



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Subject: REQUEST FOR FULL APPLICATION 72016918RFA00007

Title: STRATEGIC ADVOCACY APPROACHES ACTIVITY

RFA Issuance Date: April 17, 2018

Deadline for Questions: May 3, 2018 by 14:00 local Belgrade time

Application Closing Date: May 29, 2018, by 09:00 local Belgrade time

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Regional Contracting Office, would like to bring to the attention of prospective Serbian organizations an exciting funding opportunity for work with USAID: to enhance strategic civil society advocacy initiatives aimed at improving local communities. Therefore, USAID invites you to submit a full application for an activity outlined in the program description, “Strategic Advocacy Approaches Activity”. The funding available for this activity is up to **\$1,300,000** within a period of performance no longer than **three years**. Submission of a full application does not guarantee funding. USAID will make its determination based on the criteria outlined in Section V below.

Subject to the availability of funds, an award will be made to that responsible applicant whose application best meet the objectives of this funding opportunity and the selection criteria contained herein. Depending on successful execution of the program additional funding and time may be provided for program expansion. While one award is anticipated as a result of this NOFO, USAID reserves the right to fund more or none of the applications submitted.

Any questions concerning the RFA should be submitted in writing to Mr. Branislav Bulatovic at bbulatovic@usaid.gov and to Mr. Carter Saunders at casaunder@usaid.gov. The deadline for submission of questions is above

The strict deadline for submission of the application is no later than the date and time listed above. The Application must be submitted electronically to Mr. Branislav Bulatovic at bbulatovic@usaid.gov and to Mr. Carter Saunders at casaunder@usaid.gov.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government nor does it obligate the U.S. Government to cover any of the costs associated with the preparation or submission of the application. Further, the Government reserves the right to accept or decline any application it receives. In addition, the final award of any resultant grant cannot be made until the funds are appropriated, allocated, and obligated. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, the applicant is informed of the requirements and conditions for potential award.

Sincerely,

Carlton Bennett
Agreement Officer

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SECTION I: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1) Background

Advocacy plays a very important role in democratic processes and democratic societies. In Serbia, while gains in some advocacy skills and clear advocacy successes have been made, the public perception of civil society organizations (CSOs) overall influence is quite low. A majority of citizens do not believe that they can influence change by engaging in civic activities¹ or with civil society.

Reasons for this low level of influence are varied, but a common factor highlighted in analyses is the fact that civil society organizations (CSOs) are often deficient in shoring up significant citizen support for their causes and putting forward realistic asks. Advocacy efforts reflect an opportunity for civil society to build further credibility with stakeholders and work together with interested actors to achieve change. Nevertheless, comprehensive strategic advocacy that takes into account citizens' needs, the environment for reform options, and works in innovative ways to build policy influence and advocate for concrete steps towards achieving change remains rare.

At the same time, recent research on citizen engagement suggests that citizens are motivated to engage when initiatives are specific, tangible and when citizens fully understand and believe in the cause. The Ex-Post Evaluation on citizen engagement conducted by USAID Serbia in 2017² further highlights that successful initiatives conducted under the Civil Society Advocacy Initiative (CSAI), as well as the Community Revitalization through Democratic Action (CRDA) Program, were those that supported participatory processes, learning by doing, assigned new responsibilities to citizens and reached out in different ways.

Within development literature, there is increasing agreement that designing and implementing advocacy efforts to influence policy requires a diversified set of tools³. These tools are able to capture different levels and aspects of policy influence, such as changing how something is done, change in perceptions of key stakeholders, change in discourse, actual content or procedural change. Understanding which forms of influence are achievable within given contexts and designing for these is important in setting realistic advocacy targets and strategies for achieving them.

Likewise, engaging and utilizing the skills, knowledge and experience of a wide variety of actors, including the private sector, media, professional associations and informal groups, particularly with respect to issues such as communication, outreach and technological innovation may also improve the quality of civil society advocacy approaches, citizen engagement and can contribute to building stronger relationships among various civic actors.

In countries such as Serbia, the ability of CSOs to constructively engage a wide variety of stakeholders in efforts to effect positive change is critical to their efforts to demonstrate to both constituents and government actors that CSOs can and should play a credible and tangible role as effective agents of change in Serbia's reform and EU integration process.

