



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ARMENIA

Issuance Date: December 9, 2013
RFA Questions Due Date & Time: December 23, 2013, 10:00 AM Local Time
Application Submission Closing Due Date & Time: January 27, 2014, 12:00 PM Local Time

Subject: Request for Applications, RFA-111-14-000004, Media for Informed Civic Engagement

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The United States Government, represented by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission in Armenia, invites applications from Armenian organizations for the program entitled "Media for Informed Civic Engagement". Please refer to the Program Description for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

The authority for the RFA is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

The competition under this RFA is limited to local organizations in accordance with Section 7077 (a) "Local Competition Authority of Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-74)."

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID intends to provide approximately \$3,350,000 in total USAID funding to be allocated over the five year period. Following completion of the second year of the activity USAID is planning to conduct a mid-term external performance evaluation of the activity to evaluate: (1) the relevance of the activity vis-à-vis USAID/Armenia's priorities; (2) the relevance of the approach in the current Armenian context; and (3) the performance of the implementer. Therefore, continuation of the activity will be contingent upon the results of the evaluation. USAID will determine to continue the activity for Years 4 and 5 or redirect and change the program based on the findings and recommendations from the evaluation.

Award will be made to responsible applicant (s) whose application(s) best meets the requirements of this RFA and the selection criteria contained therein. Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. The Government may (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept other than the lowest cost application, and (c) waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received.

Applicant(s) under consideration for an award that have never received funding from USAID will be subject to a pre-award review.

The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed award may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed cooperative agreement or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

For the purposes of this RFA, the term "Grant" is synonymous with "Cooperative Agreement"; "Grantee" is synonymous with "Recipient"; and "Grant Officer" is synonymous with "Agreement Officer."

This RFA and any future amendments can be downloaded from <http://www.grants.gov/>. Select "Find Grant Opportunities," then click on "Browse by Agency," and select the "U.S. Agency for International Development" and search for the RFA. If there are problems in downloading the RFA from the internet, please contact the Grants.gov help desk at 1.800.518.4726 or support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

Any clarification questions concerning the RFA should be submitted in writing by the dates as specified below and under the *Section III, Application and Submission Information*, to Narine Sarkisian, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist, via email at OAYerevan@usaid.gov. Applications must be submitted in electronic form in addition or instead of the hard copies to the attention of Narine Sarkisian, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist, USAID/Armenia OAYerevan@usaid.gov

If the available funding is committed before the closing date, USAID will amend this RFA to note that applications will no longer be reviewed. Late applications will not be considered for award.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Chappell
Regional Agreement Officer
USAID/Armenia

SECTION I - FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Introduction

The Media for Informed Civic Engagement (MICE) is a five-year activity that aims to increase citizen access to independent and reliable sources of information about the Government of Armenia's (GOAM) policies and planned reforms, with special emphasis on USAID-supported reforms in decentralization, transparency and accountability, and social sector policy. While specifically focusing on these reforms, the activity will improve the quality of media content and strengthen the media's capacity to meet professional standards, thus fostering the continued development of an independent media sector.

This activity is expected to lead to an increased number of independent media producing quality content on the local and national levels, and giving voice to local concerns at the national level. By making independent and reliable content about these reform areas accessible to the public through news media, MICE will directly contribute to Sub-Intermediate Result (Sub-IR) 2.1.3 "*Citizen access to independent and reliable information increased*" under USAID/Armenia's 2013-2017 Country Development Cooperation Strategy Results Framework. A citizenry that is well-informed and expresses its interests in policies, programs, and services ensures that government policies and services responds to citizen needs. This activity will also contribute to IR 2.1 "*Increased civic engagement in and oversight of reforms,*" which will in turn support achieving USAID's Development Objective (DO) 2 "*More participatory, effective and accountable governance.*"

B. Background

The existence of an independent, vibrant media that supports the free flow of information is crucial for democratic consolidation and building good governance systems. As means of vertical accountability, the media and civil society play an essential role in mobilizing and articulating demand for accountability, effectiveness and transparency in all levels of government. Armenia's standing on media independence, as Freedom House's *Nation's in Transit* report indicates, has been steadily declining since 2002 (when the relative press freedom in the country received a major blow when the authorities shut down the leading independent TV station). The environment improved slightly in 2013, largely due to more balanced elections coverage and increasingly diverse and freely operating online news sources.

Armenia has far to go in establishing a fully independent media that serves the public interest. There are many factors contributing to this, including the underdeveloped media market, control of the media by the ruling political and economic elite, lack of pluralism and diversity of viewpoints, self-censorship and poor professional skills and standards. The rapid spread of online and social media within the past several years¹ has brought about positive changes in terms of plurality of information sources. To keep up with the fast and uncontrolled dissemination of

¹ According to Armenia's Public Service Regulatory Commission, as of June 2012 Internet penetration in Armenia was approximately 60% of the population. Internet World Stats, "Asia Marketing Research, Internet Usage, Population Statistics and Facebook Information," accessed August 1, 2013, <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm>.

online information, traditional media are often pressured to cover issues and events that otherwise might have been ignored.

USAID/Armenia’s 2010-2014 Alternative Resources in Media (ARM) project fostered media diversity and plurality of news sources by expanding the use of and access to alternative content through new and traditional media. The mid-term evaluation of ARM found that the project made “significant contributions in developing alternative media sources, promoting the creation of alternative content, and expanding citizens’ access to new information from new and diverse outlets.” Looking ahead, the evaluation highlighted the continued need for development of more information resources, for citizen education on using new information platforms to participate in public discussions, as well as more open, public debate including diverse voices and viewpoints.

Despite the greater availability of news sources largely due to the proliferation of online media, the quality of professional reporting has shown little improvement. As evidenced by IREX’s Media Sustainability Index (MSI), Armenian media outlets do not fully meet professional standards of quality and ethical journalism. Poor quality, bias, unverified reporting and self-censorship are among the prevailing practices and factors that contributed to a score of 1.83 and an “unsustainable mixed system” ranking under the Professional Journalism objective in the 2013 edition of the MSI.² The MSI also notes that “[n]iche reporting is under-developed because the average outlet does not have the luxury of keeping a journalist focused on only one sphere, and must be fairly universal to meet the outlet’s content demand.”³

Lack of in-depth and niche reporting significantly undermines Armenian citizens’ awareness and understanding of Government’s initiatives, policies and reforms. This negatively impacts citizens’ ability to meaningfully engage their Government on issues that directly affect their lives. This is a particular challenge this activity aims to address within the broader context of USAID/Armenia’s development strategy.

C. Activity Goal and Objectives

a. Activity Goal

The overall goal of this five-year activity is **to increase citizen access to independent and reliable sources of information** about GOAM priority policies and reforms –including decentralization, transparency and accountability, and social sector policy reforms – that have an immediate impact on people’s everyday life. It aims to enhance the quality and availability of information available to citizens, with a focus on news and program production at the local and regional levels, and coverage of reform issues at the national level. It is hypothesized that, through support for quality content and diligent reporting, news media can ensure that: (1) people are well informed about the implications of policy changes on a local level; (2) public debate about reform is enhanced; and (3) increased information and opinions on how reforms affect average citizens’ lives informs public policy formation and implementation. While specifically focusing on reforms, the activity will also strengthen media capacity to meet professional standards and foster the free flow of information to better serve democratic consolidation and good governance in general.

² On a scale from 0 to 4, a score higher than 2 is required to be considered “nearly sustainable.”

³ IREX, Media Sustainability Index 2013: Development of Sustainable Media in Europe and Eurasia, p 139.

b. Linkages with USAID/Armenia’s CDCS Results Framework and other relevant USAID Policies

The activity is expected to lead to an increased number of independent media producing quality content on the local and national levels and giving voice to local concerns at the national level. By making information on subject reform areas more accessible and available to the public, MICE will directly contribute to Sub-Intermediate Result (Sub-IR) 2.1.3 “*Citizen access to independent and reliable information increased*” under USAID/Armenia’s 2013-2017 Country Development Cooperation Strategy Results Framework.

Equipping citizens with more quality information and voicing citizen concerns regarding targeted reforms will support civil society efforts to engage citizens and articulate their needs. The activity will also provide the background, tools and platforms required for improved accountability through civic oversight, thus contributing to Sub-IRs 2.1.1 “*Civil society’s ability to engage citizens and articulate their interests improved and sustained*” and 2.1.2 “*Monitoring of government institutions, officials, and policy process strengthened.*”

By working in tandem with USAID-supported civil society consortia engaged in targeted reform areas, MICE will augment the competition of ideas and the free flow of information through mechanisms that foster citizen input and debate. The program will support the achievement of Intermediate Result (IR) 2.1 “*Increased civic engagement in and oversight of reforms.*”

MICE is based on the premise that a citizenry that is well-informed and expresses its interests in policies, programs, and services provides a means by which governments can be responsive. Progress in achieving the Sub-IRs and IR will contribute to USAID’s Development Objective (DO) 2 “*More participatory, effective and accountable governance,*” which in turn supports USAID’s overarching Goal of “[a] *more engaged, prosperous and well-governed Armenian society.*”

MICE’s approach and objectives closely fit USAID/Armenia’s development hypothesis underlying DO 2, i.e. more participatory, effective and accountable governance will result if (1) citizens are engaged in and exercising oversight over the policy process; and (2) policymaking and reform implementation are transparent and responsive to the citizenry; and 3) decision making authority is decentralized to the lowest competent level in government.

The activity contributes to the broader USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance. It is closely linked with Sub-Objective 1.1 “*Promote politically engaged and informed citizenries, active civil society organizations, organized labor, independent and open media, and representative political parties*” and Sub-Objective 1.2 “*Support the ability of civil society and independent and open media to provide oversight and an informed critique of government.*”

The activity also contributes to the USAID Forward’s Local Solutions (LS) effort. By working directly with Armenian organizations to strengthen leadership and capacity among local media partners in promoting access to and distribution of reliable and independent information, the activity will contribute to LS Objective 2: Investing in local organizations.

c. Operating Principles and Cross-Cutting Issues

Synergies with Other USAID Activities – USAID/Armenia’s development hypothesis entails an integrated approach of providing technical assistance to the GOAM to formulate and implement

priority reforms in a more transparent and responsive manner; and strengthening civil society's – including independent media's – potential to constructively impact the formation, implementation and monitoring of these reforms. It is the Mission's intention to consider funding activities that will work in close cooperation with other USAID activities across sectors and, in particular, with civil society consortia focusing on the different priority reforms. It is therefore important that proposed activities clearly demonstrate how synergies and linkages with other USAID activities will be ensured.

