



ISSUE DATE: August 15, 2014

QUESTION DUE DATE: August 21, 2014 at 5:00 PM (local time – Kosovo)

RESPONSE DUE DATE: September 15, 2014 at 5:00 PM (local time – Kosovo)

SUBJECT: Funding Opportunity No. RFA-167-14-000014
for the Engagement for Equity Program

Dear Sir/Madam:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Regional Contracting Office in Kosovo is seeking applications only from qualified locally registered Kosovo civil society organizations (CSOs) for a Cooperative Agreement to fund new program entitled “Engagement for Equity.”

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and/or submission of an application. Applicants who come under consideration for an award that have never received USAID funding will be subject to a pre-award survey to determine fiscal responsibility, ensure adequacy of financial controls, and establish an indirect cost rate (if applicable). For the purposes of this RFA, the term “Grant” is synonymous with “Cooperative Agreement”; “Grantee” is synonymous with “Recipient;” and “Grant Officer” is synonymous with “Agreement Officer”. The authority for this RFA is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

Eligible organizations interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this RFA thoroughly to understand the type of program sought and the application submission and evaluation process. The chosen Recipient will be responsible for ensuring achievement of the program objectives. Please refer to the Funding Opportunity Description (Section I) for a complete statement of goals and expected outcomes.

Pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, it is USAID policy not to pay profit under assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, that are related to the implementation of the program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards put forth by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) (22 CFR 226, OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organization and OMB Circular A-21 for universities), may be paid to the Recipient of this award.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID seeks to award the Cooperative Agreement competitively. USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

Prospective applicants shall submit all questions and Application in writing via email ONLY to mohahmed@usaid.gov, mvillegas@usaid.gov and arexhepi@usaid.gov no later than the time and date specified above. DO NOT SUBMIT APPLICATION VIA GRANTS.GOV, THEY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

This RFA contains all necessary information, web links, and materials to submit a complete Application. Any additional information regarding this RFA will be furnished through an amendment(s) and will be communicated through Grants.gov. This RFA and any future amendments can be downloaded from the World Wide Web Address at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Additionally, in order to submit a full application, organizations must have a current registration in SAM.GOV. If an organization is currently not registered in SAM.GOV, Applicants are advised to immediately start the registration process in System for Award Management (SAM) database as it takes few weeks to get confirmed/registered and it is required for issuing award to an organization. The link to access the SAM website is: <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM>. In addition, prior to award, it is required that the Applicant establish a banking account that can receive funds in US currency.

Thank you for your interest in this USAID initiative. USAID looks forward to your organization's participation.

Sincerely,



Mohib Ahmed
Regional Agreement Officer

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Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name: United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Regional Contracting Office, Kosovo

Funding Opportunity Title: Request for Application (RFA): Engagement for Equity Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity No.: RFA-167-14-000014

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) No.: 98.001

Eligible Checklist

1. Copy of Applicant organization's formal registration as evidence of valid legal status.
2. Copy of Applicant organization's Tax Verification certificate, as evidence of status with fiscal and taxation authorities in Kosovo. The certificate can be obtained electronically at <http://evertetimi.atk-ks.org/>.
3. Local Entity Eligibility Statement.
4. Conflict of Interest Statement

For detailed information of eligibility requirements, please refer to SECTION III of this RFA.

SECTION I: Funding Opportunity Description

”Engagement for Equity”

Civil Society Support Activity to Increased Participation of Marginalized Groups

A. OVERVIEW

USAID intends to award a cooperative agreement to a local entity to strengthen civil society’s role in raising critical democracy, governance and economy issues and in influencing the development and implementation of policies affecting vulnerable and marginalized groups. The recipient will serve as an Intermediary Support Organization (ISO) and is expected to solicit, award, and oversee the implementation and financial management of a civil society grant fund through sub-recipient. This fund must have an emphasis on empowering women through improved property rights, increased engagement of women in governance and economy; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights and participation; representation of people with disabilities (PWD); and youth. The recipient will also provide technical and organizational capacity development assistance to sub-recipients as needed to ensure effective program implementation and strengthen sub-recipients’ organizational and technical capacity.

B. TECHNICAL APPROACH

a) Situational Analysis

Kosovo has a wide range of civil society organizations (CSOs) and an active media that play a role in advocacy and oversight. According to the Ministry of Public Administration, there are 7,429 registered CSOs in Kosovo, including 6,925 local CSOs and 504 local branches of international organizations. More than 115 CSOs legally registered during 2013, including 109 local organizations and six international organizations. However, according to research by the Kosovo Open Society Foundation (KFOS), only ten percent of all registered organizations are active or partly active¹.

A handful of organizations, in collaboration with some civic movements, had considerable impact on several issues of public interest in 2013. The most notable CSO advocacy successes during the 2013 were the Kosovo Constitutional Court’s rejection of several disputed amendments to the draft law on microfinance institutions (MFIs) and the draft law on amnesty, as well as improvements to the anti-corruption legal framework. Moreover, cooperation between government and civil society is improving as indicated by Government of Kosovo (GOK) approval of the Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society and active preparation of its application for the Open Government Partnership (OGP), an international movement to make governments more open, accountable, and responsive to their citizens.

However, organizations that support the most vulnerable populations (women, PWD, youth, LGBT and minorities) still need further support, particularly with regard to their advocacy initiatives and actions that enhance their position in society, including their economic empowerment. At the same time, many CSOs have not built relationships with their constituencies, which further weakens their ability to advocate successfully for their initiatives. According to the 2011 CIVICUS Civil Society Index for Kosovo, only fifteen-and-a-half percent of citizens were active members of CSOs (mainly religious, cultural, and sports organizations) and only fourteen percent of the public served as volunteers (many for religious groups). Moreover, the same study concluded that Kosovo civil society is “insufficiently responsive to the

¹ Europe and Eurasia Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index, USAID, 2013.

changing priorities of citizens” and that civil society had a low impact on some of the major problems affecting society (namely economic development and rule of law)².

Kosovo’s legal framework is supportive of citizen participation – but implementation is a challenge. When citizens do engage around issues, it is primarily through political parties, and citizen- and community-based initiatives. Moreover, citizens are concerned about Government’s ability to address immediate needs related to education, job opportunities, public services, equal access for women, youth, and minorities.

Specific civil society issues affecting the most vulnerable/marginalized segments of society can be summarized as follows:

Women’s Active Participation in Governance and Economic Empowerment – Despite the fact that women’s full involvement in socio-economic life drives economic growth, the development of Kosovar women in terms of political, economic and cultural empowerment and participation still faces numerous challenges. Women have, and continue to be, traditionally marginalized from decision-making. Lack of political will and traditions have both been identified as major obstacles for functionalizing and implementing gender-related legislation, particularly related to the economy. Compared to men, women have fewer opportunities to be entrepreneurs; the rate of female entrepreneurship in Kosovo is among the lowest in the region. Economic empowerment, property rights/access to resources; and the Constitutional electoral barriers to the political participation of women, were themes widely discussed at the ever first International Pristina Women’s Conference in October 2012. Participants adopted the “Pristina Principles,³” a set of guidelines and priorities aimed at eliminating barriers to women’s political participation, aiding their economic empowerment and giving them access to security and justice in the region and around the world. Women’s economic empowerment is central to achieving gender equality; as women become aware of unequal power relations, they typically acquire a greater voice and are able to overcome inequality in other aspects of their lives. By supporting women through political and economic empowerment activities, results will impact not only the women themselves, but their families and their communities. . Such activities will assist Kosovar women in attaining sustainable and influential roles within government, the private sector and other spheres of society.

Women’s Property Rights: Limited public education and awareness on women’s property rights and cultural norms leaves many women unaware of their rights to inheritance, their rights to property upon divorce, the obligations of their husbands to include them in mortgage or lease agreements affecting jointly-owned property, or their rights to register and document their rights in their own name without interference from registry personnel. Some good gender-related property laws have already been passed, but tradition and customary practice have prevented women from exercising their inheritance rights according to those laws.

LGBT Rights: Kosovo has a reputation as a secular country with laws protecting people from discrimination, including sexual orientation (but not gender identity). Kosovo society also holds deeply traditional, conservative views on family and relationships, resulting in condemnation of homosexuality and gender identity that differs from what is perceived as normative by the majority of the population. Consequently, the majority of Kosovo’s Lesbian Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) population remain hidden. The unwritten “Law of Silence” prevents discussing homosexuality so as to maintain self-esteem and family honor. LGBT persons are subject to discrimination. There are very few LGBT

² Civicus Civil Society Index and Analytical Country Report for Kosovo, Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF) and Civicus, March 2011.