2) Areas of Interest

¹ 2017 Audit of Political Engagement in Serbia, CRTA "<http://cрта.rs/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Ucesce-gradjana-u-demokratskim-procesima-u-Srbiji-2017.pdf>"

² Available at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00mzfx.pdf

³ For example See: Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy Influence and Advocacy, ODI Working Paper 395, March 2014, <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8928.pdf> ; or <https://www.bolderadvocacy.org/tools-for-effective-advocacy/evaluating-advocacy/advocacy-capacity-tool> ; or

USAID is seeking to fund an activity that will support experienced organizations interested in working on a variety of advocacy issues in a more strategic way that is grounded in citizen support and engagement and the forms of influence that are possible for the advocacy issues being considered at the time. The activity is intended to support Serbian CSO efforts to test, evaluate and scale approaches to advocacy efforts that effectively engage citizens in the identification, design, implementation and evaluation of advocacy initiatives.

The theory of change underlying this activity is that if CSOs focus their advocacy efforts on effective citizen outreach, engagement of diverse civic actors and the development of more multifaceted and realistic advocacy strategies, they will be more successful in reaching their advocacy objectives and through this process will build a stronger base of credibility and support in their communities and among relevant stakeholders for future actions.

Rather than focusing on specific issue areas, this activity is envisioned to take a functional approach to supporting advocacy efforts across a spectrum of issue areas that are of importance to citizens and communities.

USAID seeks applications that demonstrate the following characteristics:

- The program focuses on fostering ways to directly engage citizens and communities in setting priorities for advocacy initiatives, raising resources, and implementing and evaluating these initiatives.
- The program makes best use of Serbia's existing organizational capacities and resources and brings together a coalition that represents a diverse set of partners with interest and ability to contribute to program objectives and with skill sets that are relevant to the proposed program. Approaches may involve the formal or informal establishment of coalitions, partnerships, networks, consortia, or other arrangements of civil society groups, private sector actors, media and others. The program should clearly explain how the applicant has sought out those with the interest and ability to contribute to program objectives, as well as the roles and extent of engagement of proposed coalition/consortium members. Please note that any agreement will be between USAID and only one organization as the lead partner.
- The program is not only focused on Belgrade.
- The program utilizes a 'learning by doing' approach, and clearly demonstrates how it will experiment with interventions, assess impact, adapt and seek to scale up successful practices.
- The program, and all of the activities, is completely non-partisan.

USAID expects the proposed program to target the following goals:

- CSO outreach and advocacy improved
- Increased engagement of citizens in advocacy initiatives
- Expanded types of stakeholders⁴ engaged in advocacy actions
- Increased CSO capacities for design of advocacy strategies
- Adaptability of CSO advocacy programming improved

The following is a list of illustrative areas of programming that could be considered; other ideas or approaches to addressing the objectives set forth above are welcome.

⁴ Types of stakeholders may include private sector, civil society, community leaders/groups, public institutions etc.

a) Enhancing capacities for design of advocacy strategies

Examples:

- Furthering dialogue between CSOs with the ability and willingness to try new advocacy approaches and increase citizen engagement
- Advancing strategic advocacy design skills of participating CSOs through mentorship, technical assistance and best practice exchange
- Fostering dialogue and participatory consultation processes with relevant beneficiaries and stakeholders to inform the design of advocacy strategies
- Supporting the mapping of policy influence opportunities, community needs, and conducting stakeholder analysis.

b) Supporting implementation of advocacy actions

Examples:

- Supporting the mobilization of local resources to support local advocacy initiatives
- Fostering citizen engagement and constituency building in advocacy actions
- Providing mentorship and technical assistance in identifying/adjusting advocacy tactics

c) Advancing reflection and learning

Examples:

- Supporting the development of meaningful internal M&E learning mechanisms for adaptive learning and management
- Supporting data collection to inform reflection by CSO partners
- Promoting communication feedback among relevant stakeholders and target audiences
- Fostering reflection, learning and adapting advocacy programming based on constituent feedback among CSO partners
- Providing support in identifying new practices, learning opportunities and knowledge management to the wider CSO community

The following activities and programs will not be considered for funding:

- Programs that directly engage in support of political parties, individual business or any individual.
- Programs which are partisan in nature.
- Any program containing any construction activities.
- Any program involving the purchase of large scale equipment

END of SECTION I

SECTION II: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

The award under this request for application will be administered and managed by USAID/Serbia.

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/Serbia intends to provide up to \$1,300,000 in USAID funding for the program. While one award is anticipated as a result of this NOFO, USAID reserves the right to fund more or none of the applications submitted.