Competition – As an essential element to viable economic and democratic systems, competition is a common theme in USAID/Armenia's overall strategy and an essential factor underlying the current activity. Civil society institutions, news media and citizens are critical to ensuring the competition of ideas and mechanisms available for public policy debate. All are critical to the success of a bottom-up, inclusive and participatory approach to democratic development. Increased access to reliable and high-quality information will contribute to an informed debate and more inclusive deliberation within Armenian society. It is also expected that increased transparency and accountability through watchdog reporting will lead to greater competition in service provision.

Regional Impact – USAID/Armenia has prioritized local development. Lack of reliable and thorough information on issues that directly touch people's everyday life is most acute on the local level. Reforms and policies need to be communicated at the local level in order for citizens to meaningfully engage. Likewise, implementation of reforms must be informed by the challenges faced at the local level. Therefore this activity prioritizes enhancing the quality and access to information important to citizens at the local level and regional levels, while covering reform issues at the national level.

Innovation - The Mission fosters opportunities to support new technologies and innovation in implementing the strategy. To this end, proposed activities are expected to capitalize on innovative approaches and use of new media tools to foster production of and access to independent and reliable information. Applicants are encouraged to engage international expertise and best practices to introduce these approaches.

Youth - USAID/Armenia pays special attention to youth as drivers of change, future leaders within society and entrepreneurs within the workforce. In recent years young activists have been at the forefront of civic activism, often using social media to advocate for and advance civic initiatives. It is important to address and cultivate this growing potential within the context of the proposed interventions.

Partnerships - USAID/Armenia prioritizes forging partnerships and engaging the Armenian Diaspora as a strategic means to building a legacy and ensuring sustainability of development interventions. Proposed activities are encouraged to consider strategic partnerships that will help leverage funds, bring new expertise and technologies and/or introduce third-party ownership of activities.

Gender Considerations – Information dissemination across different platforms or mediums is equally available and accessible to men and women in Armenia. Gender equality, however, is not well reflected in news reporting, and media content often lacks a gender-sensitive angle. As the USAID/Armenia August 2010 Gender Assessment concludes, “overall the media does not portray women in positions of authority or as decision-makers, says little about issues of concern to women and perpetuates stereotypes about the role of women.” This activity is expected to

adopt a gender sensitive approach to implementation and content production (1) to improve women's image in media and their role in political decision-making; (2) to ensure that men and women participate in and are portrayed in content production in an equitable manner; and (3) to reflect how targeted public policy reforms affect men and women differently/

Environment – While Armenia's legislative framework regulating environmental protection is largely in place, implementation remains problematic. Among other international documents, Armenia ratified the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in May 2001. According to environmental activists, ensuring timely and effective public participation is the most-cited impediment to access to justice in environmental matters. As access to information is a key factor in ensuring effective public participation, it is the Mission's expectation that the proposed activities demonstrate commitment to biodiversity conservation, consider mechanisms to increase media community's understanding of environmental issues and expand quality coverage of environmental hotspots and economic activities impacting biodiversity.

Sustainability – Sustainability of proposed interventions, i.e. the ability of created human and institutional capacity and skills, formed partnerships and developed tools and mechanisms, etc. to continue to develop beyond the dates and scope of the proposed activity, is a key consideration. The activity will build the capacity of local media and information advocacy organizations to ensure long-term institutionalization of public engagement in local and national governance reform processes.

D. Detailed Program Description

Building an informed and engaged citizenry is essential for a coherent approach to a more participatory and accountable governance. Reforms and policies need to be communicated at the local level, so that citizens are able to meaningfully engage. Likewise, implementation of reforms at the national level needs to be informed by the challenges faced at the local level. Media – both traditional and new – have a key role to play as conduits facilitating this multi-directional and multi-dimensional information flow. To this end, the activity will foster access to reliable and independent information covering both the urban and rural communities of Armenia. At the same time, it will increase public understanding of and demand for independent, reliable and quality information as an essential prerequisite for an engaged citizenry. The activity is expected to lead to an increased number of media outlets producing independent, reliable and quality content on the local and national levels, thereby giving voice to local concerns at the national level.

The implementer is expected to collaborate with USAID-supported civil society consortia promoting citizen engagement in, monitoring of and advocacy in the field of targeted reforms to jointly contribute to the goal of increased citizen access to independent and reliable information about those reforms. The applicants are expected to work closely with USAID-supported civil society organizations, especially think-tanks, to draw reform-specific knowledge from analyses, studies and research they produce in order to package and disseminate the information to the public in a user-friendly format.

It is expected that, while focusing on content production about priority reform areas – decentralization, transparency and accountability, and social sector policy and services – the implementer will limit its support to a core of targeted media outlets with existing or potentially expanded regional outreach. This entails customized and onsite assistance and hands-on advisory

services to individual outlets in accordance with their capacity, needs and potential capabilities. Applicants will clearly outline the selection criteria for the choice of targeted media outlets.

Local capacity development is a vital aspect for achieving sustainable results. Applicants are encouraged to self-assess their own capacity gaps vis-à-vis the implementation of the proposed activity and set aside resources for addressing the identified needs. It is expected that applicants will demonstrate interest and ability to engage international technical expertise and best practices in the implementation of this activity. While the activity is expected to be carried out primarily by a local entity (entities), applicants may partner with international networks, organizations and/or consultants both for technical expertise and for their capacity development needs.

Goal: Citizen access to independent and reliable information on targeted reforms increased

This goal is expected to be achieved through progress towards the result areas as summarized below.

Goal: Citizen access to independent and reliable information on targeted reforms increased

Result Area 1: Fact-based quality content on targeted reforms is available and accessible across the country via multiple platforms

Result Area 2: Targeted media serve as effective and multi-media watchdog platforms to monitor and debate on the performance and implementation of priority reforms

Result Area 3: Citizens and Civil Society Organizations have the critical knowledge and skills to become savvy media consumers and demand better quality media

Result Area 1: Fact-based quality content on targeted reforms is available and accessible across the country via multiple platforms

Assistance will be focused on but not limited to content relating to priority reform and policy areas specified in this Program Description, with an emphasis on news and program production and dissemination at the local and regional levels; and coverage of reform issues at the national level.

The lack of reliable and thorough information on issues that directly affect people's everyday life is most acute in the regions and especially rural areas of Armenia. Therefore, the program prioritizes working with regional media, regional information hubs such as InfoTuns, traditional

and new media professionals and citizen contributors⁴ from the regions. The program should reach out to citizens to inform and educate them on how the reforms affect their lives, and explain why they should be actively engaged.

Addressing gaps in professionalism and compliance with ethical standards of journalism is a key aspect of this activity. Journalists are expected to guard the public interest and protect it from incompetence and misinformation. Media outlets that improve the professionalism of their newsrooms and are able to produce high-quality and hard-hitting journalism stand a better chance of gaining the public trust and being perceived as reliable sources of information that can serve as a check on their elected leaders' performance.

Measures focused on content production within the development priority areas identified in this Program Description should be linked to assistance aimed at improving the professional quality and ethical standards of reporting. In addition to improving the professional media skills and standards, this approach requires ample emphasis on improving the reporting skills and awareness of ethical standards among citizen contributors.

Expected Results, Illustrative Activities and Indicators

Assistance under Result Area 1 is expected to lead to the following results:

- Reform-specific quality content is produced, packaged for and disseminated across different offline and online media with special emphasis on local outreach
- An expanding network of independent media outlets, freelance journalists and citizen contributors from around the country collaborating on content-sharing and crowd-reporting projects is established
- Targeted media outlets have expanded local outreach and coverage through an increased number of well-established links with local outlets, locally dispatched correspondents, freelance stringers and citizen contributors
- Professional quality and ethical standards of journalism within the targeted media newsrooms is improved and institutionalized
- Targeted media represent the views of the entire political spectrum and diverse social interests in their coverage

Illustrative Activities:

- Establish sustainable and practical skills-building mechanisms for media practitioners within target media outlets to upgrade their professional skills and sector-specific disciplinary knowledge
- Improve targeted outlets' capacity to produce and disseminate content that is objective, fact-based, well-researched and presented from multiple angles
- Boost investigative reporting skills among the targeted media
- Prepare a pool of quality multi-media journalists with specialized and niche reporting skills who can work or freelance for an array of national electronic, print and online outlets and have sector-specific disciplinary knowledge throughout all regions of Armenia

⁴ Throughout the document, the term "citizen contributor" is used broadly to refer to citizen journalists, bloggers, and social media users.

- Recognize journalists and citizen contributors for professional and ethical reporting through thematic (reform-specific) contests and awards to showcase excellence in journalism
- Foster the practice of highlighting and addressing unprofessional and unethical reporting through self-regulatory, professional and online media critiquing platforms, e.g. Media Ethics Observatory, www.media.am, etc.
- Facilitate targeted media outlets' ability to adopt and abide by clear codes of ethics and sound editorial guidelines

Illustrative Indicators:

- Systematic content analysis data monitoring the extent to which targeted media outlets perform an agenda setting function (i.e. raising awareness on priority policies/reforms and informing policymakers of public concerns and needs)
- # of entities engaged in content-sharing and crowd-reporting projects
- # of media outputs with reform-specific content produced and distributed
- # of media outputs produced and distributed via content-sharing and content-aggregation arrangements (# of cross-outlet movements of content)
- % of potential audiences covered by the target media
- # of voluntary subscribers to targeted media outlets
- Level of public perception that news reporting is fair and impartial (%)
- Measured levels of ethical and professional reporting by targeted media outlets

Result Area 2: Targeted media serve as effective and multi-media watchdog platforms to monitor and debate on the performance and implementation of priority reforms

New media tools have changed the patterns of information production and consumption. The growth of digital and social media has brought about a significant source of public opinion-making information. New media platforms can help amplify direct engagement between citizens and the government in policy making and promote opportunities for citizens to add their voices to public debate, exert greater force on policy-making and keep policymakers responsive. This entails initiatives to deploy digital tools to enlist the eyes and ears of citizens to better spot public problems and bring them to the attention of the government and broader public.