³<http://www.iawp.org/pdf/Pristina-PrinciplesOct4-62012.pdf>

groups, and most of them have limited capacity for engaging with government and advocating on behalf of LGBT individuals. For the most part, mainstream CSOs and local human rights organizations are not sufficiently engaged in advocating on behalf of the LGBT population. Therefore, there remains the need to improve the coordination and networking among the various segments of civil society working on human rights and anti-discrimination issues.

Persons with Disabilities (PWD): PWD⁴ have been marginalized from traditional development activities due to discrimination and inadvertent barriers, which have limited their access to care services, education, employment, and civil society integration. Estimating the prevalence rate for disabilities in the population is difficult, and Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) in the country estimate that this rate is around seven-to-eight percent. PWD are extremely vulnerable in Kosovo and face an array of severe barriers including infrastructure and transport systems that are not accessible, low levels of schooling and employment, insufficient disability pensions, an outmoded system for assessing the severity of disabilities and assigning benefits, legal requirements to hire PWDs that are not monitored or implemented, lack of political will to address issues related to disability, and an almost complete lack of services provided by the Government. Women with disabilities are described as experiencing "double discrimination" which places them among the most vulnerable groups in Kosovo society⁵.

Youth Participation: Kosovo has a growing youth population that is unemployed, disengaged, and disconnected. The country has the youngest population in Europe with 50percent under the age of 25 and 70 percent under the age of 35. Youth have few opportunities for economic engagement and employment. Youth in Kosovo are marginalized and discouraged from voicing their concerns and opinions, and many do not feel like they can make a difference. With youth unemployment hovering around 70percent, this has serious implications for stability as well as the country's long-term economic growth.

b) Strategic Framework

Relationship to CDCS

During the new USAID/Kosovo strategy for the period FY 2014 - 2018, USAID will continue building the capacity of municipal governments, local CSOs, and private sector associations to expand an existing portfolio of direct grants. These efforts aim to increase public awareness and foster government accountability so that citizens can proactively engage with the various branches of government. USAID/Kosovo's Country Development and Cooperation Strategy also emphasizes direct partnerships with local organizations. The "Engagement for Equity" Activity contributes to CDCS Development Objective (DO) 1 "More Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Governance that Meets Citizen's Needs," in general and specifically Intermediate Result (IR) 1.4. "More Effective Engagement of Citizenry in Governance".

The premise for civil society to strengthen and engage constructively with the Government is that citizens must effectively participate in governance to assure greater accountability and responsiveness to their needs. Ongoing citizen engagement also contributes to sustainability of democratic reforms; specifically, the ability of people to demand change over time requires informed and empowered citizens who understand issues and effectively advocate for their priorities. Enabling voice for women, youth, and other often-marginalized groups is central to greater overall citizen participation.

⁴ According to the National Action Plan on Disability for the Republic of Kosovo, the definition of PWD is "Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."

⁵ 2012 Country Gender Assessment for USAID/Kosovo.

The "Engagement for Equity" activity aims to bridge the current disparity in representation and participation of marginalized groups, especially as it relates to women in governance and economy, women's property rights, LGBT, PWD, and youth.

The USAID CDCS for Kosovo can be accessed at the following site:
http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1863/CDCS_Kosovo.pdf

c) Activity Description

Goal and Purpose

The goal of the "Engagement for Equity" Activity is to improve integration of vulnerable and marginalized groups and to strengthen civil society's role in raising critical democracy and governance issues and in influencing the development and effective implementation of policies affecting these communities.

Through the provision of sub-grants and targeted technical assistance, the recipient will support local civil society organizations (see Section V. Local Solutions/Sustainability) working on behalf of vulnerable and marginalized communities to:

- Conduct complex advocacy and awareness campaigns with multiple stakeholders from diverse segments of society and government.
- Engage in formulation of policy recommendations on select democracy and governance and economic empowerment issues, drawn from consultations with citizens and other stakeholders.
- Monitor and track the implementation of targeted legislation, reforms and initiatives of importance to vulnerable and marginalized groups.

d) Objectives, Activities and Results

The following provides a narrative description of each objective and anticipated result.

Objective 1: Women in Governance and Economy

Under this objective, the recipient will support the initiatives that will strengthen existing local non-governmental entities that address the needs of women/girls in various spheres of society. Such groups empower women and girls to advocate, mentor, and train others and to address the underrepresentation of women in the public and private sectors by increasing the skills and role of women for betterment of their position. Balanced gender representation and participation in political processes are closely tied to ensuring that men and women can exercise choices regarding political, social, economic and rights-based issues. Under this objective, the recipient will support the initiatives launched by groups that represent the interests of women in economy that are complementary to the USAID mainstream programs in Democracy and Governance, Economic Growth, and Human Capacity Development. The recipient will support Kosovar CSOs, to conduct public education and advocacy activities to increase awareness and change attitudes towards women's active participation and leadership in economy. Activities are envisioned to promote improved policy, representation, employment, education, and participation of women in governance and the economy.

Activities supported under sub-grants may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Promote professional development;
- Conduct research on their socio-economic situation;
- Advocacy and outreach for fair and equal opportunities for business women and women entrepreneurs;
- Capacity development, including networking;
- Public dialogue and similar fora for women to engage with government officials and elected representatives.

Anticipated Results: Activities under this objective will help Kosovar women attain a more sustainable and influential role within the government, and the private sector. It will also enhance women's positions and participation at the municipal and national government levels, to positively impact the process of democracy consolidation and economic development; as well as empower women professionals advocating as one voice for inclusive and developmental policies in the state building. Specific results include:

- Organizations representing women interests become a strong voice in support of issues that impact women;
- Interests of women are better represented in the formulation and implementation of public policy, including gender-based budgeting, improved legislation, etc.;
- Constructive dialogue between women and government institutions is increased;
- Increased awareness of the society on the role and importance of women in economy and governance;
- Women are more empowered to advocate for their interests;
- Laws and policies amended or developed to protect women's rights and improve their position in business and governance are adopted, amended or implemented.

Objective 2: Empowering Women through Enhanced Awareness of Women's Property Rights

The initiatives under this objective will address the challenges related to protecting women's rights to inherit, own and use property. As a matter of law, no formal, legal discrimination exists against women in the use, transfer, receipt or enjoyment of property rights. But serious challenges arise in enforcing these rights due to poor implementation, weak government capacity and inadequate awareness of rights and traditional/cultural practices.

The recipient will support Kosovar CSOs to conduct public education and advocacy activities to increase awareness of and change attitudes towards women's property rights in terms of ownership, inheritance and use. In order for women to exercise their rights to property, they must be able and willing to stand up for themselves and voice their demands. Empowering women and their groups (i.e. agricultural associations or other groups of women entrepreneurs etc.) with critical thinking, leadership skills and the ability to articulate their priorities to government officials will be important to the protection of women's property and inheritance rights.

On April 24, 2014, as part of the larger USAID's 15th anniversary activities, USAID held a roundtable discussion with local NGOs in Gjilan/Gnjilane with the theme of "How Courts Are Treating Women's Issues." The discussion revealed that the dissemination of information covering women and their right to property and inheritance should start as early as high-school.

Activities supported under sub-grants may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Legal analyses and review of legislation by CSOs;
- Women's inheritance and/or property ownership rights campaigns and other awareness activities and stories that might utilize mediums such as televised media, new media, social networking or print media;
- CSO court monitoring of property rights/inheritance cases;
- Training/Technical Assistance to pro-bono legal assistance providers to improve representation of women involved in property/inheritance cases;
- Raise awareness of women's entrepreneurial groups regarding the use of property as collateral.

The recipient will consult with the implementer of USAID's "Property Rights Program" in designing the terms of reference for the solicitation for grants made under this objective.

Anticipated Results: Activities under this objective will contribute to increased civil society demand and engagement that, combined with other USAID interventions outside this program, will result with increased number of women inheriting property. Results under this include:

- Increased women's and men's awareness of women's property rights issues;
- Women are more empowered to advocate for their interests;
- Laws and policies to protect women's property rights that incorporate CSO recommendations are adopted, amended or implemented.

Objective 3: Increased protection and awareness of LGBT community rights

Under this objective, civil society will increase its capacities to launch a combination of initiatives to protect the LGBT community and individuals from discrimination and human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity. This entails awareness-raising to change peoples' attitudes, improving the legal framework with better implementation of laws, empowering the LGBT community and promoting greater collaboration across various segments of civil society. Important to the success of initiatives under this objective will be bridging the divide across LGBT, mainstream CSOs and human rights organizations.