2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The duration of the proposed program should not be longer than 36 months. The anticipated start date for this activity is on or about **September 2018**.

3. Type of Award

The award under this RFA will be in the form of a cooperative agreement. Potential applicants should note that USAID policy prohibits the payment of fee/profit to the prime recipient under assistance instruments and that foregone profit does not qualify as cost sharing or leveraging. No construction activities will be financed under assistance agreements resulting from this NOFO.

Please note that any agreement will be between USAID and **only one organization as the lead partner**, which must be clear from the application.

Per ADS 303.3.11 “Substantial Involvement and Cooperative Agreements,” USAID expects substantial involvement in the following areas:

- USAID will approve specified key personnel of the Recipient.
- USAID will approve the Recipient’s annual work plans and MEL plans. Any significant changes by the recipient to the approved work plan and MEL plan will require additional approval.
- USAID will approve: all recipients and amounts of proposed sub-grants; recommendations for major capacity-building partnerships; and participate on the grant review committees as an ad hoc and non-voting member for all sub-grants under the Agreement.

4. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for this program is **937**. For accurate identification of prohibited sources, please refer to 22 CFR 228 and Automated Directive System (ADS) 310 entitled “Source and Nationality Requirements for Procurement of Commodities and Services Financed by USAID.

For accurate identification of prohibited sources, please refer to 22 CFR 228 and Automated Directive System (ADS) 310 entitled “Source and Nationality Requirements for Procurement of Commodities and Services Financed by USAID.

5. Gender Considerations

Promoting gender equality and advancing the status of all women and girls around the world is vital to achieving U.S. foreign policy and development objectives. As part of any proposed program, the applicant must assess and identify gender issues which impact the participation of men and women equally in the participation of this program. Please refer to USAID ADS 205, which can be found at <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/205.pdf> for more information on integrating this policy into their approach.

END of SECTION II

SECTION III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Qualified Serbian organizations are eligible to apply. In addition, applicants are encouraged to include non-traditional civil society stakeholders such as professional associations, local initiatives, media, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations as active partners in the proposed activity. Please note that public/government organizations can be part of a partnership, but are not able to apply for, or be party to, the award as either a prime or sub-awardee. However, programs may not be partisan or political in nature.

Given the importance of local knowledge and experience, **the primary grant from USAID must be with a Serbian organization**, and sub-grants to U.S. organizations may comprise only a small portion (typically, no more than 25%) of the total budget. Additionally, even if the portion of the award to an ineligible entity is less than 25% that will in no way guarantee that the US organization's participation will always be approved. Review of the portion of the award to an ineligible entity shall be made on a fact-specific, case-by-case basis that will entail not just the monetary portion of the total budget but also the substance of the work to be performed by the ineligible entity.

Applicants must have established financial management, monitoring and evaluation processes, internal control systems, and policies and procedures that comply with established U.S. Government standards, laws, and regulations. **The successful applicant(s) may be subject to a responsibility determination assessment (Pre-award Survey) by the Agreement Officer.** The applicant's accounting and procurement systems, audit issues, and management capability may be reviewed in detail as part of this process. **If notified by USAID that a pre-award survey is necessary, applicants must prepare and provide the required information and documents.** Prospective NGO applicants should refer to ADS Chapter 303.3.9.1 for additional information about pre-award surveys. A pre-award survey does not commit USAID to make an award to any entity.

Awardees cannot have received more than \$5 million from all U.S. Government funding sources over the last five years.

USAID will not accept an application from individuals. All applicants must be legally recognized organizational entities under applicable law. Public International Organizations are not eligible to apply for funding under this program. All applications must be submitted in accordance with ADS 303.

Applicants may only submit one application as a prime applicant.

END of SECTION III

SECTION IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Point of contact: See cover page

2. Content and Format of Application Submission

Submit applications strictly according to the instructions below.

Applications must be submitted electronically in two separate volumes via email: (a) technical and (b) cost applications. Email submissions must include the following in the subject line:

“Technical application under 72016918RFA00007, submitted by: [name of organization].”

“Cost application under 72016918RFA00007, submitted by: [name of organization].”

For an application sent by multiple emails, please indicate in the subject line of the email whether the email relates to the technical or cost application, and the desired sequence of multiple emails (if more than one is sent) and of attachments (e.g. "No. 1 of 4", etc.). For example, if your cost application is being sent in two emails, the first email should have a subject line which says: "[organization name], Cost Application, Part 1 of 2".