Focusing on priority reforms, the implementer will, therefore, encourage the flow of content across all feasible platforms, both traditional and new, in order to foster media's watchdog function. This includes efforts to strengthen the targeted media's ability to monitor and investigate the implementation and progress of priority reforms and equip them with the capacity and tools to engage citizens in the monitoring process. The latter entails the need to promote professional standards and values not only among professional media but also citizen contributors, so their work will command public trust and make citizens' voices more effective in public discussion.

Expected Results, Illustrative Activities and Indicators

Assistance under Result Area 2 is expected to lead to the following results:

- Targeted media outlets' role to perform independent watchdog scrutiny of priority policies and reforms is improved

- Targeted media outlets' use of interactive platforms promoting greater citizen participation and interaction with audiences across the country, with particular emphasis on regional communities, is enhanced

Illustrative Activities:

- Foster the use of cutting-edge tools, techniques and software for data journalism within targeted media outlets to monitor and investigate the performance of priority reforms
- Foster the use of cutting-edge tools, techniques and software for data visualization within targeted media outlets to effectively engage citizens on reform-related debate
- Foster the use of ICT platforms within targeted media outlets to provide mechanisms for citizens and organized advocacy groups to engage in crowd-sourced monitoring and bring salient facts to light in credible ways that can affect public opinion

Illustrative Indicators:

- Systematic content analysis data monitoring the extent to which media outlets perform a watchdog function over the implementation of priority policies and reforms
- Level of public perception that the media reports on issues of real concern to people (%)
- Level of citizen participation in media (%)
- # of project-supported platforms facilitating citizen engagement
- # of media using ICTs to give citizens a greater voice in the media
- # of issues raised by target outlets that affect public opinion

Result Area 3: Citizens and Civil Society Organizations have the critical knowledge and skills to become savvy media consumers and demand better quality media

Meaningful citizen engagement, among other things, entails vigilance and sophistication in news consumption and demand for high quality journalism. This is especially true in a world of technological advances and ever-expanding information flow that poses both great challenges and opportunities for assessing the reliability and quality of media information. It is thus important to help citizens become media-literate as well as informed consumers of information, so they can use it to exercise their rights as active citizens.

Likewise, civil society organizations (CSOs) need to be better versed in media relations and become more sophisticated users of media to effectively utilize a variety of dissemination and public education tools, including new media, to advance their mission and agenda. This entails assistance to improve the scope and quality of CSOs' interaction with the media, particularly targeting CSOs engaged in the promotion, monitoring and oversight of USAID-supported priority reforms.

This activity is therefore expected to incorporate media literacy efforts that: (1) enable Armenian media consumers to independently access, analyze, create and interact with media in various forms; (2) empower CSOs to use and engage media strategically to advance their mission and agenda; and (3) generate broad-based public support to increase citizens' appreciation of the value of independent, diverse, and professional media.

Expected Results, Illustrative Activities and Indicators

Assistance under Result Area 3 is expected to lead to the following results:

- Citizen’s understanding and use of media within the increasingly digitally-equipped modern environment is improved
- Targeted CSOs’ strategic use of media to advance their mission and agenda is improved
- Public demand for quality media is increased

Illustrative Activities:

- Establish sustainable mechanisms to expand media literacy among the public at large
- Train CSOs working in the targeted priority reform areas to effectively engage media to disseminate reform-related information and studies
- Promote media independence, pluralism and professionalism through targeted public messaging
- Build the capacity of civil society groups and citizens at large to participate in the promotion and enforcement of measures to foster diverse, independent and better quality media

Illustrative Indicators:

- Level of public appreciation of quality and reliable reporting (%)
- Level of public trust and confidence in media (%)
- Level of CSO capacity to use media to inform about reforms
- # of continuing sustainable media literacy programs
- # of beneficiaries of media literacy programs
- # of voluntary subscribers to platforms providing critical analysis of media
- # of voluntary subscribers/viewers/readers of information produced by the targeted media

E. Place of Performance

Given the nature of media reach, the activity will be performed nationally. USAID/Armenia has prioritized regional development, and the activity will, therefore, prioritize enhancing the quality and access to information important to citizens at the local level and regional levels, while covering reform issues at the national level. The lack of reliable and thorough information on issues that directly touch people’s everyday life is most acute at the local level. Therefore, the activity will work with regional media, regional information hubs such as InfoTuns, traditional and new media professionals and citizen contributors from the regions.

F. Coordination with Key Stakeholders and Other Implementers

Relationships with Other Donors and Key Stakeholders – USAID/Armenia highly prioritizes coordination of development interventions and expects applicants to demonstrate the commitment, capacity and mechanisms to proactively coordinate efforts with key actors in the civil society and media development field and with other relevant stakeholders.

Coordination with Other USAID/Armenia Implementers – As specified in the Operating Principles section above, the activity is expected to closely coordinate and draw sector-specific knowledge and expertise from other USAID-supported activities focusing on different priority

reforms. These include but are not limited to the following current and upcoming USAID/Armenia activities within priority areas:

Decentralization Reform

- a. USAID is planning an activity to foster democratic, transparent, accountable, and responsive local governance. This entails (a) assistance to the Government of Armenia’s Ministry of Territorial Administration in successfully implementing decentralization reforms, and (b) developing the institutional capacity of municipal governments to effectively administer their new level of authority within a decentralized system.
- b. To engage civil society in the decentralization and local governance reform process, a consortium on local organizations will mobilize citizens to voice their concerns and interests in the decentralization policy development process. This will be accomplished by disseminating independent and reliable information about decentralization, engaging citizens in public dialogue on the framework for decentralization reform, conducting monitoring and oversight of the reform process and progress, and strengthening civil society advocacy and oversight role at the local level. The consortium will also promote greater participation at the municipal and community level and oversight of local government performance and budget processes and promote accountability of decision makers to citizens.

Transparency and Accountability Reforms

- a. To mitigate opportunities for corruption, USAID intends to increase the level of transparency in government, improve the efficiency of government services, and increase the involvement of the public in the government-decision-making process through mechanisms for civic participation and oversight. Interventions aim to strengthen the Government’s technical and institutional capacity: (1) to implement and monitor anti-corruption commitments, (2) to implement and monitor e-procurement reforms, and (3) to implement Open Government Partnership commitments.
- b. USAID will assist the Ministry of Justice to develop centralized services through a “one-stop shop” principle available to natural and legal persons and creating single servicing centers for the maintenance of public registers.
- c. A Civil Society Consortium on Transparency and Accountability Issues will give voice to and increase engagement of citizens in promoting government transparency and anti-corruption reforms by mobilizing citizens, advocating on behalf of their interests, engaging in monitoring of reforms at the national and local levels and ensuring that citizens have access to independent and reliable information about corruption risks and ways to overcome them.

Social Sector Reform

- a. Through the Pension Reform Implementation Program, USAID provides technical assistance to the Government of Armenia to implement the new pension system to make it fiscally sound and sustainable. The project also supports the government's efforts to design and develop an Integrated Social Services system (ISS) with a focus on areas linked to the implementation of the pension reform.
- b. The Livelihood Improvement through Fostered Employment (LIFE) program supports increased labor market participation of disabled people through new approaches for activating people with partial work capacity. The project aims at identifying and removing legislative barriers to employment of the disabled; developing systems for reintegrating the disabled into the labor force; and supporting necessary institutional reforms.
- c. USAID plans to support the GOAM's national child welfare reform to stop the flow of children into institutions and systematically reduce the number of children in institutional care; in particular through developing alternative social services aimed at children and families. This entails: (i) refinement of the legal and regulatory framework to better respond to child welfare; (ii) building of the government's institutional and human resource capacity to ensure smooth transition from residential care to community-based alternative services; (iii) establishment of prevention services within recently launched Integrated Social Services reform; (iv) partnership with media and civil society to promote social inclusion of children deprived of parental care and children with disabilities.
- d. A Civil Society Consortium on Social Sector Reform will engage citizens in reforms aimed at increasing efficiency and sustainability of the social protection system such as pension reform, protection of persons with disabilities and reform of the overall system of social service provision. The consortium will also monitor and report on the effectiveness of the implementation of government reforms in this sector.
- e. The Support to the Armenian National Assembly Program (SANAP) provides technical assistance and works with committees and staff in the Armenian Parliament to improve internal legislative procedures, support institutional checks and balances through enhanced accountability and responsiveness, and ensure better public outreach. By strengthening committees, especially those related to priority reform areas, and their ability to reach out to and engage citizens, USAID will help develop expertise and resources with which the National Assembly can more effectively exercise its key functions. An improved National Assembly will also serve as one of the conduits for citizen engagement in and monitoring of policy changes in priority reform areas.

G. Performance Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Monitoring and Evaluation – Applicants will develop a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) to rigorously and credibly document the activity’s effectiveness and to learn from accomplished work and results. This entails identifying indicators that correspond to and can be attributable to programmatic intervention and different levels of results, identifying means of verification, as well as establishing baseline measurements and targets to assess the performance of proposed interventions. The PMP will elaborate the methods and assessment tools the applicant will use for collecting, monitoring, analyzing, reporting and maintaining the data. Significant attention is required to ensure that baseline data are collected early in the project lifespan and can be replicated toward the conclusion of implementation to assess progress toward results. All costs associated with the implementation of the PMP should be reflected in the cost application.

SECTION II - ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

To be considered eligible to apply under this RFA, the prime applicant must satisfy all conditions below:

- Be organized under Armenian laws;
- Have its principal place of business in the Armenia;
- Be majority owned by individuals who are Armenian citizens or lawful permanent residents of the Armenia or be managed by a governing body, the majority of whom are Armenian citizens or lawful permanent residents of the Armenia and;
- Not be controlled by a foreign entity or by an individual or individuals who are not citizens or permanent residents of the Armenia.

The term “controlled by” means a majority ownership or beneficiary interest as defined above , or the power, either directly or indirectly, whether exercised or exercisable, to control the election, appointment, or tenure of the organization’s managers or a majority of the organization’s governing body by any means, e.g., ownership, contract, or operation of law. “Foreign entity” means an organization that fails to meet any part of the “local organization” definition. Government controlled and government owned organizations in which the recipient government owns a majority interest or in which the majority of a governing body are government employees, are included in the above definition of local organization. USAID will not accept applications from individuals.