Activities supported under sub-grants may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- LGBT rights and anti-discrimination campaigns using news media, social networking, television programs, editorials and/or other broadcast and print media stories;
- CSO advocacy for improved laws harmonized with European Union (EU) standards and with better implementation so as to prevent discrimination and human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity;
- Capacity development of LGBT groups, including networking opportunities and initiatives for local LGBT groups with national, regional and international NGOs that work on human rights, participation and LGBT issues;
- Promotion of public discourse on anti-discrimination issues through lectures, conferences, workshops, film festivals, television talk shows and similar activities or events;

- Monitoring of court cases, public actions and media coverage, related on LGBT issues ;
- Training/technical assistance to pro-bono legal assistance providers to better represent LGBT victims of discrimination and violation of human rights;
- CSO-led support groups and other “safe” venues where LGBT individuals or groups can gather to share their experience and support each other;
- Anti-discrimination awareness targeting youth such as integrating anti-discrimination into civic education (social knowledge, governance, life skills courses) curricula in primary and secondary schools or working with faculty “champions” to promote discussion/dialogue around sexual orientation at the university level.

In developing the terms of reference and selection criteria for solicitations in this area, the recipient should consult with a cross-section of Kosovo LGBT and human rights groups.

Anticipated results: Specific results will include:

- Increased awareness of and sensitivity to LGBT issues among the general population;
- Improved civil society reporting on discrimination cases based on sexual orientation and gender identity to GoK authorities;
- Increased civil society engagement in drafting and implementation of relevant legal amendments and public policies addressing discrimination and human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity;
- Improved legal/human rights protection of LGBT activists.

Objective 4: Expand Participation of Persons with Disabilities (PwD)

Under this objective, the “Engagement for Equity” Activity will support initiatives launched by groups representing interests of PwD that are complementary to the USAID mainstream programs in Democracy and Governance, Economic Growth and Human Capacity Development. Renewed support for PwD organizations will allow USAID to capitalize on investments that are made by our current programs and ensure an inclusive approach to development. Activities are envisioned to promote policy, representation, employment, education and participation of PwD. Work in this area will promote more accessible city planning policies, regulations and public facilities and services; promote greater inclusion of PwD in civic activities and raise awareness/sensitization of businesses, employers, teachers and the general public on the capabilities of PwD.

- Facilitate and increase participation of PwD in civic activities;
- CSO advocacy and awareness-raising on accessible city planning and public facilities;
- Use of electronic/print media, broadcast (TV) media and social networking to raise awareness of capabilities of and de-stigmatizing PwD;
- Advocate and promote business opportunities and social enterprises for training/mainstreaming PwD, CSO-led training and holistic work/learning programs for unemployed PwD (i.e. pilot job finding systems).

The recipient will consult with the implementers of USAID’s Education and Economic Empowerment, and Democracy and Governance programs in designing the terms of reference for the solicitation for grants made under this objective.

Anticipated results: Activities under this objective will result in greater inclusion of PwD interests in public policies. Specific results will include:

- Increased awareness of and protection of rights of PwD in society;
- Increased involvement of PwD in civic engagement, employment and educational opportunities;
- More constructive dialogue between civil society and government institutions on needs of PwD.

Objective 5: Expand Youth Participation

Under this objective, the recipient will support the initiatives launched by groups that represent the interests of youth that are complementary to the USAID mainstream programs in Democracy and Governance, Economic Growth and Human Capacity Development. Renewed support for youth organizations would allow USAID to capitalize on investments that are currently made by our current programs and ensure a more inclusive approach to development. Activities are envisioned to promote policy, representation, employment, education and participation of youth across a range of civic and economic issues. Activities should address the needs of Kosovo's large, unemployed youth population who lack both motivation and opportunity for political and community engagement.

The following are illustrative activities that will be supported through sub-grants in this area:

- Dialogues and similar fora for youth to engage with government officials and elected representatives;
- CSO-led advocacy for training and holistic work/learning programs for unemployed youth (i.e. pilot job finding systems) or other issues of concern to youth;
- Advocacy and outreach to address low literacy rates, school drop-out and early marriage of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian (RAE) minority girls in Kosovo;
- Youth engagement in monitoring public policy such as evidence-based monitoring of education reform implementation, (i.e. at the school level), school-to-work transition & career development or flexible training programs that respond to labor market demand;
- Inclusion of youth in elections and other civic activities.

Anticipated results: Activities under this objective will raise the profile of CSOs as a key stakeholder in addressing the needs of youth with GoK. Specific results include:

- Increased engagement of youth in civic activities;
- Interests of youth are better represented in formulation and implementation of public policy;
- Increased awareness of CSOs as a key stakeholder with GoK agencies in addressing the needs of youth;
- Constructive dialogue between youth and government institutions increased.

The recipient will consult with the implementers of USAID's education and economic empowerment programs in designing the terms of reference for the solicitation for grants made under this objective.

C. CORPORATE CAPABILITY

The Applicant should have experience administering donor-funded grant funds. The Applicant is not limited to the procurement mechanisms used by USAID (see ADS 303), but may take into consideration the types of solicitation and procurement processes the agency employs (e.g. Requests for Application,

Annual Program Statements (APS's), Fixed Obligation Grants (FOG's)). The recipient of the "Engagement for Equity" Activity is responsible for ensuring that all U.S. Government (USG) guidelines and regulations related to the issuances of grants are followed and strictly adhered to.

In implementing the grant fund, and in coordination with USAID and its partners (identified below), the recipient will:

- Prepare and issue local Requests for Applications (or similar solicitation document);
- Provide appropriate pre-solicitation workshops to potential applicants, including but not limited to: application writing, performance monitoring, budget preparation, etc.;
- Organize and conduct technical reviews of the applications received;
- Ensure that sub-grantees have appropriate administrative and financial controls in place to administer funds and are in compliance with applicable regulations;
- Monitor the performance of the sub-recipient partners and report the results of their performance to USAID; and
- Ensure provision of technical and/or capacity development assistance to grant recipients where necessary and appropriate.

The recipient will be responsible for ensuring that sub-grants issued by the "Engagement for Equity" Activity are selected such that they contribute to the objectives and results described below. Furthermore, the eventual implementer will be required to strategically focus the sub-granting activities such that the sub-grants and related support costs are allocable to each of the objective areas and within the levels of funding identified by USAID.

Illustrative sub-grant selection criteria

- Relevance to "Engagement for Equity" objectives
- The quality and scale of involvement of key public and private stakeholders
- Feasibility of outreach efforts to reach targeted population
- Participation of diverse populations, including minority communities
- Likelihood that program impact will be sustained
- Importance of geographic region and audience segments that will be targeted with awareness initiatives

Types of Grants

The Applicant will conceptualize and establish a grant-making facility that will provide the funding necessary to qualified sub-grantees for activities that lead to the desired results as described below. Approximately 70percent of the total funds obligated under this Cooperative Agreement, should be set aside for sub-grants, with the remaining funds going towards monitoring, oversight and the provision of capacity development assistance (costs for administration and management of the grant-making facility will be part of the approximately remaining 30percent). The total number of sub-grants is expected to range from 40 to 60 and individual sub-grants will be from \$10,000 to \$100,000.

Below is a suggested illustrative allocation of by type of sub-grant:

Large Grants: From \$75,000 up to \$100,000. Large grants are intended for programs with ambitious program objectives that require longer-term follow up and implementation. Any potential ceiling increase is subject to USAID approval. Grant opportunities under this category may be offered multiple times during the course of implementation of this program.

Medium to Small Grants: Up to \$75,000 for small and medium grant opportunities. Grant opportunities under this category may be offered multiple times during the course of implementation of this program.

Rapid Response Fund: Grants under this category will be up to \$25,000 to be awarded. This fund is intended for short-term activities or one-off civil society events that respond to emerging needs and opportunities as they arise. Rapid response grants will have a more streamlined (and shorter) application process than the larger grants. Grant opportunities under this category may be offered multiple times during the course of implementation of this program.

Funding Allocation for Grants per Objective:

Objective 1: Women in Governance and Economy	30%
Objective 2: Empowering Women through Enhanced Awareness of Women's Property Rights	30%
Objective 3: Increased protection and awareness of LGBT community rights	10%
Objective 4: Expand Participation of Persons with Disabilities (PwD)	15%
Objective 5: Expand Youth Participation	15%

Applicants are welcome to propose an alternative configuration of grant size and type, and geographical consideration, as long as it is accompanied by adequate justification. Following the award of the agreement, the awardee is expected to work with USAID to finalize the number of large, medium, and small grants.