Our preference is that the technical application and the cost application be submitted as single email attachments, e.g. that you consolidate the various parts of a technical application into a single document before sending them. If this is not possible, please provide instructions on how to collate the attachments. USAID will not be responsible for errors in compiling electronic applications if no instructions are provided or are unclear. All applications received by the submission deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness to the RFA and the application format. No addition or modifications will be accepted after the submission date.

After you have sent your applications electronically, immediately check your own email to confirm that the attachments you intended to send were indeed sent. If you discover an error in your transmission, please send the material again and note in the subject line of the email or indicate in the file name if submitted via grants.gov that it is a "corrected" submission. Do not send the same email more than once unless there has been a change, and if so, please note that it is a "corrected" email.

All applications received by the deadline (as indicated on your invitation letter) will be reviewed for responsiveness to the specifications outlined in these guidelines and compliance with the application format. Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this RFA. Failure to do so may result in your application being determined as “non-responsive” and may forego further review.

The application must be signed by the organization’s representative who will also serve as the primary point of contact for their submission, with the authority to negotiate and enter into an award with USAID. Please print or type their name on the Cover Page of the technical and cost applications. Erasures or other changes must be initialed by the person signing the application. Applications signed by an agent must be accompanied by evidence of that agent's authority, unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

Applicants who include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation purposes, will:

- 1) Mark the title page with the following legend:

"This application includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the U.S. Government shall not be duplicated, used, or disclosed - in whole or in part - for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, an award is awarded to this applicant as a result of - or in connection with - the submission of this data, the U.S. Government shall have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting award. This restriction does not limit the U.S. Government's right to use information contained in this data if it is obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in sheets."

And:

- 2) Mark each sheet of restricted data with the following legend:

"Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application."

The application must be prepared according to the format set forth below.

A. Technical application format

Technical applications must not exceed **19** single-spaced typed pages, utilizing Times New Roman 12pt font, single spaced, typed on standard 8½" x 11" sized paper with one-inch margins (both right and left) and each page numbered consecutively.

Applicants are advised that any pages exceeding the limit will not be considered for evaluation.

The technical approach must clearly address the factors outlined in the evaluation criteria found in Section V below.

Unless otherwise specified, all application documents must be in **English**.

Application Contents: The Technical Application must contain the following within the noted page limits:

Cover Page (not counted in page limit)

A single page with the project title and RFA number, the name of the organization applying as the lead or primary applicant clearly identified. Any proposed sub-awardees will be listed separately. In addition, the Cover Page must provide a contact person for the prime applicant, including this individual's name (both typed and his/her signature), title or position with the organization/institution, address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address. State whether the contact person is the person with authority to bind the applicant, and if not, that person will also be listed with contact information. The DUNS numbers of the applicant must also be listed on the cover page.

Table of Contents (not counted in page limit)

Listing all parts of the technical application with page numbers and attachments.

Technical Approach (not to exceed 14 pages)

Clearly and thoroughly identify and describe:

- 1) The proposed approach and activities to achieve the objectives of the application as stated in Section I of the RFA, including an implementation timeline;
- 2) The anticipated outputs, outcomes, results and impact relevant to the implementation timeline;
- 3) The roles, relationships, and responsibilities of the core partners as well as the technical qualifications of key personnel. This must include a description of specific partner activities and how they contribute to particular outputs, outcomes, results and intended impacts;
- 4) How the outcomes and results, as well as any activities that need to continue beyond the duration of a USAID award, will be sustainable without continued USAID funding or involvement after the award ends;

The technical application must include a timeline for the application's activities in sufficient detail for USAID to understand expected progress of the proposed activities to achieve the applicant's objectives. This timeline should be the basis for the draft Work Plan to be submitted after award by the successful applicant.

Organizational Capacity and Management Plan (not to exceed three pages, exclusive of CVs)

The applicant must articulate its organizational capacity to plan, implement, and support the programming and range of activities for this application. The applicant must make clear the delineation of qualifications, roles, responsibilities, authority, and processes for decision making within the implementation team. An organizational chart must be provided, which is included in the three page limit. The chart shall show the staff reporting lines and relationships between the different positions. This section is distinct from the "Past Performance and Experience" section in the Cost Application.