Applicants selected for funding that are first-time recipients of USAID funds, may have to undergo pre-award financial and management reviews.

The term “controlled by” means a majority ownership or beneficiary interest as defined above , or the power, either directly or indirectly, whether exercised or exercisable, to control the election, appointment, or tenure of the organization’s managers or a majority of the organization’s governing body by any means, e.g., ownership, contract, or operation of law.

“Foreign entity” means an organization that fails to meet any part of the “local organization” definition. Government controlled and government owned organizations in which the recipient government owns a majority interest or in which the majority of a governing body are government employees, are included in the above definition of local organization.

USAID will not accept applications from individuals.

Eligibility Documents

Subject to the conditions for eligibility provided above, the applicant will submit official documentation of its organization’s formal legal status, as follows:

- State registration certificate and;
- By-laws.

Cost Share Requirement

It is required that a minimum of 15% of the proposed budget will be generated as a cost-share from non-U.S. Government funding or in-kind contribution for the proposed program (volunteer time, valuation of donated supplies, equipment, and other property, etc).

For Non-U.S. organizations it is subject to the Standard Provision, “Cost Share” and can be audited, <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf>

The proposed 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 recipients from other non-U.S. Government sources, including subrecipients.

Per the referenced Standard Provision for Non-U.S. Organizations , “Cost Share”, the cost share contributions, both cash and in-kind, must meet all of the following criteria: are verifiable from the recipient's records; are not included as cost share contributions for any other U.S. Government (USG) -assisted program; are necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of this award's objectives, etc. Please follow the following link on cost share for more information <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf>

The source, nationality, and restricted goods requirements in the Standard Provision “USAID Eligibility Rules for Procurement of Commodities and Services” do not apply to cost share expenditures.

SECTION III - APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Address to Request Application Package

This application is found on the internet at www.grants.gov. Potential applicants that cannot download application materials electronically may request paper copies of the RFA by contacting:

Narine Sarkisian
Acquisition and Assistance Specialist
Office of Acquisition and Assistance
USAID/Armenia
1-st American Avenue
Yerevan 0082 Armenia
Tel: 37410 49-43-64

Email: OAYerevan@usaid.gov

Request for Clarifications/Questions

Applicants are responsible for requesting any question/clarification on the information contained in the RFA. Requests for question/clarification shall be made in writing and send by email addressed to Narine Sarkisian, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist, at OAYerevan@usaid.gov with subject line: “*Media for Informed Civic Engagement, RFA submitted by [Name of Organization]*”. The deadline for submission of questions/clarifications is December 23, 2013, 10:00 AM Local Time.

If it is determined that the answers to any questions are of sufficient importance to warrant notification to all applicants, a Questions and Answers document, and/or if needed, an amendment to the RFA will be posted at www.grants.gov

Submission Dates and Time

Applications must be submitted in electronic form. Hard copies are not required but may be submitted in addition to electronic copies. Applications must be submitted to the attention of Narine Sarkisian, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist, USAID/Armenia at OAYerevan@usaid.gov

Pre-Award Certifications, Assurances and Other Statements of the Recipient

Applicants must submit the following certifications, assurances, and other statements as part of the application:

1. A signed certification and assurance which includes:

- a. Certification on Lobbying;
 - b. Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals;
 - c. Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing;
 - d. Certification of Recipient;
 - e. Key Individual Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking, when applicable,
 - f. Participant Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking, when applicable; and
2. Other statements of Recipient

Complete copies of these certifications, assurances, and other statements of the recipient can be found at <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mav.pdf> and as Annex A of this RFA.

Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number

All U.S. Government recipients and contractors are required to secure a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number before an award can be made to them. The DUNS is a 9-digit number assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) that uniquely identify the recipient's name and address.

Applicants should register in the System for Award Management (SAM) by visiting the following site and obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number from Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) by using the online web form (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) process, and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) CAGE (NCAGE) code

Applicants can obtain DUNS # during registration in www.sam.gov or by visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>; for NCAGE code please complete the registration at http://www.dlis.dla.mil/Forms/Form_AC135.asp.

Use the NCAGE online form http://www.dlis.dla.mil/Forms/Form_AC135.asp to obtain an NCAGE. In block 2 of the form, select "Other" if your country is not listed. If the form cannot be submitted via internet, or you have any questions about this form or have problems with it, call +9269 9617766 (DSN 661-5757) or send a message to NCAGE@dlam.mil.

Applicants may submit applications under this RFA without DUNS numbers. However, the selected applicant will be required to submit its DUNS number before it can receive an award. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to obtain a DUNS number early so that, if selected, award will not be delayed.

Evidence of U.S. Federal Contractor Registration

As stated above, all U.S. Government recipients are required to be registered with the U.S. Federal Contractor Registration, formerly Central Contractor Registration (CCR), which was the U.S. Government repository into entities must provide information required for the conduct of business with the Government. The CCR is now incorporated into the System for Award Management (SAM).

Applicants may submit applications under this RFA without U.S. Federal Contractor Registration. However, the apparently successful applicant will be required to register and must submit evidence of registration to USAID. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to register with U.S. Federal Contractor Registration early so that, if selected, award will not be delayed.

Content and Form of Application Submission

Applications shall be submitted in two separate parts: (a) technical application, and (b) cost or business application electronically to the attention of Narine Sarkisian, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist, USAID/Armenia at OAYerevan@usaid.gov

Electronic submissions are required. Hard copies are not required, if an applicant chooses to submit a hard copy in addition to the electronic copy, technical portion of applications should be submitted in an original and 2 copies and cost portions of applications in an original and 1 copy. Telegraphic or fax applications **are not** authorized for this RFA and **will not be** accepted.

Applications (hard copy and electronic copy) shall be written in English in **MS Word** format and in **PDF**, single spaced, utilizing Times New Roman 12-font size, typed on standard 8½"x11" sized paper with 1" margins on top, bottom, left and right, numbered consecutively. The total size of each e-mail attachment should not exceed 3 MBs. Every page of the application must be numbered. The application must have a table of contents. Large graphics files are discouraged. Attached file format must be Microsoft Word, Excel or PDF.

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

Applications must be submitted no later than the date and time indicated on the cover page of this RFA.

Each applicant shall furnish the information required by this RFA. On the hard copies of applications, the applicant shall sign the application and certifications and print or type its 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 shall be accompanied by evidence of that agent's authority, unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

Applicants should retain for their records one copy of the application and all enclosures which accompany their application. To facilitate the competitive review of the applications, USAID will consider only applications conforming to the format prescribed below.

Technical Application Content and Format

Technical applications should be specific, complete and presented concisely. The applications should demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the objectives of this program. Technical applications should take into account requirements of the program and evaluation criteria found in this RFA.

The aggregate length of technical application should **not exceed 25 pages**. The cover page, dividers, table of contents, acronyms list, and annexes are not included in the page limit of 25 pages. Annexes do not have page limitations; however, number of pages should be reasonable and include only minimum of necessary information. The table below outlines the application sections and page limits. Pages exceeding these page limits will not be evaluated.

No.	Technical Application Section	Page Limit
1	Cover Page	None
2	Executive Summary	1 page
3	Technical Approach	9 pages
4	Operating Principles and Cross-Cutting Issues	3 pages
5	Implementation Plan	2 pages
6	Management Approach and Staffing Plan	3 pages
7	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan	3 pages
8	Institutional Capacity	2 pages
9	Past Performance	2 pages
10	Annexes	No page limit

1. Cover Page

The cover page must include at a minimum the following information:

- USAID RFA Number;
- Activity Title;
- Name of the organization(s) submitting the application (the lead or primary Applicant clearly identified);
- Point of contact with the authority to negotiate and sign on behalf of the Applicant, including the name (both typed and his/her signature), title or position with the organization/institution, address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address;
- Any proposed sub grantees (or implementing partners) listed separately.

2. Executive Summary (1 page)

This section shall summarize the key elements of the Applicant’s technical application, including, but not limited to, the technical approach and core activities that will lead to anticipated results and stated objectives.

3. Technical Approach (9 pages)

Please use clear logic describing the links between the situation analysis, program objectives, methods and anticipated results. The narrative should be brief, concise and provide a clear description of what the Applicant proposes to do, where, why, when, how and by whom. The section should:

- Describe the specific development context; include relevant background information and an analysis of the problem and how it affects men and women; present the challenges, opportunities and risks in the proposed area of intervention;
- Describe how the proposed approach will contribute to USAID Mission objectives and priorities as described in the USAID Mission CDCS and the RFA;
- Outline the types of activities that will be undertaken and discuss the anticipated changes that should result from the proposed methods/activities and how they are expected to achieve the objectives outlined in the RFA;
- Include a description of the types and numbers of media outlets and actors expected to benefit from the activity, including a description of criteria for identifying targeted media for the purposes of this activity.

4. Operating Principles and Cross-Cutting Issues (3 pages)

Describe specific approaches and methodologies that will be used in a substantive and integrated manner to address the operating principles and cross-cutting issues outlined in the *Operating Principles and Cross-Cutting Issues* Section of the RFA. Particular attention should be paid to the description of mechanisms ensuring linkages and synergies with other USAID-funded programs focused on priority reforms, innovation, partnerships, sustainability; as well as gender mainstreaming and youth integration during program implementation.

5. Implementation Plan (2 pages)

This section shall include:

- Proposed implementation plan (in matrix format) for the first year outlining the inputs, outputs, and outcomes that are realistic and achievable within the proposed budget and timeframe and reflect a grasp of the necessary steps to ensure efficient, effective execution of the proposed approach; and
- Proposed life of project implementation plan (in matrix format) that outlines the timeline for phasing of interventions and outlines inputs, outputs, and outcomes per year that are realistic and achievable within the proposed budget and timeframe and reflect a grasp of the necessary steps to ensure efficient, effective execution of the proposed approach.

6. Management Approach and Staffing Plan (3 pages)

Management Plan – This section shall include the Applicant’s plan for management of the proposed activity, including a description of any management systems in place, respective roles and responsibilities of the Applicant. Describe any teaming arrangement, partnership, consortium or coalition arrangements between applicant and partner organizations. Understanding that Applicants may not have all necessary systems in place, the development of these systems may be included in the Applicant’s capacity development plan.

