



USAID | SERBIA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Issue Date: September 14, 2018

Deadline for Question: September 28, 2018

Pre RFA conference: September 20, 2018 at 14:00

Pre RFA conference location: Crystal Hotel Belgrade (Internacionalnih brigada 9, 11000 Belgrade)

Closing Date for Concept Papers: October 30, 2018

Closing Time: 05:00 pm Belgrade time

Subject: Request for Application Number: 72016918RFA00008

Program Title: Media Initiatives and Partnerships Support

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 98.001

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications for a cooperative agreement from qualified entities to implement the Media Initiatives and Partnerships Activity. Eligibility for this award is restricted to Serbian local organizations.

USAID intends to make an award to the applicant(s) who best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity based on the merit review criteria described in this NOFO subject to a risk assessment. Eligible parties interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements and selection process.

Competition for awards resulting from this NOFO will be conducted in two phases. The first phase will require interested parties to submit a Concept Paper providing a brief description of the nature of the activity/project to be funded, including how goals and objectives as described in Section I below will be achieved and ensure the success of the activity. Concept Papers will be reviewed by USAID and only those organizations that successfully complete the first phase will be invited to participate in the second phase of the competition. In order to promote consistency and for ease of review, all applicants must use the **Standard Application Form** which is included as **Annex 1**. Submissions using other formats will not be considered.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NOFO and meet eligibility standards in Section C of this NOFO. This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity and to ensure that the NOFO has been received from the internet in its entirety. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the NOFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section D.4.a. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, Applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the process.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section D. The deadline for questions is shown above. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted to www.grants.gov.

Issuance of this notice of funding opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government nor does it commit the Government to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of comments/suggestions or an application. Concept Papers are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Carlton Bennett', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Carlton Bennett
Agreement Officer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section A – Program Description

Section B – Federal Award Information

Section C – Eligibility Information

Section D – Application and Submission Information

Section E – Application Review Information

Section F – Federal Award Administration Information

Section G – Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

Section H – Other Information

SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This funding opportunity is authorized under the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. The resulting award will be subject to 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, and USAID’s supplement, 2 CFR 700, as well as the additional requirements found in Section F.

A. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the MIPS activity is to increase the skills of Serbian citizens to navigate a complex media landscape and effectively participate in modern economic, social and political life. MIPS will achieve this objective by deepening local engagement in efforts to improve access to and increase consumers’ demand for accurate and objective information.

B. INTRODUCTION

Accurate and objective information is more important than ever for developing stable and democratic societies. It is equally important for citizens’ participation in modern economic life, which relies heavily on information and information technology. The ability to critically assess information for accuracy and objectivity directly affects individuals’ economic, social and political decisions. The ability to obtain and critically assess information to enable effective engagement in economic activity and engaged citizenship is especially important in states that seek to reform their economic models in order to develop e-economy¹ and strengthen their democratic institutions. In addition, as digital technology is changing education, business, media, and governance, citizens must acquire digital skills in order to fully participate in modern economic and political life.²

Modern information and media consumption habits are numerous and varied, and have been directly impacted by the development of modern information technologies. While traditional media, including print and broadcast media, remain important sources of information for a significant number of consumers, for an increasing number of consumers digital platforms that offer content across multiple media formats are becoming the norm, allowing interactive communication with consumers and the personalization of delivered media content³. Shifting consumer habits impact the quality and quantity of produced content, the ease of content dissemination across media platforms, and the type and share of audiences reached. An increasing number of media providers, in order to capture and survive in an increasingly saturated media market, are induced to rapidly create and disseminate cheap and popular content, rather than to invest in quality production or to verify the information they are disseminating.

¹ In general terms, an e-economy is economy that is characterized by reliance on information (as a tool or product), and extensive use of the information networks and technology.

² <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcomp/digital-competence-framework>

³The main daily information sources in 2017 for Serbian citizens were: TV (53%); internet (37%); and print daily papers (5%).

One of the effects of these ongoing technological and economic trends in the media sector is, according to the European Commission, an editorial environment that favors the ‘tabloidization’⁴ of content, which is not conducive to improving journalistic standards. This creates an environment in which irrelevant, sensationalized or incorrect information is increasingly produced and disseminated, and journalism standards are in decline. In addition, because of the overwhelming production and supply of cheap and popular content, consumers suffer from an “information overload”, and without standards or skills by which consumers can judge the quality of content, it is difficult for consumers to assess the objectivity and accuracy of information and to be able to critically assess and engage with media content.