D. MANAGEMENT OF THE ACTIVITY

a. USAID management plan:

The Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) for this activity will be a member of the Democracy and Governance (DG) Team. Along with the Recipient, s/he will be responsible for ensuring that opportunities for inter-office, inter-agency and cross-sector coordination are identified and maximized.

b. Technical and Organizational Capacity Development

In addition to sub-grant management functions, the recipient should be prepared to provide both technical and organizational capacity development to sub-recipients as required. This assistance should be tailored to the individual needs of the recipient organizations to address both immediate capacity needs for successful program performance, as well as longer term needs related to improving the organization's sustainability. USAID anticipates that the recipient will need to use a combination of in-house staff and resources and external short-term technical assistance providers (which may be local, regional or international)⁶.

Other types of capacity development are likely to include, but are not limited to, the following areas.

Organizational Capacity Needs

⁶ While most of the assistance will be directed to the "Engagement for Equity" Activity sub-recipients, there may be need to use these external technical assistance resources to facilitate coordination among multiple organizations, including organizations that do not receive "Engagement for Equity" Activity funding (e.g. LGBT). The recipient should identify a Coordinator, preferably from the Southeast Europe region, to serve as a neutral partner for providing ongoing, intermittent facilitation and technical advice to Kosovar CSOs engaged in protection and promotion of LGBT rights.

- Internal/organizational policies, procedures and systems;
- Financial management systems;
- Organizational governance (independent board of directors, assembly of members);
- Performance monitoring and evaluation;
- Strategic planning/sustainability planning;
- Management and administrative expertise, especially in areas of project management, revenue generation, fundraising and compliance to donor reporting requirements.

Technical Capacity Needs

- Policy analysis;
- Engaging with Government (articulating policy recommendations effectively, understanding when and how to push/pressure government, holding government accountable for following through on commitments);
- Collaborating effectively with other organizations/networking (facilitating connections among activists, NGOs and academics);
- Engaging/involving citizens/local businesses;
- Subject-matter experts on specific issues relevant to the objectives (not covered by existing USAID programs) such anti-discrimination policies and practices or disability rights and access.

c. Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

The recipient should establish a Technical Advisory Group as a way to leverage the expertise of key stakeholders and promote greater buy-in by vulnerable and marginalized communities. Careful attention should be paid to the functions of the TAG, and its members, so as not to inadvertently create conflicts of interest.

- Members of the Technical Advisory Group will review and score applications, and provide recommendations for approval of sub-grants.
- Technical Advisory Group members shall operate under clear rules of avoiding conflict of interest.
- Technical Advisory Group shall consist of respectful leaders knowledgeable about civil society and Kosovo's priorities, including representatives from civil society, government, academia, media, business sector and minority representatives.
- Technical Advisory Group members shall be suggested by the implementing partner. USAID reserves the right to have a representative serve on the TAG as it deems appropriate.

d. Conflict of Interest

The organization that is selected to administer the award must have appropriate internal conflict of interest policies in place that stipulate that TAG Members and/or independent panel evaluation members and employees of the organization administering the award, are not allowed to benefit financially or materially from any funding set aside for sub-awards under the sponsorship of the program.

To avoid conflicts of interest, the organization that will be selected to manage this award is not eligible to apply for sub-awards funding. In this respect, as part of the application under this RFA, the applicant should clearly stipulate the process of tasking and selecting proponents. This process should take into account decision-making roles of the implementer, and other independent actors that may be selected to participate in the independent reviews of application.

E. SUSTAINABILITY

One component of *USAID Forward* is the Local Solutions Initiative (formerly known as the Implementation and Procurement Reform Initiative or “IPR”) which is designed to increase the use of host country systems and local organizations to deliver development assistance. This approach is predicated on the assumption that successful and sustainable development depends in large part on the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity with which a country manages and expends public resources. By utilizing a host-country’s institutions and systems to deliver aid, (including civil society) and providing technical assistance to strengthen those institutions and systems, USAID is making an investment in the country’s long-term capacity to manage its own development programs.

This assistance favors activities that contribute to long-term solutions to the inclusion of marginal and vulnerable communities, with Kosovo counterparts performing the work. Under the Engagement for Equity Activity, local civil society organizations should be empowered to the fullest extent possible in the implementation of activities. Whenever possible, technical assistance and training will be conducted by and through local organizations, but may be supplemented by international consultants as appropriate and necessary.

The program will work in close cooperation and partnership with local civil society organizations to ensure their full ownership and improve prospects for sustainability. The sub-grantees will be asked to link plans for sustainability to changes in behavior and attitudes that support long-term change, not just the formal structures or processes which may also be needed to buttress and institutionalize these new behaviors.

USAID expects that this program’s legacy will be both the direct results of sub-recipient projects, but also the increased capacity and sustainability of local organizations themselves.

F. LINKAGE TO OTHER USAID AND US GOVERNMENT PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

To the maximum extent possible, the recipient should coordinate with other USAID programs relevant to the populations targeted under the “Engagement for Equity” Activity. Applicants should propose their coordination approach, which might include, for instance, stakeholder participation in a launch event at the onset of program implementation, or a formal Technical Advisory Group role for key partners.

The following is an overview of relevant USAID programs:

Property Rights Program: USAID launched its Property Rights Program in the spring of 2014. The Property Rights Program’s overall goal is to improve the property rights regime in Kosovo, to strengthen the rule of law (RoL) and increase economic growth and investment. The Property Rights Program will achieve this goal by focusing on four objectives: (1) better coordination and setting of policy priorities in the area of property rights in close cooperation with the relevant stakeholders; (2) improved court processes related to property claims; (3) enhanced ability for women to exercise their property rights in practice; and (4) greater access to information and understanding of property rights. Achieving all four objectives will require close coordination and collaboration with appropriate Kosovo public and private sector counterparts, donors, and beneficiaries. The Property Rights program implementer (TBD) will be available to provide the prospective and selected sub-grantees working in the area of women’s property rights and inheritance with assistance to increase their organization and technical capacity. They will also monitor the performance of local partners and report performance results to USAID, including a report/survey to measure the capacity of CSOs to conduct public education, outreach and advocacy activities in the area of women’s property rights.

Kosovo is Ready Program: This program is implemented by the local Center for Social Emancipation/Qendra per Emancipimin Shoqëror (QESH). The activity aims to increase the capacity and ability of local LGBT organizations to better defend and advocate for human rights for the LGBT community in Kosovo. The anticipated outcomes include: 1) Enhancing inherent institutional and networking capacity of the leading local LGBT organizations, and 2) Strengthening advocacy initiatives that lead to changes in legislation; better monitoring of implementation of existing laws that protect the LGBT community; and increasing awareness among the general population, especially youth, in Kosovo.

Advancing Kosovo Together through Local Solutions: AKT, which is expected to begin in 2014, is an integral part of the USAID's Advancing Kosovo Together program using local Kosovar organizations in delivering assistance to minority beneficiaries. The aim of this activity is to foster positive and constructive inter-ethnic communication that can reach a broad mass of people who have never engaged with the other, centered on common problems and needs. The activity will focus on opportunities to get people thinking, talking and engaging with members of the other community. These include grassroots community exchanges, opportunities to better integrate non-majority and majority markets, including improved overall value chains to encourage long-term economic viability of businesses and increased responsiveness of local administrations to the service needs of minority communities. In doing so, in addition to provision of local technical assistance, the activity will manage a portfolio of sub-awards to local businesses, community based organizations (CBOs) and smaller CSOs aimed at creating the desired results.

Transformational Leadership Program: This is a new USAID scholarships and partnerships program that will develop a cadre of leaders to drive significant change in Kosovo in priority economic, political, and social development areas. The program facilitates higher education scholarships, professional certifications, internships, exchanges and partnerships between Kosovo and American universities. This program will work in close coordination with other activities that comprise USAID's comprehensive Transformational Leadership (TL) initiative, which is jointly funded by USAID and the Government of Kosovo.

Basic Education Program: USAID's Basic Education Program works with schools and communities to develop 21st century skills for children in primary school grades one through nine. It also assists Kosovo education institutions to undertake reforms such as: decentralization of the Municipal Education Directorates, improving the quality of teaching and learning outcomes of primary school students, and improving teacher professional development through school-based training. The program enables Kosovo's primary schools to attain a high level of educational excellence, preparing youth with necessary skills to succeed in a global economy. Additionally, the program aligns with global educational trends, EU standards and USAID's goal of improved early grade reading skills worldwide. Program is scheduled to end in September 2015.

Inclusive Education and Integration in Kosovo Program: The project, "Inclusive Education and Integration in Kosovo", aims to increase access to education and improve quality of education for children from disadvantaged communities in Kosovo. More specifically, the project focuses on integration of vulnerable and disadvantaged children into educational process and raising awareness about causes and consequences of discrimination of people based on language, ethnicity or other factors. In addition, the project aims to put into practice the strategy of RAE integration at the local level and in the sector of employment and other social issues.