Staffing Plan – This section shall identify the Applicant’s key personnel positions (3 to 4 positions) for this activity, as well as include an organigram outlining the roles and responsibilities of all staff involved. Please note that key personnel suggested in the applications

must be substantially dedicated to the project. In particular, the time of the suggested Chief of Party dedicated to the activity should be no less than 80%.

Position descriptions (including roles and responsibilities), relevant experience and academic and professional qualifications shall be provided for all key personnel.

Applicants should also include a two to three page curriculum vita as an appendix for each candidate.

7. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (3 pages)

Applicants will be expected to establish a performance monitoring and evaluation plan (PMEP), outlining the mechanisms proposed to monitor and measure progress and achievement of expected results. The PMEP shall contain project objectives and intermediate and final results, suggested performance indicators of activity progress and success, annual targets, data management methods (sources, frequency of data collection and reporting, including a plan for collecting baseline and follow-on data), and references to staff responsible for monitoring, data collection and analysis.

8. Institutional Capacity (2 pages)

Describe the Applicant's technical, administrative and financial capacity and experience in managing projects similar to the activity being proposed.

9. Past Performance (2 pages)

This section shall include a concise description of Applicant's (and sub-grantees', if any) previous work and experience relative to the activities being proposed during the past three years. For each relevant project/award, include the following: (a) a brief description of the work performed and the relevance of the work to the activity being proposed; (b) results achieved; (c) location, duration, size/scale, and overall dollar value; and (d) list of references and information, such as current telephone numbers, points of contact, and award numbers, if available. Newer organizations, or Applicants with no related prior grant awards, remain eligible for consideration and are encouraged to apply. Additional information on past performance can be provided in an annex.

10. Annexes

Items such as key personnel resumes, case studies, table summarizing qualifications of proposed personnel, past performance summary table will not be counted against the page limitation.

Please note that if annexes contain information that relates to the technical application, they will not be scored (e.g. placing elements of technical understanding and proposed approaches in an annex is unacceptable).

Cost Application Format

The Cost or Business Application shall be submitted separately 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. Applications will be evaluated on a Best Value basis. As such, the technical application will have more significance than the cost application in the selection of a successful applicant.

The following sections describe the documentation that applicants for 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 still provide the necessary detail to address the following:

A. Include a budget in Excel format with an accompanying budget narrative which provides in detail the total costs for implementation of the program your organization is proposing. Detailed budget notes and supporting justification of all proposed budget line items should be included. In addition, a summary of the budget must be submitted using Standard Form 424 and 424A, available at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>. Budgets must be in U.S. dollars. Budgets to be submitted in unlocked Excel format with all formulas to demonstrate calculations.

The budget shall include:

1. The breakdown of all costs associated with the program according to costs of, if applicable, headquarters, regional and/or country offices;
2. The breakdown of all costs according to each partner organization or subcontractor/subgrantee involved in the program;
3. The costs associated with external, expatriate technical assistance and those associated with local in-country technical assistance;
4. The breakdown (including evaluation method) of the cash and in-kind contributions if any of all organizations involved in implementing this Cooperative Agreement;
5. Potential contributions of non-USAID or private commercial donors to this Cooperative Agreement;
6. A procurement plan for commodities.

B. Proposed Cost Share: It is required that a minimum of 15% of the proposed budget will be generated as a cost-share from non-U.S. Government funding or in-kind support for the proposed program. The match may be a combination of cash and in-kind. The Applicant must demonstrate ability to raise the match proposed. Actual and/or expected sources and amounts of the cost-share amount from all sources (other donors, community members, businesses, etc.) must be stipulated. Funds received by the Applicant directly from the U.S. Government or USAID

intermediaries or foreign governments are not allowable elements of the match but should be identified as sources in the overall budget if they are critical to the program.

Applications should identify all critical sources of support for the program, including private and public cash receipts recorded in the organization's accounts and in-kind contributions of goods and services and other contributions not recorded in the organization's accounts but directly supporting its grant program activities.

Criteria for acceptance and allowability for the non-U.S. federal contributions are set forth in 22 CFR 226. (Copies of 22 CFR 226 may be obtained from Internet address <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/CFR-2012-title22-voll/CFR-2012-title22-voll-part226/content-detail.html>

or

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/22/226>

C. A copy of the latest Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement if organization has such an agreement with the US Government;

Applicants that do not currently have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from their cognizant agency shall also submit the following information:

1. Copies of the applicant's financial reports for the previous 3-year period, which have been audited by a certified public accountant or other auditor satisfactory to USAID;
2. Projected budget, cash flow and organizational chart; and
3. Copies of applicable policies and procedures (e.g., accounting, purchasing, property management, personnel).

D. Applicants should submit additional evidence of responsibility they deem necessary for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility. The information submitted should substantiate that the Applicant:

1. Has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the award.
2. Has the ability to comply with the award conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the applicant, nongovernmental and governmental.
3. Has a satisfactory record of performance. Past relevant unsatisfactory performance is ordinarily sufficient to justify a finding of non-responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance.
4. Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics; and
5. Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a cooperative agreement under applicable

laws and regulations (e.g., EEO).

E. Applicants that have never received a cooperative agreement, grant or contract from the U.S. Government are required to submit a copy of their accounting manual. If a copy has already been submitted to the U.S. Government, the applicant should advise which Federal Office has a copy.

Marking and Branding

Effective January 2, 2006, all USAID-sponsored assistance awards are required to adhere to branding policies and revised marking requirements for grants and cooperative agreements in accordance with ADS 320. This includes visibly displaying the USAID Standard Graphic Identity that clearly communicates assistance is, “From the American people” on all programs, projects, activities, publications, public communications, and commodities provided or supported through USAID assistance awards. ADS 320 requires that, after the evaluation of the applications, the USAID Agreement Officer will request the Apparently Successful Applicant to submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan that describes how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and cooperating country citizens, and identifies all donors and explains how they will be acknowledged. The Branding Strategy will be negotiated and finalized as part of assistance award. ADS 320 may be found at the following website:
<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/320.pdf>

Specific communications and promotion measures shall be described in the “Branding Strategy” and “Branding Implementation Plan” and specific marking will be described in the “Marking Plan” for this award(s). Please also refer to Section VI, Standard Provisions: “Branding Strategy - Assistance (June 2012)” and “Marking Plan- Assistance (June 2012).”

SECTION IV - APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Evaluation Criteria

A. Technical Evaluation

The criteria set forth below will be used by the technical review panel to evaluate applications submitted in response to this RFA. All sub-criteria will be weighted equally.

1. Technical Approach (40 points):

- a. Extent to which the applicant demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the issues and challenges faced by Armenian media and the appropriateness of the suggested approach(es) to the Armenian context in accomplishing program objectives;
- b. Extent to which the application sets forth a clear, justifiable and technically sound course of action to achieve the program objectives and anticipated results, and extent to which lessons learned are reflected in the proposed approach;
- c. Extent to which the proposed technical approach will meaningfully address the outlined operating principles, particularly innovation, partnerships and sustainability; as well as cross-cutting issues, particularly youth integration and gender mainstreaming, during program implementation;
- d. Extent to which the applicant demonstrates the ability to ensure strategic and synergetic linkages with other USAID-funded programs focused on priority reforms, as well as projects funded by other donors and implemented by other international and domestic organizations.

2. Management Approach and Staffing Plan (20 points):

- a. Extent to which the proposed management structure, systems and partnership arrangements, if any, are appropriate and effective for the implementation of the proposed activity;
- b. Appropriateness of the composition and organizational structure of the proposed project team, including a clear, sound and effective staffing pattern with roles and responsibilities among different positions adequately delineated, as well as experience, expertise and performance of the key personnel in managing complex media development programs, particularly in transitional countries, and their experience in building and effectively supervising a diverse team of employees, and prior experience in working with other technical assistance programs in areas relevant to the proposed activity.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation (20 points):

Clarity, appropriateness and soundness of an illustrative Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP) for identification of expected intermediate and final program results, including a plan for collecting base-line and follow-on data; suggested indicators of program impact and success; methods to be used for monitoring activities and collecting indicator results, and a mechanism for oversight and verification of monitoring conducted by staff.

4. Institutional Capacity and Past Performance (20 points):

- a. Demonstrated institutional capability of the applicant in managing the proposed activities, including transparent personnel, procurement and financial management systems in complex field operations;
- b. Demonstrated track record of the Applicant (and sub-grantees, if any) in successfully implementing similar media activities, and quickly and effectively staffing a project and launching program activities.

B. Cost Evaluation**Cost Effectiveness and Reasonableness of total estimated cost**

Demonstrated ability to minimize recurrent costs and maximize cost-effectiveness. Maximizing the percentage of the costs allocated to program delivery as compared to administrative costs will also be a factor in evaluating applications. The cost realism analysis is intended to meet the following goals:

- Verify the Applicant's understanding of the requirements and regulations;
- Assess the degree to which the cost application reflects the approaches in the technical application;
- Assess the degree to which the cost included in the cost application accurately represents the work effort included in the technical application;
- Proposed cost share contribution at a minimum 15% of the total budget.

Cost has not been assigned a weight; however, the cost applications of the most highly ranked technical applications will be evaluated for cost effectiveness. Other considerations are the completeness of the application, adequacy of budget detail and consistency with elements of the technical application. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability, to be measured for a responsibility determination.

Prospective applicants are forewarned that an application with the lowest estimated cost may not be selected if award to a higher priced application affords the government a greater overall benefit. All evaluation factors other than cost or price, when combined, are significantly more important than cost. However, estimated cost is an important factor and the estimated cost to the Government increases in importance as competing applications approach equivalence and may become the deciding factor when technical applications are approximately equivalent in merit. Cost estimates will be analyzed as part of the application evaluation process. Proposed costs may be adjusted, for purposes of evaluation, based on results of the cost analysis and its assessment of reasonableness, completeness, and credibility.

Cost share match equivalent to or greater than 15% the total project is required to support the activity. Meeting or exceeding the cost share will be favorably considered as contributing to cost effectiveness and may be considered in the Government's determination if application represents the greatest benefit to USAID.