At the same time, the spread of modern information technology, the speed of information sharing, and the rapid development of digital multi-media platforms have all greatly affected how information is evaluated and disseminated. An increase in the use of predictive online search technology - when an algorithm guesses what information a user would like to see based on information about the user – can create a “filter bubble”, which often locks users out of information that is not aligned with viewpoints attributed to them, unless they are aware of these technological shortcomings, and are incentivized to critically assess the validity and sources of information presented to them. Social media, developed to facilitate the creation of virtual communities and networks, are also increasingly becoming important communication channels to create and distribute content, use and spread information, and acquire knowledge. Thus, the sharing of information within online communities also contributes to the spreading of irrelevant or incorrect news, as users share information that confirm their existing viewpoints, even if this news is incorrect.

In Serbia, civil society, media associations and outlets have launched media literacy initiatives, as well as initiatives to introduce the fact-checking of information. A journalistic code of ethics has been adopted by self-regulatory bodies such as the Press Council and by professional journalist associations. At the same time, it is also the case that overall levels of media literacy and professional journalism standards have not kept pace with rapid changes in media production and content dissemination. In Serbia and globally, the mass production of information and new forms of content dissemination in the digital era have made it more difficult for consumers to discern between relevant and irrelevant or false information circulated in the media and online. This is affecting consumers’ choices in every aspect of life, including their economic, social and political choices. In an information-driven world, media literacy becomes an important precondition necessary to overcome the effects of modern information networks on consumers’ ability to access and assess relevant and accurate information, and make economic, social and political decisions. At the same time, efforts to counteract the effect of these changes in media

⁴ Serbia 2018 Report, European Commission, April 2018

and content production on the quality and objectivity of media content through initiatives undertaken by self-regulatory organizations, civil society, citizens or others, have also become critically important to addressing these challenges.

C. BACKGROUND/AREA OF INTEREST

The objective of this activity is to increase the skills of Serbian citizens to navigate a complex media landscape and effectively participate in modern economic, social and political life. MIPS will achieve this objective by deepening local engagement in efforts to improve access to and increase consumers' demand for accurate and objective information. USAID is looking to build upon ongoing media and digital literacy activities and seek to institutionalize these, as well as to scale up local initiatives that are aimed at increasing the accuracy and quality of published media content, increasing professional journalists' standards, and supporting consumer demand for accurate information and quality media content. Applicants are encouraged to develop an implementation approach that addresses a variety of media and information formats and markets (including online, TV and other media platforms), as well as an approach that will take into account multiple consumer groups and their diverse media consumption habits, and different levels of media and information literacy among consumers to enable program activities to reach as many media formats and consumers as possible.

The theory of change underlying this activity is that if citizens obtain the skills to critically assess information and information sources, and if consumers, civil society groups and media organizations effectively advocate for increased journalist adherence to existing ethical and professional standards, there will be an increase in demand for professional, accurate and unbiased reporting across media platforms. This activity has been designed to complement other USAID activities in the media sector that aim to support media and digital business development, as well as to support the development of more fair and transparent media market in order to increase the economic and financial capacity and sustainability of media actors. Together, USAID's media activities aim to improve Serbian citizens' access to the accurate and objective information necessary to make economic, social and political decisions.

Applicants must propose one or more initiatives they intend to undertake to address the purpose and challenges set forth above. Applicants should ensure that the issue or issues they propose to address are commensurate with the cost proposed and that applications present a strategy to sustain applicants' efforts beyond the lifetime of the activity. The following is a list of illustrative areas of programming that could be considered; applicants may also offer their ideas and approaches to address the purpose and theory of change set forth above.

1. Support to Media and Information Literacy initiatives to increase public competencies to search and critically evaluate information and media content to make decisions, and to responsibly interact in the digital space.

2. Support to civil society and consumer advocacy initiatives to increase professional, accurate and unbiased reporting across media platforms.
3. Support media stakeholders' self-regulation efforts to monitor adherence to professional journalism standards.
4. Support Digital Literacy initiatives to increase the digital competencies of citizens, civil society and the private sector, including through implementation of the European Union Digital Competence Framework and related efforts.

Proposed activities may include the provision of financial resources through sub-grants, public private partnerships or other sub-financing and/or co-financing modalities with civil society and private sector organizations, networks, academia, media outlets and associations to support activity objectives. Please note that financial support that is a subsidy for ongoing regular business activity, for example, production that would normally be part of standard media business activities, major equipment purchases, and similar activities is not envisaged. However, potential support for production of non-commercial (including educational) content, or content that responds to the public interest will be considered if it supports the purpose of the MIPS program, and if it is effectively integrated within the applicants' proposed approach. In addition, applicants are strongly advised to provide a plan for ensuring the sustainability of their proposed activities, such as by demonstrating plans to seek sustainable financial or institutional support that can ensure the viability of initiatives beyond the lifespan of this program.