Also, applicants must propose key personnel and all other essential personnel under the program and include CVs for all those individuals (**no more than three CVs / Key Personnel**). Key personnel are defined as those positions which are central to the technical and administrative management of the program and are subject to USAID's Substantial Involvement per RFA Section II.4. CVs may not be longer than two pages in length each and are not included in the above page limitation.

Draft Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (not to exceed two pages).

A draft Activity Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan shall be submitted with the application and shall include:

- Specific performance indicators (outputs, outcomes, and impact);
- A description of monitoring systems to measure activity progress against overall objectives;
- A plan for data collection and measurement of overall activity outcomes and results, including collection of baseline data, and for the use of data collected by the project to improve program planning and performance; and
- A plan for learning that would help ensure that the AOR and the activity team are able to learn from implementation and adapt the activity accordingly based on received data. This section may

identify learning questions that relate to the overall activity theory of change and/ or any related knowledge gaps and ways to allow for adjustments as circumstances change or learning evolves.

B. Cost application format

The Cost Application must be submitted under separate cover from the technical application.

Certain documents are required to be submitted by an applicant in order for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility. However, it is USAID policy not to burden applicants with undue reporting requirements if that information is readily available through other sources. NOTE: The award will not provide for the reimbursement of pre-award application costs.

The cost application must include all direct costs associated with the implementation and completion of activities, as well as any indirect costs and program costs such as those related to any sub-agreements and/or contracts as detailed below. These amounts are subject to revision depending on availability of funds.

The proposed budget must provide cost estimates for the management of the program (including program monitoring). Applicants will minimize their administrative and support costs for managing the project to maximize the funds available for project activities. Accordingly, those applications with minimal administrative costs may be deemed to offer a "greater value" than those with higher costs for program administration.

The following sections describe the documentation that Applicants for the Assistance award must submit to USAID prior to award. While there is no page limit for this portion, applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible, but must still provide the following:

- i. SF-424 series (found on www.grants.gov):
 - SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
 - SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-construction Programs
 - SF-424B, Assurances – Non-construction Programs

Cost application must be submitted in accordance with the attached excel spreadsheet, with all cells and formulas visible and unlocked that includes a summary budget (in US dollars) and a detailed/itemized budget (in US dollars). The detailed budget must include:

Costs notes/budget narrative explaining all estimated costs. Please note that the budget narrative must not only express the calculation of the estimate and purpose but also the basis of estimate – the rationale and method used to determine the budgeted cost estimate was fair and reasonable. Explanations should discuss cost components, rather lump costs.

A basic template is attached. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all links in their submitted budget are correct.

Additional guide for cost application

Identified below are some of the common cost elements in a budget and the required information in the budget and budget narrative.

Salaries

Please provide a separate line item for each proposed individual and identify each by name, title and the level of effort and salary rate. Also include position descriptions for all employees and consultants whose compensation will be charged as a direct cost to the agreement. This information will also be required for sub-recipients. Direct salaries and wages must be proposed in accordance with the applicant's personnel policies. Applicants shall submit salary history for all named staff via the USAID Form 1420 Biodata.

Fringe Benefits

Please provide a breakdown of proposed fringe benefits. This breakdown must include the rate at which the benefit is charged and the base against which it is applied. If the applicant has a fringe benefit rate that has been approved by an agency of the Government, such rate will be used and evidence of its approval must be provided. If a fringe benefit rate has not been so approved, the applicant will propose a rate and explain how the rate was determined. If the latter is used, the narrative must include a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., unemployment insurance, workers compensation, health and life insurance, retirement, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in dollars and as a percentage of salaries. **For Serbian local employees, in accordance with the Serbian Law on Salaries and Benefits, it is the amount of 17.9% of the gross salary and it is a liability of the employer.**

Travel/Per Diem

Please provide the destination and duration of each trip, the individuals traveling, and a breakdown between the per diem and airfare and the basis for each. The application will indicate the number of trips, domestic and international, and the estimated costs. Specify the origin and destination for each proposed trip, duration of travel, and number of individuals traveling. Per diem must be based on the applicant's normal travel policies (applicants may choose to refer to the Federal Standardized Travel Regulations for cost estimates).

Other Direct Costs

Please provide a breakdown and explanation for all other direct costs (ODCs). This includes communications, report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams and inoculations, insurance (other than insurance included in the applicant's fringe benefits), equipment (procurement plan for commodities), office rent abroad, etc. The narrative will provide a breakdown and support for all and each other direct costs.