SECTION V - AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Award Notices

Following the completion of the technical and cost evaluation of all applications submitted in response to this RFA and responsibility determination, USAID will make an award to the applicant(s) whose application represents the best overall value to the U.S. Government. Best overall value is defined as the expected outcome that, in the Government's estimation, provides the greatest overall benefit in response to the requirement and available funds.

The successful applicant(s) will receive a written notification in the form of an award document signed by the Agreement Officer. The notice will be provided electronically to the applicant's point of contact listed in the application. Pursuant to ADS 303.3.7.1.b, unsuccessful applicants will also be notified electronically.

USAID does not intend to provide formal debriefings for unsuccessful applicants but retains the right to consider informal briefings for said applicants following award.

A Description of any Deviations from Standard Provisions

Currently, USAID does not anticipate any deviations from the mandatory or applicable the Standard Provisions applicable for this award. The Standard Provisions to be used will be Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303mab.pdf>).

Reporting Requirements

The title page of all reports to be submitted to USAID must include a descriptive title, the author's name, cooperative agreement number, the project title, the Recipient's name, the name of the USAID office, and the publication or issuance date of the report.

1. Financial Reporting

The recipient must submit the SF- 425 at the same time to the Financial Analyst at vtermargaryan@usaid.gov, the Agreement Officer and the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR).

Financial Reports shall be in keeping with General Provision "Accounting, Audit, and Records". Advances shall be requested monthly in accordance with the requirements per Payment-Advance (October 1998). At the end of each quarter the recipient shall submit liquidation of advances to liquidate the advances of the previous quarter.

- (a) Unless otherwise notified in writing, the Recipient shall submit monthly financial reports to:

Office of Financial and Administrative Management
USAID/Armenia
1 American Avenue
Yerevan 0082, Armenia
armeniapayments@usaid.gov

(b) The Recipient's financial reports shall include expenditures of USAID grant funds provided hereunder during the reporting period. The format of the financial reports should follow the line items as established in the Budget.

2. Program Reporting

In addition to any reports that may be requested via technical directions under program activities, the recipient shall submit the approval of the USAID Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) following reports, and when requested, to the USAID/Armenia Agreement Officer.

- a) Annual Work Plans
- b) Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP)
- c) Monthly Activity Schedule
- d) Progress Reports
- e) Final Report

Annual Work Plans

Within 30 days of the signing of Cooperative Agreement, the Recipient will present the initial work plan to the USAID AOR for review and approval. The AOR will provide written comments on the draft plan within 30 days of receipt and when the plan is finalized, the AOR will provide written approval.

The work plan should include a list of tasks to be completed during the year, grouped under the objective that they seek to support. For each task, the Recipient should: 1) explain in brief its connection to the objective; 2) define the necessary steps to complete the tasks; 3) assign responsibilities for completing those steps; 4) provide any quantitative or qualitative targets; and 5) a timeline for the implementation of the task.

The work plan must include a Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP), which must establish specific results-level and objective level indicators, impact indicators, annual targets, progress benchmarks for the life of the award, and the date by which all baseline data will be established.

Annual work plans for subsequent years are due to the AOR 60 days before the end of the preceding award year. Annual work plans should include all the sections as the initial work plan discussed above. In addition, the subsequent annual work plans shall review the activities of the year that is ending, the activities that were implemented, the results achieved, and problems that existed and how they were resolved. These subsequent annual plans shall propose program adjustments to reflect any lessons learned.

As with the first annual plan, the AOR will review the plan and provide comments and recommendations for changes no later than 30 days after receipt of the draft. The Recipient shall incorporate AOR comments and recommendations into the final version of work plan and submit it for AOR written approval within 15 days. In addition, all substantial changes in the work plan require prior written approval of the AOR.

Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP)

In order to assist in managing project performance, the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP) shall contain project objectives and results, performance indicators, data sources and collection methods, baseline information or a timeline for collecting it, annual targets, and references to staff responsible for data collection and analysis. Performance indicators should be direct, objective, practical, adequate, and useful in managing for results. PMEP data should meet reasonable quality criteria of validity, reliability, timeliness, precision and integrity. All people-level indicators must be disaggregated by sex. PMEP data should be based on fiscal year calendar.

The PMEP shall have the following suggested structure:

1. List of key project objectives, expected results and project outputs (output is a count of services delivered or items produced) and outcomes as well as brief description of the linkages between the project outputs and its expected results;
2. Definition and detailed description of the performance indicators to be tracked including: unit of measure and disaggregation by sex, as appropriate and feasible; justification/management utility; annual baselines/targets; schedule for data collection; responsibility for data collection and availability of data at USAID; and, detailed plans for data analysis, review and reporting.

Within 30 days after the award is made, the Recipient will submit the Final PMEP to USAID together with the Annual Work Plan. The Recipient and USAID will agree upon the final choice of performance indicators useful for timely management decisions and credibly reflecting the actual performance of the project. Recipient should explain how the PMEP will be implemented. In designing the PMEP, the Recipient should also weigh human and financial resources necessary to implement it.

The PMEP is subject to final approval by USAID and is separate from the regular financial and other reports. USAID is required to report on indicators in the Foreign Assistance Framework. USAID reserves the right to propose the Recipient to integrate into the PMEP a number of indicators to help USAID measure the immediate program results.

All information collected for the PMEP shall be compiled and submitted to USAID with the annual and final reports, as well as based on the frequency of data collection and reporting established in the approved PMEP. Additionally, progress in meeting the expected program results will be monitored through the USAID annual performance reporting process.

Mid-Term Evaluation

At the mid-point of the project, USAID will conduct an evaluation to measure project impact and determine whether programmatic adjustments are needed (see program description section “Performance Period”) taking into account any changes in the implementation climate. If such a decision is taken, the Recipient will be notified at least two months in advance of planned evaluations.

Monthly Activity Schedule

USAID expects the Recipient to submit (electronically) to the AOR by the 23rd calendar day of each month, a calendar of planned events for the upcoming month. USAID will post events on the Mission’s events calendar, as appropriate, and use the monthly calendar to plan site visits in a timely manner.

Progress Reports

The Recipient will submit three quarterly and one annual progress reports per year to the AOR. The Recipient shall submit progress reports which present activities and analyses of the Recipient (and partners, if relevant) within 30 days after the end of the quarter/year.

The report may be submitted by email and shall contain the following information at a minimum:

1. A brief description of the context and/or enabling environment in which program activities are implemented. This section may include significant political developments and/or relevant events which affect the overall implementation environment.
2. A summary of activities conducted, including a description of progress towards results and relevant trends.
3. A narrative analytical description of overall program progress towards results that reflects and synthesizes achievements of the Recipient and partners, if applicable. This should not be a mere description of activities, but rather a broader analysis that examines the implications of progress made toward each objective, as well as toward the operating principles and cross-cutting issues identified in this RFA. Special emphasis should be made to evaluate and elaborate upon progress toward achieving sustainability of results.
4. Data on all indicators established in the PMEP for the award activities. Data should be disaggregated by sex where relevant.
5. Problems encountered, reasons why established goals and targets were not met, if appropriate, and how challenges or problems will be overcome during the next reporting period.
6. A comparison of actual expenditures with budget estimates, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, cost savings, and any other pertinent information.

7. Priorities for programming during the next reporting period.

Annual progress reports will also include data collected to measure progress against the PMEP. Each annual progress report will take the place of the quarterly report for the previous three-month period, in addition to reporting on the entire past year. The annual report will include progress against annual work plan projections and will cover activities completed during the preceding year. The annual report will provide USAID *annual* data on the agreed upon performance indicators, as well as any additional qualitative results information the Recipient would like to include to demonstrate the results achieved toward the project's objectives during that particular reporting period.

Final Report

Recipients shall submit the original and one copy of the USAID approved final report to USAID/Armenia and one copy to USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse at the following address:

- a) Online: <http://dec.usaid.gov/>
- b) Via mail: Development Experience Clearinghouse, M/CIO/KM, RRB M.01-10, U.S. Agency for International Development, Washington, DC 20523
- c) Or e-mail: docssubmit@usaid.gov

The Recipient shall submit a draft final report for USAID review 30 days before the award expiration date. USAID will review and comment within 30 days of receipt. The electronic copy of the final performance report shall be submitted no later than 90 calendar days after the end of the Cooperative Agreement. The final performance report will:

- Contain an overall description of the activities under the project during the period of this Cooperative Agreement, and the significance of these activities;
- Describe the methods of assistance used and the pros and cons of these methods;
- Present life-of-project results towards achieving the project objectives and the performance indicators;
- Identify any unmet targets and the reasons for them;
- Elaborate the issues and problems that emerged during program implementation and the lessons learned in dealing with them; and
- Provide comments and recommendations regarding unfinished work and/or future needs and directions for further engagement in the program area, as well as recommendations for what issues no longer require donor assistance.

Substantial Involvement

USAID considers collaboration with the Recipient crucial for the successful implementation of this program. Substantial involvement under this award shall include but not limited to the following:

- a. Review and approval of the Recipient's Annual Implementation Plans (Work Plans), including the PMEP, with Project Logical Framework, by the AOR. Any

- significant changes to the approved Implementation Plan or the PMEP, as well as the Project Logical Framework, will require additional approval of the AOR.
- b. Review and approval of key personnel and any key personnel changes by the AOR.
 - c. Approval of selection criteria for targeted media outlets to receive enhanced technical assistance, as well as approval of the actual selection of all targeted assistance recipients and changes to the cohort by the AOR.
 - d. Sub-awards: Approval of all proposed sub-contractors and sub-recipients including their extensions prior to award and participation in preparation of solicitation documents including the topics, program descriptions, match requirements, selection criteria and funding levels for applications, by the AOR.

For more details refer to USAID ADS 303.3.11 at <http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/agency-policy>.

Initial Environmental Examination (IEE)

This activity consists of interventions entirely within the categories listed in paragraph (c)(2) “Categorical Exclusions” of Title 22 CFR Part 216. The Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) # DCN: 2014-ARM-001 has determined that these activities are categorically excluded from any further environmental review requirements.

1a) 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 (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/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.

1b) In addition, the contractor/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.

1c) No activity funded under the contract resulting from this RFTOP will be implemented unless an environmental threshold determination, as defined by 22 CFR 216, has been reached for that activity, as documented in a Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE), Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), or Environmental Assessment (EA) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO). (Hereinafter, such documents are described as “approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.”)

