



REQUEST FOR CONCEPT PAPERS (RFCP) # CEP - YESG - 01

Youth Engagement Support (YES) Grants

Issued on December 15, 2016

I. SUMMARY

The USAID Civic Engagement Project in Macedonia (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Project’) invites youth civil society organizations (CSO) in Macedonia and non-registered youth groups to submit Concept Papers for Youth Engagement Support (YES) grants.

The Civic Engagement Project (CEP) is a five year USAID-funded program that contributes to achieve two objectives: (1) strengthened influence of CSOs on policies and programs related to priority issues of citizen concern; and (2) increased and sustained youth engagement in public life in Macedonia. The Project is implemented by East West Management Institute (EWMI), in partnership with four local CSOs: the Foundation for Internet and Society “Metamorphosis” (Metamorphosis), the Association for Democratic Initiatives (ADI), the Foundation for Open Society in Macedonia (FOSM), and the National Youth Council of Macedonia (NYCM). YES grants will be managed by ADI.

The aim of YES grants is to support initiatives by youth CSOs and non-registered youth groups that focus on:

- (i) educating young men and women about their rights and the opportunities for participating in public life;
- (ii) engaging youth in using existing mechanisms for youth participation (youth CSOs and groups, Youth and CSO Support Centers, municipal Youth Councils, municipal Youth Policies, etc.) and online accountability portals to constructively engage with public institutions at the central and local government level regarding issues of priority concern for youth or the community at large; and
- (iii) providing opportunities for youth to give back to communities and society, and focus on priority political, economic, cultural or social issues that might impact their lives.

The Project will give priority to applications that:

- a. propose **creative solutions** to the identified problems and to engaging youth;
- b. include **innovative uses of technology** in engaging youth, such as, SMS surveys or internet-based activities; and/or

- c. include components that increase **commitment from youths and other citizens**, such as volunteering;
- d. ensure substantial engagement of women, girls, youth, ethnic or religious minorities, the LGBT community, or other **vulnerable/marginalized groups**.

The Project **will not accept or review** Concept Papers that include the following activities:

- Support for or lobbying on behalf of a particular political party;
- Religious activities;
- Humanitarian/charitable activities;
- Theoretical research;
- Capital expenditures, including construction activities;
- Training on organizational development or fundraising activities.

II. GRANT AWARDS

The Project will use a three-step application process.

- (i) Applicants will submit Concept Papers in response to this RfCP.
- (ii) The Project will pre-select the best Concept Papers and will invite the respective applicants to present them at an Idea Competition Event. The Project's Grant Review Committee will assess the presentations and will provide feedback to the applicants.
- (iii) The Project will invite the applicants that were selected by the Grant Review Committee to submit full applications based on the respective Concept Paper.

The Project plans to award up to 4 (four) grants resulting from this RfCP. The maximum grant award for each proposal is 15,000 USD, and for projects that may last up to 12 (twelve) months. Grant funds may be used only for activities directly related to the implementation of the project. The Project reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

III. FUNDING PRIORITIES

The Project will give priority to youth CSOs and non-registered youth groups that:

- Focus on priority issues of concern to youth in Macedonia including: youth engagement, youth empowerment, improving youth's quality of life in Macedonia, good governance, public service improvement, rule of law, human rights, economic growth, business enabling environment, and monitoring and oversight of public institutions;
- Have a proven track record of engaging in effective and successful interventions related to the above-listed priority issues at least for the last two years;
- Support multi-culturalism and inter-ethnic cooperation and take progressive stances vis-à-vis gender equality and social inclusion;

- Demonstrate understanding and commitment to cooperate with a wide range of stakeholders, including the media, private sector, think tanks and academia, and public institutions; and
- Are insufficiently supported by other USAID programs or other donors.

IV. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Youth CSOs legally registered in Macedonia and non-registered youth groups are eligible to submit Concept Papers for the YES grants.

Applicant youth CSOs and non-registered youth groups which will be invited to submit a full application should meet the following criteria:

- Be a Macedonian CSO, meaning that it is managed by a governing body the majority of who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of Macedonia;
- Have at least two years of operational experience. As a rule, the Project will not provide “start-up” funding, although the Project may make a rare exception if sufficient evidence is presented to show that the CSO’s leadership has adequate prior experience and the CSO is capable of filling a niche that has been underserved in the past.
- Have a governance structure that ensures proper separation of power, including an Assembly and a President, and preferably a Board of Directors, a Chairperson, and an Executive Director. The same individual should not hold the position of the Board Chairperson and Executive Director unless the size of the organization precludes this separation. If the following criteria are not met, the applicants invited to submit full applications will also need to submit a proposed reform process that will work towards meeting these standards.
- Registered youth CSOs must have a transparent system of bookkeeping that complies with the Macedonian legislation and International Accounting Standards (IAS). If such a system is not in place, the grantee must work closely with the Project office to ensure that accurate financial management and transparent bookkeeping systems are developed. **Note:** The Project will award YES grants to non-registered youth groups as In-Kind Grants. That means that the Project will pay directly for project-related expenses.
- Must not be a debtor of the Government of Macedonia and must have cancelled any debt to the state or arranged for debt collection by the state prior to receiving the first disbursement of grant funds by the Project.
- Must operate as an independent non-politically affiliated organization.
- Must not be debarred, suspended, excluded or otherwise ineligible to receive US Federal funding.