Branding and Marking.

The cost application must incorporate the estimated cost for Branding and Marking. Additional guidance is available in USAID Automated Directive System ADS 320 found at <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/320.pdf>. Please see attached guide for developing branding strategy and marking plan.

Indirect Costs for Institutions without a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

Institutions, especially local institutions usually do not have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) letter with the US Government. Institutions without NICRAs may either treat all indirect costs as direct costs or may choose to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (see 2 CFR 200.414(f)).

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Costs

Pursuant to ADS 203.3.5 Monitoring Activities/Implementing Mechanisms, recipients are required to provide in the budget a separate line item for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL). The line item must include costs for data collection, analysis, and reporting. This line item will be tracked during implementation of the activity. The applicant will propose to USAID the most cost-efficient and effective way to address this requirement.

Seminars and Conferences

The applicant will indicate the subject, venue and duration of proposed conferences and seminars, and their relationship to the objectives of the program, along with estimates of costs.

Funding Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences

Funds in this agreement may not be used to finance the travel, per diem, hotel expenses, meals, conference fees or other conference costs for any member of a foreign government's delegation to an international conference sponsored by a public international organization, except as provided in ADS Mandatory Reference "Guidance on Funding Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences" (found at <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/350maa.pdf>) or as approved by the Agreement Officer.

Cost Share

The applicant may, but is not required to, propose cost share. Cost sharing or matching means the portion of project costs not paid by Federal (USG) funds. Cost share may include project costs incurred by the Recipient from its own funds, or project costs financed with cash, services, or property contributed or donated to the Recipient from other non-USG sources, including subrecipients.

Cost share becomes a condition of an award when it is part of the approved award budget. Cost sharing is not required for applicants to be eligible to receive USAID funding under this RFA. However, USAID encourages applicants to propose cost sharing to demonstrate their commitment to the proposed activities and to promote sustainability, as appropriate.

For NGO recipient contributions to qualify as cost share, the cost share must be verifiable from the recipient's records. Cost share can be audited. For U.S. entities, cost share is subject to the requirements of 2 CFR 200.306, 2 CFR 700.10, and the Standard Provision, "Cost Sharing (Matching)"; for non-U.S. entities it is subject to the Standard Provision, "Cost Share."

The USAID Mission Agreement Officer will determine whether any proposed cost share will become a condition of the award.

C. Past Performance and Experience (not to exceed 3 page per application)

This section will address the following:

- Brief description of the applicant's organizational history and experience;
- Examples of accomplishments and results in developing and implementing similar programs;
- Relevant experience with proposed approaches;
- Institutional strength as represented by breadth and depth of experienced personnel in program relevant disciplines and areas; and
- Explanation of how lessons learned will be applied in achieving the goals of the program.

Matrix of past performance information (included 3 page limit)

The Applicant must provide a Matrix of all its contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs during the past three years. The reference information for these awards must include:

- The performance location;
- Award number (if available);
- A brief description of the work performed;
- A point of contact list with current telephone numbers, e-mail address, name and title of someone, outside of the Applicant’s organization, who supervised/oversaw the activity.

D. Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each Applicant is required to provide a valid DUNS number and be registered in SAM before submitting the full application. USAID will not make an award to applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Additional information at: <https://fedgov.dnb.com> and www.sam.gov. Additional guidance and instructions on registration are attached this RFA.

****IMPORTANT RECENT CHANGES IN SAM****

Beginning March 27, 2018, new entities registering in SAM, as well as entities renewing are required to submit a notarized letter to the Federal Service Desk. The letter must follow the General Services Administration (GSA) Notarized Letter requirements and be mailed to the Federal Service Desk at the address below. Please review the GSA Notarized Letter Requirements link under OTHER INFORMATION in this RFA as well as the attached Notarized Letter Template. Please be sure to select the correct template: "International Entity, No U.S. Banking Information" or "International Entity, U.S. Banking Information" and mail it to the following address:

FEDERAL SERVICE DESK
ATTN: SAM.GOV REGISTRATION PROCESSING
460 INDUSTRIAL BLVD
LONDON, KY 40741-7285

Beginning April 27, 2018, GSA will lift the requirement for the letters to be notarized and mailed for new international registrants who are not entering bank account information for a U.S. financial institution. The letter must be completed, but does not need to be notarized. The letter may be scanned and sent to the Federal Service Desk. Once approved, the registration will be conditionally activated based on the scanned copy. The entity must then mail the original, signed letter to the Federal Service Desk. If the letter is not received within 45 days, the registration will expire. In order to apply, the applicant must have registered but the letter does not need to have been received by GSA by the application deadline.