USAID is interested in working with civil society organizations, media support organizations, media outlets, private sector actors and academia to support local efforts to address the challenges discussed above. Approaches may include the formal or informal establishment of coalitions, partnerships, networks, consortia, or other arrangements of media actors, civil society groups, private sector stakeholders, and others. USAID also encourages applications that aim to leverage USAID resources with other funding sources or existing resources, for example through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and partnerships with the private sector or publishing / broadcasting arrangements with the media industry. Please note that due to the potential for the appearance of a conflict of interest, in the event that any association of legal entities is selected as an implementing partner, that association's members will be ineligible for receiving sub-awards and technical assistance.

The following interventions and activities may not be considered for funding:

- Interventions that directly engage in support of individual political parties or candidates.
- Interventions that are partisan in nature or that promote content that is partisan in nature.
- Construction activities.

- The provision of individual financial support solely for equipment purchase or as a subsidy for ongoing business activities.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER USAID PROJECTS AND OTHER DONOR PROGRAMMING

USAID envisions a program that will closely coordinate and cooperate with other USAID-funded media and civil society programs, as well as with select media outlets and/or networks, civil society, private sector and other initiatives, professional associations, the Ministry of Culture and Information, as well as the initiatives of other donors, particularly those of the European Union.

In particular, cooperation and coordination will be sought with the following projects:

- USAID is currently implementing the four-year Strengthening Media Systems (SMS) activity, awarded in September 2017. The SMS activity aims to enable Serbian media system actors to improve the business enabling environment for media. The SMS activity also supports new media business models and ways to monetize content, particularly in the digital media market.
- The Balkan Media Assistance Program is a four-year regional activity (implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Kosovo) aimed at supporting increased media access to more substantial and stable resources to enable media actors in the region to operate as viable enterprises, engage wider audiences through high-quality content and expand media outlets' reach within the region, and fostering stronger media partnerships across the Balkans to advance solutions to common challenges.
- The European Union-funded Support to Media Reforms in Republic of Serbia program provides technical assistance to improve the enabling regulatory and policy environment for media freedom and media pluralism. The focus of the project is on increasing media literacy and strengthening the role of public broadcasting services in Serbia.

D. INDICATORS OF A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

USAID seeks applications that demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Proposed initiatives show the potential for sustained impact after the life of the project.
- Interventions effectively address different consumer groups and different media platforms.
- The program leverages existing technical resources, know-how, activities, networks, tools and organizations, before creating or employing new ones.
- The program is based on data driven approaches that provide a solid baseline of the current context for media content production and consumption in Serbia, and measurement of the impact of planned interventions on this context as well as the overall activity objective.
- The program utilizes a 'learning by doing' approach, and clearly demonstrates how it will experiment with interventions, assess impact, adapt to programmatic and contextual changes and seek to scale up successful practices.

- The program engages a wide group of stakeholders, fosters, creates and sustains innovative partnerships between different sectors (including media, technology, educational institutions and civil society) and takes advantage of opportunities for creating and sharing information and knowledge to achieve results.
- The program, and all of the activities, is completely non-partisan.

E. 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. 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 I

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID intends to award one Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide \$3,000,000 in total USAID funding over a four year period.

2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The anticipated period of performance is four years. The estimated start date will be December 2018.

3. Substantial Involvement

The anticipated substantial involvement is defined by the following elements and will be described in detail at the time of award:

- a) Approval of the Recipient's Implementation Plans
- b) Approval of Specified Key Personnel
- c) Agency and Recipient Collaboration or Joint Participation
- d) Agency Authority to Immediately Halt a Construction Activity

4. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for the procurement of commodities and services under this program is 937.

5. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the **Media Initiatives and Partnerships Support Program** which is authorized by Federal statute. The successful Recipient will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives and the efficient and effective administration of the award through the application of sound management practices. The Recipient will assume responsibility for administering Federal funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreements, program objectives, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award.

6. Selection of Instrument

USAID/Serbia has significant experience in delivering development assistance in the media sector, including assistance through direct grants to local implementing partners. Based on market research and its direct experience with the sector and implementing partners, USAID/Serbia determined that there are sufficient sources that can meet the agency need.

The Mission assessed that the key element in deciding on assistance instrument was flexibility and innovation that is needed in the implementing approach in order for MIPS to fulfill its goal. As a result, USAID/Serbia determined that the assistance instrument - cooperative agreement - best fits the Mission's needs under MIPS, as it will provide an opportunity to develop flexible and innovative approach.

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility for this NOFO is restricted. Eligibility is restricted to Serbian organization.