Empower Private Sector Kosovo : Through this activity, USAID will provide technical assistance, training, services and goods, and to increase the capacity of a local organization to service the needs of the private sector. The goal of Empower Kosovo Private Sector Competitiveness and Employment Generation Activity is to increase competitiveness and employment in the private sector. This three-year

activity will increase competitiveness in growth-ready sectors, facilitate inclusive private sector job-creation, and build the capacity of a local consortium to deliver market responsive services to the private sector, as well as their ability to respond to USAID requirements. The program will also address the constraints of underserved groups that have specific that have difficulty joining the formal workforce and cannot access current business assistance.

Kosovo Credit Support Facility: In partnership with the Government of Kosovo and other donors, USAID intends to create a local credit facility as a non-banking financial institution to initially provide partial loan guarantees to banks that lend in targeted sectors such as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The overarching goal is increased investment and private sector employment from increased lending by banks to the private sector that accelerates business creation and expansion. This initiative addresses a key constraint to economic growth, access to credit, as identified by the USAID Economic Growth Constraint Analysis. The program will also address the needs of underserved groups that have specific constraints to joining the formal workforce and cannot access current business assistance.

Other USG: The U.S. Embassy, specifically the Public Diplomacy section, has strongly supported activities that promote participation of marginalized groups. “Engagement for Equity” implementer should coordinate with the Public Diplomacy section during implementation of this program.

G. GENDER

A 2012 USAID gender assessment found that Kosovo has a very strong set of laws promoting gender equality and female empowerment and is ahead of many other countries in the region in this respect. However, the laws are not well-monitored, implemented, or enforced, leaving many women open to discrimination, disempowerment and violence without sufficient protection. Population estimates for Kosovo suggest a significant imbalance in the sex ratio at birth (1.08 males born for every female). Imbalances of this magnitude are usually suggestive of intentional sex selection.

Women in different ethnic groups in Kosovo tend to experience the same gender inequalities (e.g., higher levels of unemployment than men, economic disempowerment, domestic violence, health issues) although sometimes these issues differ in magnitude for women of different ethnicities. Generally, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) women are more disadvantaged than women from other ethnic groups and also experience unique gender issues such as being married at a very young age, being excluded from mainstream schools, and sometimes living under conditions that pose special health hazards.

Women with disabilities are among the most vulnerable populations in Kosovo and they face a formidable array of barriers including lack of access to health and gynecological care, low levels of education, social isolation, and inability to get a job, lack of economic empowerment, and low levels of decision-making power at home and in their communities.

Beliefs about gender roles and relationships are relatively patriarchal in Kosovo, although specific beliefs vary considerably from person to person, with older, rural Kosovars as well as those in the diaspora displaying more traditional attitudes. Generally speaking, however, women in Kosovo are still expected to marry, bear children, and have primary responsibility for the home and care of children and the elderly, whether they are employed or not. Men, as the head of the household, are expected to be the main breadwinner.

Kosovo women have traditionally been in a disadvantageous position in comparison to the men in all spheres of society. Lack of political will and traditions have both been identified as major obstacles for functionalizing and implementing gender-related legislation particularly related to economy. Compared to men, women have fewer opportunities to be entrepreneurs; the rate of female entrepreneurship in Kosovo

is among the lowest in the region. A survey conducted in 2006 with 450 female business owners in Kosovo revealed that 25% of women who were co-owners of a business did not make decisions about their business; 54% of them deferred to their husbands to make the decisions, and 20% deferred to a brother. The fact that so many businesses in Kosovo are family businesses can also constrain women's roles as decision-makers in particular if the family holds traditional views about gender roles in management.

Kosovo civil society sector is well established when it comes to addressing gender issues. Most of these CSOs tend to be social service providers, many still struggle with financial sustainability, a few are strong enough to produce sophisticated publications on gender equality issues, but many (especially in minority communities) still suffer from a lack of capacity. There is reasonable collaboration between the GoK and women's CSOs, although many CSOs would like to have greater influence.

USAID is committed to strengthening gender equality and women's empowerment in all aspects of the economy and society. In accordance with USAID's recognition that gender issues are important considerations in development, the "Engagement for Equity" Activity will be sensitive to gender issues and incorporate activities that address gender gaps in every aspect of programming. Every attempt should be made to ensure participation of all groups in the activities and technical assistance where applicable. Data on sex, age, ethnicity and other factors need to be disaggregated under the activities, as appropriate. The sub-recipients will address each objective with gender specific initiatives and the defined approach and outcome. Activity monitoring will include data sex disaggregated by sex and – whenever possible – age, region, income, ethnicity, disability, and other relevant social characteristics..

Other activities to address gender equality and female empowerment may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Use the media to reach more traditional communities with messages of gender equality and non-traditional presentations of the roles of women and men.
- Work with women's CSOs to monitor courts and the justice system on issues of special importance to women.
- Explicitly target female and male youth and women in minority-dominated municipalities

Uniform gender indicators and reporting gender-disaggregated data for indicators and targets will be included in the monitoring and evaluation plan.

H. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

"Engagement for Equity" Activity performance will be evaluated based on progress toward achieving the anticipated results, objectives and purpose. To monitor program implementation, a detailed progress monitoring plan will be prepared by the recipient. Applicants will also be evaluated on their proposed progress monitoring mechanism. Applicants will be required to submit a preliminary program Performance Management Plan (PMP) with their application. A more detailed PMP will be required from the recipient after the award is signed.

The PMP should also include an explanation of how data and information will be collected, analyzed, used and reported. The recipient should conduct a baseline assessment at the start of the project. Since performance management is, by definition, a dynamic process, the PMP review process should be clearly articulated. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all costs associated with the implementation of the PMP are considered in the cost application.

In addition to the indicators requested by USAID below, the applicant should identify other indicators specific to proposed activities. The performance indicators should seek to measure the results for each program objective and result as well as establish baseline measurements and targets to assess the impact of proposed interventions.

These indicators should go beyond measuring outputs of activities (i.e. how many people were trained) to also measure outcomes (i.e. changes in attitudes, behaviors or practices as a result of the intervention). Because the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of civil society will ultimately depend on how the program is perceived by key stakeholders, including CSOs, citizens, government officials and others, assessment tools that assess stakeholder views should be used whenever possible.

In addition to data collection and reporting indicators, the PMP should identify other assessment, evaluations or learning products that will be used to assess the effectiveness of activities and progress towards results.

Indicators

The recipient should use a mix of standard and custom indicators. Standard indicators include relevant indicators under the Standard Foreign Assistance Master Indicator List and indicators under USAID/Kosovo's Mission-wide PMP. The PMP's outputs and indicators should align with the CDCS. Wherever possible, indicators should be disaggregated by gender.

USAID has identified the following illustrative indicators to measure program performance that, except where noted, the recipient will be required to collect and report on. However, the recipient should also identify other indicators and targets that are necessary to measure important program outputs and outcomes.

Purpose or Objective	Indicator(s)
Purpose: Strengthen civil society's role in raising critical democracy and governance issues and in influencing policies affecting vulnerable and marginalized communities	• Percent increase in women's and men's awareness of women's property rights (will be collected in survey carried out by the Property Rights Program implementer) • Number of legislative actions promoted by marginalized and vulnerable constituencies disaggregated by women's empowerment, LGBT rights, PwD and youth • Number of USG-assisted advocacy issues which are receiving heightened public attention • Percent of target beneficiaries who report being more engaged in civic and public life as a result of the program.
Objective 1: Women Actively Engaged in Governance and Economy Results contributing to this objective include: • Organizations representing women become a strong voice in support of issues that impact women	• Number of policy/legislative recommendations initiated • Number of dialogue initiatives between organizations that represent specific sector, such as business, and government institutions and/or policy makers • Number of public awareness campaigns and other events to promote the role and importance of women