Civil servants, political appointees, members of the current parliament, staff of public broadcasting companies, and/or leaders of political parties cannot participate in a grant project as a director or as grant-remunerated participant.

V. APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

The Project will accept Concept Papers in English. Applicants must submit the following documents using the forms provided by the Project for (i) and (ii):

- (i) Concept Paper Application;
- (ii) Concept Paper Budget;
- (iii) A copy of the organization's most recent registration document (for registered CSOs). Non-registered youth groups should send information regarding any similar previous activities they have implemented in the past two years.

Incomplete submissions will not be reviewed.

Submitted Concept Papers must be the original and sole work of the applicant organization. Plagiarism will result in disqualification from the grant competition. The Project will retain all materials and documents submitted by applicants. It will not use this information for purposes other than proposal review and will not share it with other persons or institutions, except when required by Macedonian law or requested by USAID.

Please note that in line with our donor coordination efforts, we may share the names of the applicants and a short description of their respective Concept Papers with other Macedonian and international programs that support CSOs in Macedonia.

VI. EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

The selection process will be administered by a Grants Review Committee (GRC) established by the Project for the purpose of this RfCP.

The Project will assess Concept Papers based on the following criteria:

a. Collaborative Posture – 20%

- The extent to which the CSO or non-registered youth group plans to foster cooperation among CSOs, government, media, and citizens to better achieve the project goal;
- A demonstration of the level of collaboration with other CSOs in sharing expertise and resources to implement innovative advocacy, civic engagement, and technology approaches in fulfilling project goals.

b. Problem Statement and Implementation Plan – 20%

A clear and concise statement of the problem(s) to be addressed. The problem statement must address details such as:

- the conceptualization of the problem and the solution;
- strategic visioning in how to implement the proposed solution;

- outline of the detailed plan for implementation that shows how the strategic vision will be achieved;
 - plans for monitoring and evaluation of the proposed implementation plan;
 - plans for public outreach/interaction with the media; and
 - plans for periodic reporting on the implementation plan.
- c. *Beneficiaries – 20%*
- The level and nature of proposed actions to ensure large-scale engagement of youth and other citizens: generate awareness, support for advocacy, and/or other activities involving youth and other citizens;
 - The level and nature of proposed actions to encourage volunteerism, as well as youth engagement;
 - The level and nature of proposed actions to include girls, women, ethnic and religious minorities, people with disabilities, the LGBT community, and other marginalized groups in the proposed activities.
- d. *Impact – 20%*
- A description of how the proposed solution will be objectively measured as it pertains to the success or extent of success in addressing the issue/problem;
 - The effectiveness of the proposed method(s) to reach out and to engage the targeted beneficiaries in project activities;
 - The extent to which the project highlights, contributes to, and influences important policy issues, which may be addressed by local, regional, and national policy makers.
- e. *Sustainability – 20%*
- Description of how the proposed solution(s) will be sustained once the grant funding expires.

VII. TIMELINE

RfCP launch date	December 15, 2016
Deadline for submitting clarification requests to the Project	December 25, 2016
Date when the Project will issue clarifications or/ and organize an Information Session for interested applicants	December 29, 2016
DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING CONCEPT PAPERS	16:30, JANUARY 25, 2017
Evaluation of Concept Papers	January 31, 2017
Idea Competition notification to successful applicants	February 1, 2017
Idea Competition Events	February 9-10, 2017
Invitation to successful applicants to submit full applications	February 13, 2017

Deadline for submitting clarification requests to the Project	February 27, 2017
Date when the Project will issue clarifications	March 3, 2017
DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING FULL APPLICATIONS	16:30, MARCH 24, 2017
Evaluation of full applications	March 31, 2017
Grant award notification to successful applicants	April 13, 2017
Grant agreement signing	APRIL 26, 2017
<i>Please note that the idea competition details will be issued on December 28, 2016</i>	
<i>Please note that evaluation, idea competition event, and award dates are subject to change</i>	

VIII. CONTACT INFORMATION

Application Form: To download the Concept Paper application form, please see the RfCP announcement at www.adimacedonia.org. Alternatively, please contact ADI Grants Manager, Ms. Lindita Bexheti, at linda@adi.org.mk for a Concept Paper Application Form.

Clarifications: Applicants should submit clarification requests by the deadline listed above via email to ADI Grants Manager, Ms. Lindita Bexheti, at linda@adi.org.mk. The Project will issue clarifications to all interested organizations via e-mail and on www.adimacedonia.org.

Proposals: Applicants should submit their Concept Paper Application via e-mail to ADI Grants Manager, Ms. Lindita Bexheti, at linda@adi.org.mk. E-mails must have “RfCP # CEP-YESG -01: Youth Engagement Support Grants” in the subject line.

Alternatively, applications may be submitted in a sealed envelope to: **ADI, Bul. B. Giniski 61/3, 1230 Gostivar**, att: Ms. Lindita Bexheti. Should you choose to mail the hard copy of the proposal, please note that the time when the sealed envelope is delivered to ADI will be taken into consideration and not the time when the envelope is mailed. The mail should be delivered to ADI’s office by **16:30, January 25, 2017**.

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