to which the proposed key personnel possess relevant experience, expertise, and leadership skills for successful implementation of the activity.
- c. The feasibility of the proposed Mobilization Plan and quality of the MELP.

[END OF SECTION E]

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

Award of the agreement contemplated by this NOFO cannot be made until funds have been appropriated, allocated and committed through internal USAID procedures. While USAID anticipates that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Agreement may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed Agreement or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

Resulting award to **local (Moldovan) non-governmental organizations** will be administered in accordance with Chapter 303 of USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS), including ADS 303mab, Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations. The Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental organizations are available at <http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>. ADS Chapter 303 is available at <http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303>.

3. Reporting

Reporting requirements will be dependent on each program. Reporting shall not be required more often than quarterly. In general, awardees can expect to provide quarterly programmatic report, a quarterly financial report (SF-425), and annual report, and a final program report. Final reporting requirements will be included in the request for full application.

4. Program Income

Program income is not expected to be generated under this award. However, any program income that is generated under the resulting award shall be in accordance with ADS 303, 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 700, and USAID Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations.

5. Environmental Compliance

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE:

1) The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) [ADS 201](#) and [ADS 204](#), which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities. Applicant's environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this NOFO.

2) In addition, the recipient must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter shall govern.

3) No activity funded under this award will be implemented unless an environmental threshold determination, as defined by 22 CFR 216, has been reached for that activity, as documented in a Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE), Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), or Environmental Assessment (EA) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO). (Hereinafter, such documents are described as “approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.”)

4) The Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) ([DCN: 2022-MOL-001](#)) has been approved for the Activity funding this assistance instrument and defines environmental compliance terms and conditions for this award. It will cover program activities during the implementation period. USAID has determined that a Categorical Exclusion Determination applies to proposed activities discussed in Program Description. This indicates that if these activities are implemented subject to the specified conditions, they are expected to have no significant adverse effect on the environment. The Recipient shall be responsible for implementing all IEE conditions pertaining to activities to be funded under this award.

5) As part of its initial Implementation Plan, and all Annual Implementation Plans thereafter, the Recipient, in collaboration with the USAID Agreement’s Officer’s Representative (AOR) and Mission Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing and planned activities under this award to determine if they are within the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.

6) If the Recipient plans any new activities outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation, it shall prepare an amendment to the documentation for USAID review and approval. No such new activities shall be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval of environmental documentation amendments.

7) Any ongoing activities found to be outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation shall be halted until an amendment to the documentation is submitted and written approval is received from USAID.

Applicants need to account for resources required for implementing and monitoring the environmental compliance activities in the technical application and in the budget and describe associated costs in detail to the degree possible in the budget narrative.

6. Other Requirements

Special Award Requirement Relating to the Prohibition on Certain Telecommunication and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment (November 2020)

USAID has been granted a temporary waiver under Section 889(d)(2) that will allow the recipient to use award funds through September 30, 2022, to procure certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment as specified in the standard provision “Prohibition on Certain

Telecommunication and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment (AUGUST 2020).” Based on this waiver, all costs incurred for covered telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment will be allowable through September 30, 2022, without regard to the standard provision “Allowable Costs” and the cost principle at 2 CFR 200.471. Procurements made on or after October 1, 2022, will be unallowable in accordance with the standard provision “Allowable Costs” and 2 CFR 200.471.

[END OF SECTION F]

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

Agency Point of Contact:

- A. USAID Agreement Officer – Brian K. Woody, bwoody@usaid.gov
- B. Acquisition and Assistance Specialist – Lucia Sandefur, lsandefur@usaid.gov

[END OF SECTION G]

ANNEX 1

USAID Civil Society Resiliency Activity

Concept Paper Template

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY INFORMATION

a. Proposed Activity Name

b. Name and Contact Information of Applicant (Name, email and phone number)

c. Full Address of applicant Organization.

d. (If Applicable) Names of Collaborating Organizations/Implementing Partners.

e. Total Amount of Funding Requested from USAID including \$

f. Cost-share amount (if proposed) \$ [Note: cost share is not required]

g. Proposed period of performance. (e.g. Start Date and End Date)

h. DUNS number.

SECTION 2: CONCEPT BODY

- A. Concept Introduction and Technical Approach: Identify the problem you will address, and describe your plans to tackle the challenges in Section A. If activities will include regions/communities outside of Chisinau and/or regional/smaller/newer civic initiatives, please address that here.: Describe how this intervention will produce the desired impact in the focus area(s) identified. Briefly describe critical barrier(s) or problem(s) related to your focus area(s) that your concept addresses. Defined any critical assumptions that must exist throughout the activity for it to be successful. Be sure to include information to describe why the approach is feasible, and likely to have a positive development impact. Describe how it will be sustained. Include discussion of how the activity can adapt to changed circumstances throughout implementation.
- B. Describe the types of benefits your work will produce and the types and range of people who will benefit from this work.
- C. Describe the anticipated results and/or impact of your activity. What are the key, quantifiable metrics related to the concept?

- D. **Management and Staffing.** Describe the positions and personnel that will be considered essential for the implementation of this activity. Present a plan, if gaps of in-house expertise are identified, for obtaining additional in-country or international/ regional expertise.
- E. **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Describe and define the role of other entities in the partnership. If your organization is not proposing any partners, this section can be empty. USAID strongly encourages the Applicant and its partners / sub-awardees to be thoroughly involved in the development of the concept paper and be fully in agreement with the proposed technical approach and management structure.
- F. **Applicant capacity.** Describe your organization’s technical, financial, and managerial capacity to carry out the proposed work and that of any partners. Describe if you have previously done similar work, or worked in the same location(s).
- G. **Proposed timeline:**

Month									
Activity									

Full Application Instructions

Please note that full applications fall under Phase 2 of this process. Applicants will be notified by the Agreement Officer if they qualify to submit a full application and will be provided the instructions at that time. Please do not submit a full application without USAID’s invitation to do so.

[END OF ANNEX 1]