USAID is interested in working with civil society organizations, media support organizations, media outlets, private sector actors and academia to support local efforts to address the challenges discussed above. We are encouraging coalitions and partnerships, as well as applications that aim to leverage USAID resources with other funding sources or existing resources, for example through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and partnerships with the private sector or publishing / broadcasting arrangements with the media industry. 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.

Only local organizations as defined below are eligible for award. USAID defines a "local entity" as an individual, a corporation, a nonprofit organization, or another body of persons that:

- (1) Is legally organized under the laws of; and
- (2) Has as its principal place of business or operations in; and
- (3) Is majority owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of; and
- (4) Is managed by a governing body the majority of who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the country receiving assistance.

For purposes of this section, '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.

These eligibility requirements applies only to the principal (prime) Applicant.

USAID welcomes applications from organizations that have not previously received financial assistance from USAID.

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

USAID will not accept a concept/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.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

N/A

3. Other

- a) An applicant may submit only one application as a prime under this notice of funding opportunity.
- b) 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 as part of this process. **If notified by USAID that a pre-award survey is necessary, applicants must prepare in advance 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.

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency Point of Contact

Branislav Bulatovic and Albert Rexhepi
Acquisition and Assistance Specialists
Email: bbulatovic@usaid.gov and arexhepi@usaid.gov

2. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this NOFO should be submitted via email to bbulatovic@usaid.gov and arexhepi@usaid.gov, no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Any information given to a prospective Applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective Applicants as an amendment to this NOFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective Applicant.

3. General Content and Form of Application

This competition is being done in two phases. The first phase will require interested parties to submit a Concept Paper providing a brief description of the nature of the activity/project to be funded, including how the purpose and challenges as described in Section I below will be achieved and ensure the success of the activity. Based on the selection criteria stated below, USAID selects the most promising concept paper(s) and then has applicant(s) submit full application(s).

The concept paper must comply with the following:

- Applicants must submit concept papers using the template in Attachment 1. No other format will be accepted. Applicants **must** adhere to the instructions of the template, including the page limitations
- USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections. The concept paper must be written in English
- Use standard 8 ½” x 11”, single sided, single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1” margins, left justification and headers and/or footers on each page including consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and Applicant’s name.
- 10 point font can be used for graphs and charts. Tables however, must comply with the 12 point Times New Roman requirement.
- Submitted via Microsoft Word or PDF formats, except budget files which must be submitted in Microsoft Excel.
- The estimated start date identified in Section B of this NOFO must be used in the cost application.
- The Concept paper must be a searchable and editable Word or PDF format as appropriate.

Applicants must review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to do so may be considered as being non-responsive and may be evaluated accordingly. Applicants should retain a copy of the application and all enclosures for their records.

4. Application Submission Procedures

The concept paper in response to this NOFO must be submitted no later than the closing date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Late concept paper will not be reviewed nor considered. Applicants must retain proof of timely delivery.

The concept paper must be submitted by email to bbulatovic@usaid.gov and arexhepi@usaid.gov. Email submissions must include the NOFO number and applicant’s name in the subject line heading.

The concept paper must be submitted as a consolidated email attachment, e.g. you must consolidate the various parts of a concept paper into a single document before sending it. 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.

After submitting an application electronically, applicants should immediately check their own email to confirm that the attachments were indeed sent. If an applicant discovers an error in 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.

Applicants are reminded that e-mail is NOT instantaneous, and in some cases delays of several hours occur from transmission to receipt. Therefore, applicants are requested to send the concept paper in sufficient time ahead of the deadline. For this NOFO, the initial point of entry to the government infrastructure is the USAID mail server.

There may be a problem with the receipt of *.zip files due to anti-virus software. Therefore, applicants are discouraged from sending files in this format as USAID/Serbia cannot guarantee their acceptance by the internet server. File size must not exceed 5MB.

a) Dun and Bradstreet and SAM Requirements

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is exempted from requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

1. Provide a valid DUNS number for the Applicant and all proposed sub-recipients;
2. Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. SAM is streamlining processes, eliminating the need to enter the same data multiple times, and consolidating hosting to make the process of doing business with the government more efficient (www.sam.gov).
3. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, Applicants are encouraged to begin the process early. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements above by the time USAID is ready to make an award, USAID may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

DUNS number: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

SAM registration: <http://www.sam.gov>

Non-U.S. applicants can find additional resources for registering in SAM, including a Quick Start Guide and a video on how to obtain an NCAGE code, on www.sam.gov, navigate to Help, then to International Registrants.

b) Funding Restrictions

Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients under this award. See 2 CFR 200.330 for assistance in determining whether a sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor.