International registrants using a US bank account are required to submit notarized letters to the Federal Service Desk. Please also refer to the attached "SAM Entity Administrator Letter Process for International Entities" attached.

In order to be eligible for funding, the successful applicant must maintain active DUNS and SAM registration. Applicants are highly encouraged to begin the new registration or renewal as soon as possible.

E. Submission Dates and Times:

- (i) Submission instructions and deadline: See cover page
- (ii) Questions instructions and deadline: See cover page

F. Funding Restrictions

The following activities and programs will not be considered for funding:

- Programs that directly engage in support of individual political parties or candidates.
- Programs that are partisan in nature.
- Any program containing any construction activities.
- Any program involving the purchase of large scale equipment

USAID policy is not to award profit under assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the agreement program and are in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and/or Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations, M1 - Allowable Costs, may be paid under the anticipated award.

G. Certifications, Assurances, and Solicitation Provisions

Each Applicant is required to provide the following Certifications, Assurances and Other Statements (<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mav.pdf>):

1. Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs (This assurance applies to Non-U.S. organizations, if any part of the program will be undertaken in the U.S.);
2. Certification Regarding Lobbying (22 CFR 227);
3. Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals (ADS 206, Prohibition of Assistance to Drug Traffickers);
4. Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing;
5. Certification Regarding Trafficking in Persons; and
6. Certification of Recipient

END of SECTION IV

SECTION V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

USAID/Serbia will evaluate the applications on the following merit review criteria, listed in descending order of importance:

Technical Approach: The extent to which the applicant's proposed technical implementation approach:

- Incorporates those local contextual factors described in the solicitation and relevant to the applicant's technical approach
- Is technically sound, feasible, and sustainably addresses areas of interest described in this solicitation
- Includes a diverse set of partners and skill sets that are relevant to the proposed program.

Organizational Capacity and Management: The extent to which the applicant's management organization and strategy:

- Supports the technical implementation approach and provides for timely implementation.
- Demonstrates necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the goals of the solicitation.
- Incorporates a Monitoring & Evaluation and Learning (MEL) approach that will advance technical approach's goals.

END of SECTION V

SECTION VI: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Award: The award made through this RFA will be administered by USAID.

Authority to Obligate the Government: The Agreement Officer is the only individual authorized to commit the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Award may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed Award or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

USAID Management of Activities: The Agreement Officer (AO) shall serve as the primary agreement contact between USAID and the Recipient. The Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) will serve as the primary technical contact between USAID and the Recipient.

Award Administration: For non-U.S. organizations, USAID Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations, <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf> are applicable.

Reporting: The types and frequency of financial and programmatic reports must be provided in accordance with 2 CFR 200.

Financial Reporting

Financial reporting will be in accordance with 2 CFR 200.327 and required on a quarterly basis.

Program Reporting

Reporting requirements are summarized below:

Type of Report	Due Date <i>(Days refer to calendar days and quarter refers to the fiscal quarter, unless stated otherwise)</i>
Annual Workplan	Annual work plan is due for approval 30 days after award and each year thereafter.
Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation Plan (MEL)	Revised MEL Plan is due for review and approval 30 days after award and each year thereafter.
Quarterly Performance Report	Quarterly Performance Report is due 30 days after the end of each quarter.
Annual Performance Report	Annual Performance Report is due 30 days after the last quarter.
Special Reports and inputs	As requested
Reporting Host Government Taxes	Annually: submit a report by April 16 of the for the last financial year ending March 31
Final Report	60 days after completion of award
Closeout Plan	120 days before the end of the award

Annual Work Plan

The Recipient shall submit an Annual Work Plan of its activities during the first year of the program within 30 days of the effective date of this Award for review, comments/suggestions to the Agreement

Officer's Representative (AOR). The Recipient shall then submit the revised Work Plan to the AOR for approval not later than 15 days from receipt of USAID's comments and/or suggestions. Subsequent Annual Work Plans should be submitted 30 days prior to commencement of the subsequent year of the Cooperative Agreement. The Work Plan shall include a timeline and benchmark indicators for achieving the objectives of each component of the program, all major activities that will be undertaken, rationale behind these activities, anticipated results of these efforts and how they will be measured. The Recipient shall submit significant changes/revisions to the Work Plan to the USAID Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) for his/her approval

Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL)

The Recipient shall submit a draft MEL to the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) within 30 days after award for review, comments/suggestions, and approval. Quarterly reporting against the MEL is due with a Quarterly Performance Report 30 days after the end of each quarter. Annual MEL reporting shall be included as part of the Annual Performance Report. An updated annual MEL should be submitted 30 days prior to the start of each subsequent year detailing activities for the following 12 months.