4a) As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the contractor, in collaboration with the USAID Contracting Officer’s Representative and Mission Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing and planned activities under this contract to determine if they are within the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.

4b) If the contractor plans any new activities outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation, it shall prepare an amendment to the documentation for USAID review and approval. No such new activities shall be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval of environmental documentation amendments.

4c) Any ongoing activities found to be outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation shall be halted until an amendment to the documentation is submitted and written approval is received from USAID.

SECTION VI - SOLICITATION STANDARD PROVISIONS

1. Branding Strategy - Assistance (June 2012)

- a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Branding Strategy," describing how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, and how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and host country citizens.
- b. The request for a Branding Strategy, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.
- c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Branding Strategy within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.
- d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.
- e. The Branding Strategy must include, at a minimum, all of the following:
 - (1) All estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth.
 - (2) The intended name of the program, project, or activity.
 - (i) USAID prefers to have the "USAID Identity," comprised of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline "from the American people" as found on the USAID Web site at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding>, included as part of the program or project name.
 - (ii) USAID prefers local language translations of the phrase "made possible by (or with) the generous support of the American People" next to the USAID Identity when acknowledging contributions.
 - (iii) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.
 - (iv) If branding in the above manner is inappropriate or not possible, the applicant must explain how USAID's involvement will be showcased during publicity for the program or project.
 - (v) USAID prefers to fund projects that do not have a separate logo or identity that competes with the USAID Identity. If there is a plan to develop a separate logo to consistently identify this program, the applicant must

attach a copy of the proposed logos.

- (3) The intended primary and secondary audiences for this project or program, including direct beneficiaries and any special target segments.
 - (4) Planned communication or program materials used to explain or market the program to beneficiaries.
 - (i) Describe the main program message.
 - (ii) Provide plans for training materials, posters, pamphlets, public service announcement, billboards, Web sites, and so forth, as appropriate.
 - (iii) Provide any plans to announce and promote publicly this program or project to host country citizens, such as media releases, press conferences, public events, and so forth. Applicant must incorporate the USAID Identity and the message, "USAID is from the American People."
 - (iv) Provide any additional ideas to increase awareness that the American people support this project or program.
 - (5) Information on any direct involvement from host-country government or ministry, including any planned acknowledgement of the host-country government.
 - (6) Any other groups whose logo or identity the applicant will use on program materials and related materials. Indicate if they are a donor or why they will be visibly acknowledged, and if they will receive the same prominence as USAID.
- e. The Agreement Officer will consider the Branding Strategy's adequacy in the award criteria. The Branding Strategy will be reviewed to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.
- f. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Branding Strategy will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement

2. Marking Plan – Assistance (June 2012)

- a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Marking Plan," detailing the public communications, commodities, and program materials, and other items that will visibly bear the "USAID Identity," which comprises of the USAID logo and landmark, with the tagline "from the American people." The USAID Identity is the official marking for the Agency, and is found on the USAID Web site at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding>.
- b. The request for a Marking Plan, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no

rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.

- c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Marking Plan within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.
- d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.
- e. The Marking Plan must include all of the following:
 - (1) A description of the public communications, commodities, and program materials that the applicant plans to produce and which will bear the USAID Identity as part of the award, including:
 - (i) Program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects or other sites physical in nature;
 - (ii) Technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audio-visual productions, public service announcements, Web sites/Internet activities, promotional, informational, media, or communications products funded by USAID;
 - (iii) Commodities, equipment, supplies, and other materials funded by USAID, including commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs; and
 - (iv) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.
 - (v) Events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences and other public activities. If the USAID Identity cannot be displayed, the recipient is encouraged to otherwise acknowledge USAID and the support of the American people.
 - (2) A table on the program deliverables with the following details:
 - (i) The program deliverables that the applicant plans to mark with the USAID Identity;
 - (ii) The type of marking and what materials the applicant will use to mark the program deliverables;

- (iii) When in the performance period the applicant will mark the program deliverables, and where the applicant will place the marking;
 - (iv) What program deliverables the applicant does not plan to mark with the USAID Identity , and
 - (v) The rationale for not marking program deliverables.
- (3) Any requests for an exemption from USAID marking requirements, and an explanation of why the exemption would apply. The applicant may request an exemption if USAID marking requirements would:
- (i) Compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program or materials where independence or neutrality is an inherent aspect of the program and materials. The applicant must identify the USAID Strategic Objective, Interim Result, or program goal furthered by an appearance of neutrality, or state why an aspect of the award is presumptively neutral. Identify by category or deliverable item, examples of material for which an exemption is sought.
 - (ii) Diminish the credibility of audits, reports, analyses, studies, or policy recommendations whose data or findings must be seen as independent. The applicant must explain why each particular deliverable must be seen as credible.
 - (iii) Undercut host-country government “ownership” of constitutions, laws, regulations, policies, studies, assessments, reports, publications, surveys or audits, public service announcements, or other communications. The applicant must explain why each particular item or product is better positioned as host-country government item or product.
 - (iv) Impair the functionality of an item. The applicant must explain how marking the item or commodity would impair its functionality.
 - (v) Incur substantial costs or be impractical. The applicant must explain why marking would not be cost beneficial or practical.
 - (vi) Offend local cultural or social norms, or be considered inappropriate. The applicant must identify the relevant norm, and explain why marking would violate that norm or otherwise be inappropriate.
 - (vii) Conflict with international law. The applicant must identify the applicable international law violated by the marking.
- f. The Agreement Officer will consider the Marking Plan's adequacy and reasonableness in the award criteria, and will approve and disapprove any exemption requests. The

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Marking Plan will be reviewed to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.

- g. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Marking Plan, including any approved exemptions, will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement, and will apply for the term of the award unless provided otherwise.

SECTION VII - AGENCY CONTACTS

The Agreement Officer for the resultant award(s) is:

Jonathan Chappell
Regional Agreement Officer
USAID/Armenia
1 American Avenue
Yerevan, Armenia
Email: jchappell@usaid.gov

The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist is:

Narine Sarkisian
Acquisition Specialist
USAID/Armenia
1 American Avenue
Yerevan, Armenia
Email: nsarkisian@usaid.gov
Tel.: +37410 49-43-64

SECTION VIII - ANNEXES AND ATTACHMENTS

Annex A - CERTIFICATIONS, ASSURANCES, AND OTHER STATEMENTS OF THE
RECIPIENT

Attachment I - USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy
FY 2013-2017

Annex A

**CERTIFICATIONS, ASSURANCES, AND OTHER STATEMENTS OF THE
RECIPIENT**

Part I – Certifications and Assurances

1. Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Non-Discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs

Note: This certification applies to Non-U.S. organizations if any part of the program will be undertaken in the United States.

(a) The recipient hereby assures that no person in the United States will, on the bases set forth below, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity receiving financial assistance from USAID, and that with respect to the Cooperative Agreement for which application is being made, it will comply with the requirements of:

(1) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub. L. 88-352, 42 U.S.C. 2000-d), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance;

(2) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance;

(3) The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (Pub. L. 95-478), which prohibits discrimination based on age in the delivery of services and benefits supported with Federal funds;

(4) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance (whether or not the programs or activities are offered or sponsored by an educational institution); and

(5) USAID regulations implementing the above nondiscrimination laws, set forth in Chapter II of Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

(b) If the recipient is an institution of higher education, the Assurances given herein extend to admission practices and to all other practices relating to the treatment of students or clients of the institution, or relating to the opportunity to participate in the provision of services or other benefits to such individuals, and must be applicable to the entire institution unless the recipient establishes to the satisfaction of the USAID Administrator that the institution's practices in designated parts or programs of the institution will in no way affect its practices in the program

of the institution for which financial assistance is sought, or the beneficiaries of, or participants in, such programs.

2. Certification Regarding Lobbying

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal Cooperative Agreement, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned must complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned must require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients must certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, United States Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification will be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

"The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that: If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned must complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement will be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure."

3. Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals (ADS 206)

USAID reserves the right to terminate this Agreement, to demand a refund or take other appropriate measures if the Grantee is found to have been convicted of a narcotics offense or to have been engaged in drug trafficking as defined in 22 CFR Part 140. The undersigned must review USAID ADS 206 to determine if any certifications are required for Key Individuals or Covered Participants.

If there are COVERED PARTICIPANTS: USAID reserves the right to terminate assistance to or take other appropriate measures with respect to, any participant approved by USAID who is found to have been convicted of a narcotics offense or to have been engaged in drug trafficking as defined in 22 CFR Part 140.

4. Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing Implementing Executive Order 13224

By signing and submitting this application, the prospective recipient provides the certification set out below:

1. The Recipient, to the best of its current knowledge, did not provide, within the previous ten years, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it does not and will not knowingly provide, material support or resources to any individual or entity that commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated, or participated in terrorist acts, as that term is defined in paragraph 3.
2. The following steps may enable the Recipient to comply with its obligations under paragraph 1:
 - a. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Recipient will verify that the individual or entity does not (i) appear on the master list of [Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons](#), which is maintained by the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), or (ii) is not included in any supplementary information concerning prohibited individuals or entities that may be provided by USAID to the Recipient.
 - b. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Recipient also will verify that the individual or entity has not been designated by the United Nations Security (UNSC) sanctions committee established under UNSC Resolution 1267 (1999) (the "1267 Committee") [individuals and entities linked to the Taliban, Usama bin Laden, or the Al-Qaida Organization]. To determine whether there has been a published designation of an individual or entity by the 1267 Committee, the Recipient should refer to the consolidated list available online at the Committee's Web site: <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1267/1267ListEng.htm>.
 - c. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Recipient will consider all information about that individual or entity of which it is aware

and all public information that is reasonably available to it or of which it should be aware.

d. The Recipient also will implement reasonable monitoring and oversight procedures to safeguard against assistance being diverted to support terrorist activity.