• Interests of women are better represented in formulation and implementation of public policy, including improved legislation, etc. • Constructive dialogue between women, including women entrepreneurs, and government institutions are increased • Increased awareness of the society on the role and importance of women in governance and economy • Women's technical capacities are enhanced	in governance and economy • Number of training and capacity building activities provided to women.
Objective 2: Women empowered through enhanced awareness of property rights Results contributing to this objective include: • Increased women's and men's awareness of women's property rights issues • Women are more empowered to advocate for their interests. • Laws and policies to protect women's property rights that incorporate CSO recommendations are adopted, amended or implemented.	• Number of laws, policies, or procedures drafted, proposed or adopted to promote gender equality (and relevant to women's ownership and inheritance rights) at the regional, national or local level • Number of court cases or proceedings related to women's property inheritance monitored and reported by CSOs • Percent change in women and men who report having greater awareness of women's property rights and inheritance laws and issues (to be collected by Property Rights implementer)
Objective 3: Increased protection and awareness of LGBT community rights Results contributing to this objective include: • Increased awareness of and sensitivity to LGBT issues among the general population; • Improved civil society reporting on discrimination cases based on sexual orientation and gender identity to GoK authorities • Increased civil society engagement in drafting and implementation of relevant legal amendments and public policies addressing discrimination and human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender	• Number of joint actions/activities initiated by HR or other mainstream civil society organizations and LGBT groups • Number or cases of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity that are reported to GoK authorities by CSOs • Number of relevant Laws implemented or enforced addressing discrimination and human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity as a result of CSO input • Number of youth, especially university students that report increased knowledge about LGBT rights and concerns. • Number of media in Kosovo that present LGBT community more objectively as a result of CSO initiatives

identity.	
Objective 4: Participation of People with Disabilities (PwD) Expanded Results contributing to this objective include: • Increased awareness of and protection of rights of PwD in society • Increased involvement of PwD in civic engagement, employment and educational opportunities • More constructive dialogue between civil society and government institutions	• Number of CSO policy recommendations initiated on behalf of PwD • Number of PwD participating in advocacy and outreach activities • Number of CSO-initiated dialogue initiatives between PwD and government institutions or policy makers
Objective 5: Youth Participation Expanded Results contributing to this objective include: • Increased involvement of youth in civic engagement and representation of interests in public policy; • Increased public awareness of CSOs as a key stakeholder with GoK agencies in addressing the needs of youth; and • Constructive dialogue between youth and government institutions.	• Number of CSO policy recommendations initiated on behalf of youth • Number of youth participating in advocacy and outreach activities • Number of dialogue initiatives between youth and government institutions or policy makers

SECTION II: Award Information

A. Total Amount of funding

USAID expects to fund the program in the amount of \$2,500,000. This amount is subject to availability of funds. USAID reserves the right to determine the resulting level of funding for the award.

B. Type and Number of Award

USAID intends to award one (1) Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this RFA to the responsible applicant whose application conforming to this RFA offers the greatest value to the U.S. Government.

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. In addition, final award of any resultant cooperative agreement cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal USAID procedures.

C. Substantial Involvement

The intended purpose of the Agreement Officer Representative (AOR) involvement during the Cooperative Agreement is to assist the Recipient in achieving the supported objectives. The Agreement Officer has delegated the Substantial Involvement approvals listed below to the AOR. Such approval delegation does not extend to approvals for changes to the Program Description or the approved budget. Any changes to the Program Description or the approved budget shall only be approved by the Agreement Officer, after first being reviewed by the AOR.

USAID will be substantially involved in the Cooperative Agreement as follows:

- Approval of the Recipient's annual work/implementation plans
- Approval of specified key personnel and any changes
- Approval of quarterly reports
- Approval of any sub-awards, sub-grants and subcontracts
- Approval of the recipient's Monitoring and Evaluation plans
- Agency and Recipient Collaboration or Joint Participation

D. Period of Performance

The period of performance anticipated herein is three years from the date of the award.

E. Authorized Geographic Code

The authorized geographic code for the procurement of services and commodities is 937.

F. Place of performance

The place of performance for this activity is Kosovo.

End of Section II

SECTION III: Eligibility Information

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for a Cooperative Agreement(s) under this RFA, principal applicants must meet the below applicable eligibility requirements. Eligibility requirements apply all principal applicants unless otherwise specified. Any proposed deviation to the eligibility requirements will not be accepted.

Eligible Applicant

In order to ensure that local Applicants possess adequate capacity to carry out the activities envisioned under this Request for Applications, the following eligibility criteria will be used to determine Applicants' eligibility to receive an award. Only complete applications, submitted by eligible organizations, will be considered for award. The following eligibility criteria must be met by the date, upon which an application is submitted under the Request for Applications:

- Valid organizational registration as a legal local entity in Kosovo, with the Department of Registration and Liaison of NGOs within the Kosovo Ministry of Public Administration;
- Valid tax verification certificate obtained through Tax Administration of Kosovo (TAK) web-portal
- Local Entity Eligibility Statement.
- Conflict of Interest Statement

For the purposes of this locally competed Request for Applications (RFA), all prospective applicants are advised to consider the following definitions:

'Local Entity' or local nonprofit organization is defined as an entity that: (1) is legally organized under the laws of the country receiving assistance; (2) has as its principal place of business or operations in the country receiving assistance; (3) is majority owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the country receiving assistance; and, (4) is managed by a governing body the majority of who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the country receiving assistance.

'Majority owned' and **'Managed by'** include, without limitation, beneficiary interests and 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.

End of Section III

SECTION IV: Application and Submission Information

A. Announcement

This RFA contains all necessary information, web links, and materials to submit a complete, full application. Any additional information regarding this RFA will be furnished through an amendment(s) and will be communicated through Grants.gov. This RFA and any future amendments can be downloaded from the World Wide Web Address at <http://www.grants.gov>.

B. Application Instruction

Applicants will submit their application as required below:

- All information must be presented in the English language.
- The Application must use the Letter Format A4 (297mm x 210mm) (There are two exceptions to the aforementioned instruction: 1) budgets may be in a slightly smaller font [10 point] with smaller margins, and 2) tables may use smaller fonts and margins, however, must be easily readable).
- Times New Roman 12-point font using fixed pitch spacing per inch 1" margins on standard, letter-sized paper A4 (297mm x 210mm)

Please note that for this RFA applicants must provide the following information in format:

VOLUME I: TECHNICAL APPLICATION

a) COVER PAGE (one Page, does not count toward 15 pages) must contain:

- Full legal name of the organization (as per registration certificate);
- Full name of applicant (in English);
- Date of registration and registration number(s);
- Project title;
- Project duration;
- Address of the applicant;
- Office telephone numbers;
- E-mail address;
- Web pages, if applicable;
- Contact person, title;
- Contact person's e-mail address;
- Contact person's telephone number;
- Certification Statement by Authorized Negotiator or Head of Organization:
"I hereby certify that the information contained herein and attached hereto is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge."

b) ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST (Does not count towards page limit)

b.1 Copy of Applicant organization's formal registration as evidence of valid legal status.

b.2 Copy of Applicant organization's Tax Verification certificate, as evidence of status with fiscal and taxation authorities in Kosovo. The certificate can be obtained electronically at <http://evertetimi.atk-ks.org/>.

b.3 Local Entity Eligibility Statement

We undersigned, hereby certify that our organization is in compliance with eligibility requirement of Section III of this RFA.

Name of Organization

Authorized Representative Signature

b.4 Conflict of Interest Statement

We undersigned, hereby certify that our organization has appropriate internal policies for conflict of interest that stipulate that TAG Members and/or independent panel evaluation members and employees of the organization administering the award, are not allowed to benefit financially or materially from any funding set aside for sub-awards under the sponsorship of the program.

Name of Organization

Authorized Representative Signature

c) FULL TECHNICAL APPLICATION (max.15 pages)

The Technical Application must be divided into: 1.Technical Approach; 2.Corporate Capability; 3.Management Structure; 4. Sustainability; and 5. Past Performance sections.

c.1 TECHNICAL APPROACH

At a minimum, the approach must address the following:

- Situation analysis: containing a brief background on the specific development challenges and opportunities to be addressed by the program including a description of the target populations.
- A realistic and a technically sound plan to achieve the activities and anticipated results outlined in the five objectives required in the Program Description.
- Articulation of the program, its components, approach to stakeholder coordination (including cooperation with relevant USAID partners) and the overall integration of the proposed approach to maximize results.
- Approach to integrating marginalized and vulnerable populations throughout the five objectives, related activities and anticipated results. Includes articulation of how gender equality and women empowerment will be integrated throughout the life of the project as core development objectives, including inclusion of gender specific initiatives within program objectives, to include youth and people with disabilities.
- Plan for solicitation, management and oversight of sub-grants. A draft proposed Gantt Chart for the implementation of the Program must be included as part of the application. (See ANNEX 1 — Draft Gantt chart and Performance Management Plan).