Construction is not authorized under this award.

USAID will not allow the reimbursement of pre-award costs under this award without the explicit written approval of the Agreement Officer.

Except as may be specifically approved in advance by the AO, all commodities and services that will be reimbursed by USAID under this award must be from the authorized geographic code specified in Section B.4 of this NOFO and must meet the source and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR 228.

Please note that the issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. The applications are submitted at the risk of the submitter. All preparation and submission costs are at the submitter's expense. In addition, final award of any resultant grant cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal USAID procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award.

A decision not to fund a program may occur at any phase of the evaluation process. No program expenditures will be paid by USAID/Serbia except those covered in an award signed by the USAID Agreement Officer. USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications received.

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**1. Criteria**

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

Technical and other factors will be evaluated relative to each other, as described here and prescribed by the Concept Paper Format (See Annex 1). The Concept Paper will be scored by a Selection Committee (SC) using the criteria described in this section.

2. Review and Selection Process

The concept paper should demonstrate how the approaches proposed by the Applicant will

address the objective and challenges set forth in Section A above, and lay out how the Applicant is uniquely capable of addressing the MIPS purpose and challenges set forth in the Program Description. The concept paper should be no more than 8 pages long, excluding a cover page. The concept paper will be reviewed based on the following merit criteria. The criteria listed below are presented in order of importance – Factor (a) is the most important factor.

a) Merit Review

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

(a) Technical Approach

The extent to which the Applicant clearly articulates its technical approach, and proposes activities that comprehensively address the multiple issues and challenges in the Program Description.

(b) Management Plan

The extent to which the management plan demonstrate that the Applicant and its coalition partners will effectively and efficiently achieve the purpose set forth in the Program Description, including the extent to which the application utilizes new and existing partnerships to leverage resources and know-how to achieve results.

If USAID/Serbia requests a full proposal, applicant(s) may be given additional and specific evaluation criteria that speak to the subject matter of the concept.

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

Award of the agreement contemplated by this NOFO cannot be made until funds have been appropriated, allocated and committed through internal USAID procedures. While USAID anticipates that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award.

2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

The resulting award from this NOFO will be administered in accordance with the following policies and regulations.

For US organizations: [ADS 303](#), [2 CFR 700](#), [2 CFR 200](#), and [Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental organizations](#).

For Non US organizations: [Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations](#).

See Annex 2, for a list of the Standard Provisions that will be applicable to any awards resulting from this NOFO.

3. Reporting Requirements

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

4. Program Income

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

5. Environmental Compliance

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) Parts 201.5.10g and 204 <https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/agency-policy/series-200>, which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities.

6. Other Requirements

Reserved for full application.

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

- a) Points of contact (POC) for questions while the funding opportunity is open, see section D.1

SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. Any award and subsequent incremental funding will be subject to the availability of funds and continued relevance to Agency programming.

Applications with Proprietary Data

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 purpose, should mark the cover page with the following:

“This application includes data that must not be disclosed duplicated, used, or disclosed – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, an award is made as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government will 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 {insert sheet numbers}.”

Additionally, the Applicant must mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following:

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

ANNEX 1 – Concept paper template

I. CONCEPT PAPER

Concept papers must not exceed 8 pages and must use standard margins and 12pt Times New Roman font. The following format must be used:

A. Name of Organization and DUNS number.

B. Overall Objective (2-3 sentences)

C. Amount of Funding (if any) Requested from USAID \$ _____

E. Program Description (approx. 5-7 pages)

Clearly identify and describe the activities to be addressed in order to achieve the objective and challenges presented in Section I of the NOFO and provide a description of:

1. the proposed approach and activities to address selected areas of interest and achieve the objective stated in the Section I of the RFA, including an implementation timeline;
2. what results the applicant realistically expects to accomplish through activity interventions, and how success will be measured;
3. the roles and responsibilities of the core partners, if any;
4. how the proposed program approach demonstrates the characteristics listed in Section I D (Indicators of a Successful Program) of the NOFO.

II. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

A. Proposed Estimated Cost and Cost Breakdown (1 page maximum)

This should include a proposed budget and projections.

C. Contact Information for All Proposed Partners (1 page maximum)

Contact information for all proposed partners, including name, title, email and phone numbers and a brief description of each prospective partner’s previous work and experience, including but not limited to experience working in similar activities.

ANNEX 2 - STANDARD PROVISIONS

Standard and standard as applicable clauses will be part of the award and can be found under: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303maa>

and <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>). The actual Standard Provisions included in the award will be dependent on the organization that is selected. The award will include the latest Mandatory Provisions for either U.S. or non-U.S. Nongovernmental organizations.