3. For purposes of this Certification -

a. “Material support and resources” means currency or monetary instruments or financial securities, financial services, lodging, training, expert advice or assistance, safehouses, false documentation or identification, communications equipment, facilities, weapons, lethal substances, explosives, personnel, transportation, and other physical assets, except medicine or religious materials.”

b. “Terrorist act” means -

(i) an act prohibited pursuant to one of the 12 United Nations Conventions and Protocols related to terrorism (see UN terrorism conventions Internet site: <http://untreaty.un.org/English/Terrorism.asp>); or

(ii) an act of premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents; or

(iii) any other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.

c. “Entity” means a partnership, association, corporation, or other organization, group or subgroup.

d. References in this Certification to the provision of material support and resources must not be deemed to include the furnishing of USAID funds or USAID-financed commodities to the ultimate beneficiaries of USAID assistance, such as recipients of food, medical care, micro-enterprise loans, shelter, etc., unless the Recipient has reason to believe that one or more of these beneficiaries commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated or participated in terrorist acts.

e. The Recipient’s obligations under paragraph 1 are not applicable to the procurement of goods and/or services by the Recipient that are acquired in the ordinary course of business through contract or purchase, e.g., utilities, rents, office supplies, gasoline, etc., unless the Recipient has reason to believe that a vendor or supplier of such goods and services commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in

terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated or participated in terrorist acts.

This Certification is an express term and condition of any agreement issued as a result of this application, and any violation of it will be grounds for unilateral termination of the agreement by USAID prior to the end of its term.

5. Certification of Recipient

By signing below the recipient provides certifications and assurances for (1) the Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Non-Discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs, (2) the Certification Regarding Lobbying, (3) the Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals (ADS 206) and (4) the Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing Implementing Executive Order 13224 above.

These certifications and assurances are given in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all Federal grants, loans, contracts, property, discounts, or other Federal financial assistance extended after the date hereof to the recipient by the Agency, including installment payments after such date on account of applications for Federal financial assistance which was approved before such date. The recipient recognizes and agrees that such Federal financial assistance will be extended in reliance on the representations and agreements made in these assurances, and that the United States will have the right to seek judicial enforcement of these assurances. These assurances are binding on the recipient, its successors, transferees, and assignees, and the person or persons whose signatures appear below are authorized to sign these assurances on behalf of the recipient.

Request for Application or
Annual Program Statement No. _____

Application No. _____

Date of Application _____

Name of Recipient _____

Typed Name and Title _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Part II – Key Individual Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking

I hereby certify that within the last ten years:

1. I have not been convicted of a violation of, or a conspiracy to violate, any law or regulation of the United States or any other country concerning narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances.
2. I am not and have not been an illicit trafficker in any such drug or controlled substance.
3. I am not and have not been a knowing assistor, abettor, conspirator, or colluder with others in the illicit trafficking in any such drug or substance.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Title/Position: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

NOTICE:

1. You are required to sign this Certification under the provisions of 22 CFR Part 140, Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers. These regulations were issued by the Department of State and require that certain key individuals of organizations must sign this Certification.
2. If you make a false Certification you are subject to U.S. criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1001.

RFA-111-14-000003, Advanced Civil Society for Accountable Governance Project

Part III – Participant Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking

1. I hereby certify that within the last ten years:

a. I have not been convicted of a violation of, or a conspiracy to violate, any law or regulation of the United States or any other country concerning narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances.

b. I am not and have not been an illicit trafficker in any such drug or controlled substance.

c. I am not or have not been a knowing assistor, abettor, conspirator, or colluder with others in the illicit trafficking in any such drug or substance.

2. I understand that USAID may terminate my training if it is determined that I engaged in the above conduct during the last ten years or during my USAID training.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

NOTICE:

1. You are required to sign this Certification under the provisions of 22 CFR Part 140, Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers. These regulations were issued by the Department of State and require that certain participants must sign this Certification.

2. If you make a false Certification you are subject to U.S. criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1001.

Part IV – Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants

Applicability: All RFA’s must include the attached Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants as an attachment to the RFA package. Applicants under unsolicited applications are also to be provided the survey. (While inclusion of the survey by Agreement Officers in RFA packages is required, the applicant’s completion of the survey is voluntary, and must not be a requirement of the RFA. The absence of a completed survey in an application may not be a basis

upon which the application is determined incomplete or non-responsive. Applicants who volunteer to complete and submit the survey under a competitive or non-competitive action are instructed within the text of the survey to submit it as part of the application process.)

See Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants at the below internet link:
<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/surveyeo.doc>

Part V – Other Statements of Recipient

1. Authorized Individuals

The recipient represents that the following persons are authorized to negotiate on its behalf with the Government and to bind the recipient in connection with this application or grant:

Name	Title	Telephone No.	Facsimile No.

2. Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)

If the recipient is a U.S. organization, or a foreign organization which has income effectively connected with the conduct of activities in the U.S. or has an office or a place of business or a fiscal paying agent in the U.S., please indicate the recipient's TIN:

TIN: _____

3. Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number

(a) Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation using an applicable exemption, in the space provided at the end of this provision, the recipient should supply the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number applicable to that name and address. Recipients should take care to report the number that identifies the recipient's name and address exactly as stated in the proposal.

(b) The DUNS is a 9-digit number assigned by Dun and Bradstreet Information Services. If the recipient does not have a DUNS number, the recipient should call Dun and Bradstreet directly at 1-800-333-0505. A DUNS number will be provided immediately by telephone at no charge to

the recipient. The recipient should be prepared to provide the following information:

- (1) Recipient's name.
- (2) Recipient's address.
- (3) Recipient's telephone number.
- (4) Line of business.
- (5) Chief executive officer/key manager.
- (6) Date the organization was started.
- (7) Number of people employed by the recipient.
- (8) Company affiliation.

(c) Recipients located outside the United States may e-mail Dun and Bradstreet at globalinfo@dbisma.com to obtain the location and phone number of the local Dun and Bradstreet Information Services office.

The DUNS system is distinct from the Federal Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) system.

DUNS: _____

4. Letter of Credit (LOC) Number

If the recipient has an existing Letter of Credit (LOC) with USAID, please indicate the LOC number:

LOC: _____

5. Procurement Information

(a) **Applicability.** This applies to the procurement of goods and services planned by the recipient (i.e., contracts, purchase orders, etc.) from a supplier of goods or services for the direct use or benefit of the recipient in conducting the program supported by the grant, and not to assistance provided by the recipient (i.e., a subgrant or subagreement) to a subgrantee or subrecipient in support of the subgrantee's or subrecipient's program. Provision by the recipient of the requested information does not, in and of itself, constitute USAID approval.

(b) **Amount of Procurement.** Please indicate the total estimated dollar amount of goods and services which the recipient plans to purchase under the grant:

\$ _____

(c) **Nonexpendable Property.** If the recipient plans to purchase nonexpendable equipment which would require the approval of the Agreement Officer, indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types, quantities of each, and estimated unit costs. Nonexpendable equipment for which the Agreement Officer's approval to purchase is required is any article of nonexpendable tangible personal property charged directly to the grant, having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

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TYPE/DESCRIPTION (Generic) _____
 QUANTITY _____
 ESTIMATED UNIT COST _____

(d) Source If the recipient plans to purchase any goods/commodities which are not in accordance with the Standard Provision “USAID Eligibility Rules for Procurement of Commodities and Services,” indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types and quantities of each, estimated unit costs of each, and probable source. “Source” means the country from which a commodity is shipped to the cooperating country or the cooperating country itself if the commodity is located in the cooperating country at the time of purchase. However, where a commodity is shipped from a free port or bonded warehouse in the form in which received, “source” means the country from which the commodity was shipped to the free port or bonded warehouse. Additionally, “available for purchase” includes “offered for sale at the time of purchase” if the commodity is listed in a vendor’s catalog or other statement of inventory, kept as part of the vendor’s customary business practices and regularly offered for sale, even if the commodities are not physically on the vendors’ shelves or even in the source country at the time of the order. In such cases, the recipient must document that the commodity was listed in the vendor’s catalog or other statement of inventory; that the vendor has a regular and customary business practice of selling the commodity through “just in time” or other similar inventory practices; and the recipient did not engage the vendor to list the commodity in its catalog or other statement of inventory just to fulfill the recipient’s request for the commodity.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION _____
 QUANTITY _____
 ESTIMATED GOODS _____
 PROBABLE GOODS _____
 PROBABLE (Generic) _____
 UNIT COST _____
 SOURCE _____

(e) Restricted Goods. If the recipient plans to purchase any restricted goods, indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types and quantities of each, estimated unit costs of each, intended use, and probable source. Restricted goods are Agricultural Commodities, Motor Vehicles, Pharmaceuticals, Pesticides, Used Equipment, U.S. Government-Owned Excess Property, and Fertilizer.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION _____
 QUANTITY _____
 ESTIMATED _____
 PROBABLE _____
 INTENDED USE (Generic) _____
 UNIT COST _____
 SOURCE _____

Media for Informed Civic Engagement

(f) **Supplier Nationality.** If the recipient plans to purchase any goods or services from suppliers of goods and services whose nationality is not in accordance with the Standard Provision “USAID Eligibility Rules for Procurement of Commodities and Services,” indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types and quantities of each good or service, estimated costs of each, probable nationality of each non-U.S. supplier of each good or service, and the rationale for purchasing from a non-U.S. supplier.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION	_____
QUANTITY	_____
ESTIMATED	_____
PROBABLE SUPPLIER	_____
NATIONALITY	_____
RATIONALE (Generic)	_____
UNIT COST (Non-US Only)	_____
FOR NON-US	_____

6. Past Performance References

On a continuation page, please provide past performance information requested in the RFA.

7. Type of Organization

The recipient, by checking the applicable box, represents that -

(a) If the recipient is a U.S. entity, it operates as a corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of, an individual, a partnership, a nongovernmental nonprofit organization, a state or local governmental organization, a private college or university, a public college or university, an international organization, or a joint venture; or

(b) If the recipient is a non-U.S. entity, it operates as a corporation organized under the laws of _____ (country), an individual, a partnership, a nongovernmental nonprofit organization, a nongovernmental educational institution, a governmental organization, an international organization, or a joint venture.

8. Estimated Costs of Communications Products

The following are the estimate(s) of the cost of each separate communications product (i.e., any printed material [other than non-color photocopy material], photographic services, or video production services) which is anticipated under the grant. Each estimate must include all the costs associated with preparation and execution of the product. Use a continuation page as necessary.