- Plan/approach for addressing organizational and technical capacity development of CSO partners/sub-recipients working in five main areas: women in economy and governance, women's property rights, LGBT rights/anti-discrimination, participation of PWD, and youth participation.

c.2 CORPORATE CAPABILITY

- Experience in provision of a wide range of grants and technical assistance to other local sub-awardees or other stakeholders, at varying levels of competency in areas such as civil society capacity development, inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized communities, community mobilization, public advocacy and related areas.
- Experience in carrying out activities throughout whole territory of Kosovo, as opposed to working in only one region/municipality.

c.3 MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

- Propose which positions should be designated as Key Personnel (up to five positions).
- Specify the qualifications and abilities of proposed Key Personnel, provide resumes and at least three (3) professional references for candidates proposed for such positions that are suited to successfully undertake the activities described in the Program Description. (See ANNEX 2 — Key Personnel CV).
- Specify the composition and organizational structure of the entire project team and describe each staff member's role, technical expertise and estimated amount of time each will devote to the project. (See ANNEX 3 — Detailed staffing plan and position descriptions).
- Explain how the Management Structure will lead to the successful management of sub-grantees and achievement of Program Objectives.

c.4 SUSTAINABILITY

- In this section, Applicants must provide methodology and approach on how this Program will optimize the sustainability of the assistance, both as direct results of sub-recipient projects and the sustainability of local organization themselves.
- Applicants must identify issues hindering sustainability and how they plan to address these issues as part of their methodology and approach.
- Explain in detail a realistic understanding of the capabilities of target Kosovo institutions and other local partners.
- Outline how the Applicant envisions cooperation and partnerships with local counterparts to ensure full ownership and sustainability.
- Articulate in sufficient details project outputs at the grassroots level, as well as the projected experiences of participants and long-term results of the project.

c.5 PAST PERFORMANCE

In this section, Applicants shall describe any number of contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements which the applicant, and major partners if applicable, have implemented involving similar or related programs over the past five years. (See ANNEX 4 – Past Performance).

Annexes listed below should be submitted separately and do not count towards Technical Application page limit.

d) ANNEXES 1-5 (Does not count towards page limit)

ANNEX 1 — Draft Gantt chart and Performance Management Plan

A draft proposed Gantt Chart for the implementation of the Program shall be included as part of the application. This draft shall be revised, as appropriate, and finalized in consultation with the USAID Agreement Officer Representative (AOR) within three months of the award.

Work Plans and reports shall be prepared to be available for public reference and limited distribution. Financial or other proprietary information can be provided in an Addendum for USAID and noted in the Work Plan or report.

- a) Draft Gantt Chart (Work Plan):** A draft Gantt Chart for the implementation of the first 12 months of the project will be submitted as part of the application. The Work Plan Gantt Chart will include major activities that will be undertaken, any outside technical assistance that may be required to complete the activity, and a timeframe for when activities will commence and end.
- b) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan:** The Applicant must submit a draft Performance Management Plan (PMP) inclusive of realistic and appropriate performance indicators and a plan for the methodology to be used for its performance monitoring system. The PMP should serve to track and document the targets and actual performance data relative to the performance indicators under each activity component and objective. The Applicant should demonstrate the ability to develop and implement a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) that is thorough, clear, and feasible and that covers expected implementation over the life of the award. The Applicant should also elaborate on how the PMP will be used as management tool for both decision making and reporting purposes.

ANNEX 2 — Key Personnel CV (no more than two pages each)

The Recipient must submit CVs for key personnel which should not exceed more than two pages each

ANNEX 3 — Detailed staffing plan and position descriptions

The Recipient should submit a chart for proposed staffing plan covering all planned positions. The recipient must be able to demonstrate a sound staffing plan with clear roles and responsibilities. Names/CV's of non-key personnel will not be evaluated and should not be within the staffing plan.

ANNEX 4 – Past Performance

List the number of contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements which the lead organization, implemented involving similar or related programs over the past three years. Provide the following information:

- Name, address, current telephone number and email address of responsible representative(s) from the organization for which the work was performed (donors and/or beneficiaries);
- Contract/grant name and number, if any, annual amount received for each of the last five years and beginning and end dates; There is no need to submit copies of contracts, agreements or grants in their entirety; and
- Brief description of the past project/assistance activity.

ANNEX 5 — Draft Branding and Marking plan

It is a Federal statutory and regulatory requirement that all overseas programs, projects, activities, public communications, and commodities that USAID partially or fully funds under an assistance award or sub-award must be appropriately marked with the USAID identity. Accordingly, the “apparently successful applicant” will be required to submit a branding and marking plan. The apparently successful applicant’s proposed Marking Plan may include a request for approval of one or more exceptions to the marking requirements in 22CFR226.91 at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title22-vol1/xml/CFR-2011-title22-vol1-part226.xml>. The Agreement Officer evaluates the apparently successful applicant’s Branding Strategy and Marking Plan (including any requests for exceptions) for approval, consistent with the provisions “Branding Strategy,” “Marking Plan,” contained in the Certifications, Assurances, Other Statement of the Recipient and Solicitation Standard Provisions, and “Marking and Public Communications Under USAID-funded Assistance” contained in the USAID ADS 320 at <http://transition.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/320.pdf>

VOLUME II: COST APPLICATION

Cost Effectiveness and Cost Realism

Note: Most negotiations stall due to insufficient and/or unverifiable cost and pricing data. The recipient should provide as detailed cost breakdown and cost narrative as practicable. Please provide as much other than certified cost and pricing data necessary for the Agreement Officer to find costs realistic and reasonable. Lack of details in this section will lead to longer procurement time.

1. SF-424A

2. Cost Application:

- a. There is no page limit for the cost application. However, Applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible and still provide the necessary details.
- b. The Cost Application shall be completely separate from the Technical Application.
- c. The Cost Application Detailed Budget shall be formatted in Microsoft Excel 2010. Budgets shall display all formulas (to illustrate method of calculation) with unlocked cells.
- d. The Cost Application Budget Narrative shall be formatted in Microsoft Word 2010.

3. Budget Narrative and Detailed Budget Format:

The contents of the Budget Narrative and Detailed Budget documents shall mirror and reflect one another. The Budget Narrative shall have appropriate headings that match those of the Detailed Budget. For example, the Budget Narrative shall explain how salaries and wages were determined and give the appropriate rationale under the Salaries and Wages heading and the Detailed Budget shall display the estimated costs for salaries and wages under the Salaries and Wages budget line item. The Budget Narrative shall explain in as much detail as possible how costs were derived and the methodologies used to derive and estimate costs. The Detailed Budget shall display the estimated costs proposed for each budget line item.

3.a Budget Narrative Contents

To support proposed costs for your project, all applicants must provide a detailed Budget Narrative for all costs that explain how the costs were derived and the methodologies used. The Budget Narrative must provide:

1. The breakdown of all costs associated with the program.
2. The breakdown of all costs according to each partner organization involved in the program.
3. The costs associated with external, expatriate technical assistance and those associated with local in-country technical assistance.
4. The breakdown of any financial and in-kind contributions of all organizations involved in implementing this program.
5. Potential contributions of non-USAID or private commercial donors to this program (cost share) in accordance with 22 CFR 226.23 and/or OMB Circular A-110.
6. Procurement plan for commodities, goods and services (if applicable).

3.b Detailed Budget Contents

The Detailed Budget should be broken out by the projects implementation period (e.g. If the project implementation period is for five years, the applicant would propose a Detailed Budget which explains the project costs for a total of five years).

The Detailed Budget Excel Worksheet should contain the following budget categories at a minimum:

1. **Salary and Wages:** Direct salaries and wages should be proposed in accordance with the Applicant's personnel policies; USAID requires that salary daily rates are calculated 260 working days per year. Biographical Data Sheets (AID 1420; See ANEX 6- Bio data sheets for Key personnel) are required for all key personnel. Non key personnel should not be mentioned, only position description and rates must be provided. (forms may be obtained at :<http://www.usiad.gov/forms/>.) The Budget Narrative should explain how daily rates are calculated.
2. **Fringe Benefits:** If the Applicant has a fringe benefit rate that has been approved by a U.S. Federal Agency, such rate should be used and evidence of its approval shall be provided. If a fringe benefit rate has not been so approved, the Application should propose a rate and explain how the rate was determined. If the latter is used, the narrative should include a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits as prescribed by the governing laws and regulations in Kosovo (e.g. health insurance, retirement, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in dollars and as a percentage of salaries.
3. **Travel and Transportation:** The budget should indicate the number of trips, domestic, regional, and international, and the estimated costs. Specify the origin and destination for proposed trips, duration of travel, and number of individuals traveling. Per Diem shall be based on the Applicant's normal travel policies.
4. **Equipment:** The budget should provide the estimated types of equipment to be used on this project. Be sure to include all costs associated with equipment such as safety gear (e.g. helmets), fuel, tax/tag, and insurance premiums as applicable under an appropriate budget category. The equipment model number, cost per unit and quantity shall be provided.
5. **Supplies:** The budget shall specify the supply items related to this activity (e.g. specimen collection, sample transport, administrative).
6. **Contractual:** The budget shall identify any goods and services being procured through a contract mechanism, including sub-awards.
7. **Other Direct Costs:** The budget shall identify the following but is not limited to:

communications, report preparation costs, passports, visas, medical exams and inoculations, insurance (other than insurance included in the Applicant's fringe benefits). The narrative shall support and provide a breakdown for all other direct costs.