Quarterly Performance Reports

The Recipient will submit quarterly reports that give insight into the progress of planned activities. The narrative report will include qualitative and quantitative information describing activities carried out and specific results achieved during the quarter. In addition, the narrative report will indicate key implementation challenges encountered and how they were or are planned to be resolved. Reporting periods will coincide with USAID fiscal year quarters, with reports due no later than thirty (30) days after the end of each quarter. The report should also include budgeted versus actual expenditures (along with a brief analysis of any variance) and estimated accruals for the quarter.

Annual Performance Report

This report should summarize the information contained in the quarterly performance reports with greater detail provided for the 4th quarter.

Closeout Plan

Four months prior to the completion date of the Agreement, the Recipient will submit a closeout plan for AOR approval. The closeout plan shall include a) draft property disposition plan, if property was purchased with award funds; b) delivery schedule for all reports or other deliverables required under the agreement; and d) timetable for completing all required actions in the closeout plan to the Agreement Officer.

Final Report

The final performance report is a detailed report which summarizes the accomplishments and impact in relation to the expected results. It should contain a three-page executive summary, an index of all reports and information products produced under the agreement. The final report shall be submitted no later than 60 days after the end-date of the agreement to the Agreement Officer Representative, and submitted to the Development Experience Clearinghouse no later than 30 days after the approval of the final report by the AOR. An electronic copy must be submitted either by:

(a) Via E-mail: docsubmit@dec.cdie.org;

(b) Via U.S. Postal Service: Development Experience Clearinghouse, 8403 Colesville Road, Suite 210 Silver Spring, MD 20910, USA; or

Online: <http://www.dec.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=docSubmit.home>.

Program Income

If the successful applicant(s) is/are a non-profit organization, any program income generated under the award(s) will be added to USAID funding (and any cost-sharing that may be provided, if applicable), and used for program purposes. However, if the successful applicant is a for-profit or commercial organization, any program income generated under the award will be deducted from the USAID share of this award.

Alternate Branding and Marking Standards

There are no alternate branding and marking standards for this award. If selected for award, applicants will work with USAID staff to create a branding and marking strategy that highlights USAID and their organization.

Environmental Compliance

USAID requires the impact of all activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. Potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities must be identified prior to award and appropriate environmental safeguards must be adopted for all activities.

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

In case of a successful application, applicants will work with USAID staff to determine any environmental compliance requirements, implementation procedures, and reporting requirements on the compliance activities/results.

Gender Consideration

Promoting gender equality and advancing the status of all women and girls around the world is vital to achieving U.S. foreign policy and development objectives. As part of the design of any proposed activity, the Recipient will assess and identify gender issues which impact the participation of men and women equally in the participation of this program. Refer to USAID ADS 205 found at <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/205.pdf> for more information on integrating this policy into their approach.

END of SECTION VI

SECTION VII: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

Agency Point of Contact

- A. USAID Agreement Officer – Carlton Bennett, cabennett@usaid.gov
- B. Negotiator – Carter Saunders, casaunders@usaid.gov
- C. Negotiator – Branislav Bulatovic, bbulatovic@usaid.gov

END of SECTION VII

SECTION VIII: OTHER INFORMATION

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

Applicable Regulations & References

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

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

- 2 CFR 200 <http://www.ecfr.gov>

- SF-424 Downloads <http://www.grants.gov/> > Forms

- USAID Form 1420 Biodata <https://www.usaid.gov/forms/aid-1420-17>

- DUNS and SAM registration

[https://www.sam.gov/sam/transcript/Quick Guide for International Entity Registration.pdf](https://www.sam.gov/sam/transcript/Quick_Guide_for_International_Entity_Registration.pdf)

&

<https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/organization/federal-acquisition-service/office-of-systems-management/integrated-award-environment-iae/sam-update>

END of SECTION VIII

- END of RFA #72016918RFA00007 -