8. **Indirect Costs:** The Applicant shall support the proposed indirect cost rate with a letter from a cognizant U.S. Federal audit agency, a Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement (NICRA), or a budget narrative with sufficient information for USAID to determine the reasonableness of the rates (For example, a breakdown of labor bases and overhead pools, the method of determining the rate, etc.).

If an applicant does not have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement it must be able to provide the previous three years of audited financial statements to the Agreement Officer. (This will be requested separately).

4. Certifications and Representations

The applicant must provide signed Certifications, Assurances, and Representations that can be found at <http://inside.usaid.gov/ADS/300/303mav.pdf>

ANNEX 6 – Bio data sheets (AID 1420) for Key personnel

End of Section IV

SECTION V: Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

The Application will be evaluated in accordance with the Technical Evaluation Criteria set forth below.

Applicants should note that the technical evaluation criteria serve to set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated. **To facilitate the review of the application, please organize the narrative sections of the application in the same order as the evaluation criteria.**

The Government will evaluate the application on a best value basis, with technical merit more important than cost. Technical Approach and Corporate Capability are the most important and of equal importance. Management Structure, Sustainability, and Past Performance are of equal importance, but not as important as Technical Approach and Corporate Capability.

VOLUME I: TECHNICAL APPLICATION

a) Cover page: Compliant Y/N

b) Eligibility Checklist: Compliant Y/N

c) Full technical Application

c.1. Technical Approach

- The degree to which the technical approach depicts in detail the understanding of development challenges and opportunities to be addressed by the program – including a description of target populations.
- The degree to which the technical approach reflects a realistic and a technically sound plan to achieve the activities and anticipated results outlined in the five objectives required in the Program Description.
- The degree to which the Applicant clearly articulates the program, its components, coordination with relevant stakeholders and USAID partners and the extent to which the overall proposed approach is appropriately integrated to maximize results.
- The degree to which the technical approach outlines effective integration of gender, marginalized and vulnerable groups throughout all five objectives, related activities and anticipated results throughout the life of the project.
- The extent to which the applicant outlines a realistic plan for managing multiple sub-grants and ensures effective oversight and its links to the Performance Management Plan.
- The degree to which the Applicant addresses optimal needs for organizational and technical capacity development of local CSOs working in five main areas: women in economy and governance, women's property rights, LGBT rights/anti-discrimination, participation of PWD, and youth participation.

c.2. Corporate Capability

- Demonstrated experience in provision of a wide range of grants and technical assistance to other local sub-awardees or other stakeholders, at varying levels of competency in areas such as: civil society capacity development, inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized communities, community mobilization, public advocacy and/or related areas.

- Demonstrated experience in carrying out activities throughout whole territory of Kosovo, as opposed to working in only one region/municipality.

c.3. Management Structure

- Positions proposed as Key Personnel are realistic to meet the overall objectives of the program.
- Individuals proposed as for positions designated Key Personnel demonstrate the requisite skills and education to provide necessary oversight and management of the Program.
- The level at which the composition and organizational structure of the entire project team and roles of staff members, their technical expertise and LOE are appropriate to achieve the objectives of the Program.
- The degree to which the Applicant's proposed management structure would lead to a successful and tangible management of subgrants.

c.4. Sustainability

- The degree to which the Applicant demonstrates a valid methodology and approach to optimize the sustainability of the assistance, both as direct results of sub-recipient projects and the sustainability of local organization themselves.
- The level at which Applicant has successfully identified issues hindering sustainability and defined a plan to address these issues as part of their methodology and approach.
- The degree to which the Applicant depicts in detail a realistic understanding of the capabilities of targeted Kosovo institutions and other local partners.
- The degree to which the Applicant clearly articulates in detail their envisioned cooperation and partnerships with local counterparts to ensure full ownership and sustainability.
- The degree to which the Applicant clearly articulates in sufficient details project outputs at the grassroots level, as well as the foreseen experiences of participants.

c.5. Past Performance

- Demonstrated organizational past performance in successfully implementing similar projects through provision of past performance reference information covering the past five (5) years.

c.6. Branding & Marking: Compliant Y/N

VOLUME II: COST APPLICATION

Cost Effectiveness and Cost Realism

Cost volume will not be rated. The cost volume will be evaluated for realism and reasonableness.

Cost Effectiveness

In this section, Applicants shall describe their innovative and cost-effective approaches to budgeting that would provide the U.S. Government the most development benefit for the total estimated amount of the program. Applicants shall describe the following:

What innovative cost approaches the applicant has proposed that both simultaneously decrease cost and increase program impact (for example, avoidance of excessive salaries, excessive support staff, or other costs in excess of reasonable requirements);

Best Value Decision

Award will be made to the Applicant whose application offers the best value to the Government. Best value is defined as the expected outcome of a procurement that, in the Government's estimation, provides the greatest overall benefit in response to the requirement. Other areas of review and discussion will vary according to the circumstances pertaining to the application.

End of Section V

SECTION VI: Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

1. Applicants will be notified in writing via email of their application status (successful or unsuccessful) upon completion of the application review process.
2. The Apparently Successful Applicant will be notified of a successful application status. Notification of successful application status is **not** an authorization to begin performing proposed activities or performance in general.
3. Applicants notified of an unsuccessful application will not be considered further for an award under this RFA. Applicants with an unsuccessful application are advised that a debriefing may be requested within 10 working days after the applicant receives the notice. The unsuccessful applicant may send a written request for a debriefing to mohahmed@usaid.gov, mvillegas@usaid.gov and arexhepi@usaid.gov. Debriefings may be provided at the discretion of the AO and will be provided in writing electronically.

B. Authority to Obligate the Government

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.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Standard Provisions

If awarded a cooperative agreement under this RFA, the Recipient shall adhere to and govern itself under the Mandatory Standard Provisions and the Required As Applicable Provisions for Non-U.S. NGOs. Links to these Standard Provisions can be found in *Section VIII. Other Information “Regulations and References”*.

2. Environmental Compliance Terms

The Engagement of equity program will be in compliance with USAID and USG environmental procedures. The request for categorical exclusion has been approved by the Bureau Environmental Officer. If there are any programmatic changes affecting the environment during project implementation, the AOR will ensure that the environmental requirements are met.

End of Section VI

SECTION VII: Agency Contacts

The Agency points of contact for this RFA are as follows:

Primary Point of Contact:
Mohib Ahmed, USAID/Kosovo
Regional Agreement Officer
mohahmed@usaid.gov

Alternate Point of Contacts:

Maria Elba Villegas, USAID/Kosovo
Senior Agreement Specialist
mvillegas@usaid.gov

Albert Rexhepi, USAID/Kosovo
Agreement Specialist
arexhepi@usaid.gov

End of Section VII

SECTION VIII: Other Information

A. Regulations and References

Mandatory Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients:

<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303mab.pdf>

22 CFR 226

http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_02/22cfr226_02.html

22 CFR 228 USAID Source, Origin, Nationality Regulations:

http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_01/22cfr228_01.html

OMB Circular A-122

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a122/a122.html>

OMB Circular A-110

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a110/a110.html>

SF-424 Downloads

http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aapproved_standard_forms.jsp

Development Clearinghouse:

http://dec.usaid.gov/submit_doc.cfm

Requirements and standard formats/logos for USAID branding requirements:

<http://www.usaid.gov/branding/assistance.html>

PVO Registration Instructions

<http://idea.usaid.gov/ls/pvo-narp>

System for Award Management

www.sam.gov

Certifications, Assurances and Other Statements of the Offeror

<http://inside.usaid.gov/ADS/300/303mav.pdf>

Information sources on environmental health and safety

USAID's general launching point for information relating to environmental assessments and guidelines are at:

- http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/environment/compliance/index.html
- USAID's list of key contacts (Environmental Officers) in Bureaus and Missions at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/environment/compliance/officers.html#aec

- USAID's Environmental Training Course Materials, including Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 216 that governs the U.S. government's environmental impact abroad. The site also contains various forms and templates relating to Initial Environmental Examinations. <http://www.encapafrica.org/EPTM.htm>
- State Dept., International Travel Information: http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html.
- CDC, Travelers' Health (by destination): <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>.
- Regulating Pesticides, International Issues: <http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/international/#I3>
- The International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS): <http://www.who.int/ipcs/en/>.