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**ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT (APS)**  
USAID Mediji.Inovacije Project

Funding Opportunity Title:	Mediji.Inovacije Support
Announcement Type:	Annual Program Statement
Funding Opportunity Number:	APS-MIA-2022-01
Issuance Date:	June 20, 2022
Questions for First Round of Evaluations Due By:	Questions are accepted on a rolling basis
Deadline for Submission of Concept Papers:	May 31, 2023
Final Closing Date:	June 30, 2023
Submit Concept Papers to:	<a href="mailto:grants.mi@irex.org">grants.mi@irex.org</a>

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The purpose of this Annual Program Statement (APS) is to solicit applications for funding. The Mediji.Inovacije project, funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Sida, seeks to support innovative business ideas, focused on growth and impact, that will increase long-term prospects of business success and contribute to long-term sustainability of media and media adjacent organizations.

Key information about the APS:

- The geographic focus under consideration includes the following: Serbia.
- No projected funding ceiling for individual projects;
- Maximum sub-grants to be awarded: 12
- APS competition duration: 12 months
- All of the available funds for this APS may be allocated early on in the program;
- IREX/Mediji.Inovacije may choose to fully fund or incrementally fund the selected application(s).
- The number of awards and amount of available funding is subject to change and IREX/Mediji.Inovacije reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this APS.

This APS is seeking applicants from media, information and communication sectors to propose creative and effective approaches, that will improve their capacities and contribute to tangible and measurable results in the following areas:

1. Business and technological development;

2. Increasing market share (audience reach, revenue)
3. Leveraging third-party investments;

Applicants may choose among a range of initiatives or scale up small projects that have demonstrated success. Awardees will be expected to share data, evaluation results and key lessons, and disseminate periodic activities and outcomes with the broader community.

Applications outside the geographic focus will not be considered. Applicants must demonstrate success in managing cultural and political considerations in the proposed focus country or region as well as success in addressing Mediji.Inovacije development objectives.

## **SECTION I - FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Description of the Proposed Program**

#### Background

Mediji.Inovacije is a five-year program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Mediji.Inovacije activities work to improve the economic sustainability and business development of Serbian digital media, information, and communications sector stakeholders that support public access to fair, accurate, and relevant information. Focus of the program are implementation of business and technological development and improvement of beneficiary access to finance and investment readiness.

The following serves as the overall description of the Mediji.Inovacije sub-grants program, and specific objectives under each component:

**Catalyzation Grants:** Small grants program that enables beneficiaries to focus on making the changes and absorbing the support offered through M.I technical assistance. This small-grant program provides resources to allow recipients to drive change and engage in new activities focused on growth and impact. Grant disbursements will be tied to clear milestones so that payments are progressive, based on progress along an agreed development plan.

**Incentivization Grants:** Grants will support beneficiaries to further develop their growth concepts and identify viable partners and/or third-party funders for grants. Grants will support achievement of a set of objectives and KPIs, and will finance testing and implementation of new business models.

The Mediji.Inovacije project will assess the best mechanism to use for funding for each individual application.

Applicants could be supported by grants and or technical assistance and expert support.

Themes of grant-supported projects could include but are not limited to:

*Adoption of new technologies:* Grants in this category may finance high-tech products and services via national/international ICT or other technology companies toward quantifiable improvement in market share or revenue generation. Examples include: a local media app that combines news, service, and event information, filling a gap in the market and providing new opportunities for further partnership and revenue generation; or a partnership between an existing local media outlet and a retailer or service provider digital platform to bring new advertising and cross-marketing opportunities.

*Access to investment matchmaking.* Utilizing local and regional experts, grants in this category will help beneficiaries determine the most appropriate funding/financing structure, including commercial business

development loans and/or equity financing, and assist them with the application process. M.I will then mentor promising partnerships and enable beneficiaries through the grant program to meet third-party investor needs.

*Network development.* These grants will assist and encourage media/digital media companies to develop regional and international ties with investors and strategic partners to increase business opportunities and improve market share or revenue. Grants in this category could finance beneficiary participation at regional and international investment, entrepreneurship, and trade/sectoral events. Such events can help beneficiaries identify new commercial opportunities, strategic partnerships, and/or potential investment.

## **B. Application Process**

Mediji.Inovacije will review candidates for grants using a two-stage process.

Applicants must first submit a concept paper of no more than 5 pages to Mediji.Inovacije. Concept papers must be filled in using a template that could be found on [IREX Mediji.Inovacije](#) page and meet the identified needs of this solicitation.

Direct download of Concept paper template:

<https://irex.org/sites/default/files/IREX%20Mediji.Inovacije%20Concept%20Paper%20Template.docx>.

If a concept paper is approved, Mediji.Inovacije will contact applicants and provide instructions and templates to complete an application.

Please note the following:

Do not submit a full proposal unless requested by Mediji.Inovacije. Only upon receipt of positive feedback on the concept paper is the applicant requested to assemble a full proposal for Mediji.Inovacije consideration, based on instructions provided at that time.

## **C. Concept Paper**

In the first stage, all interested applicants are required to submit a short technical concept paper of no longer than 5 pages that is specific and concise. The concept paper should demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this program.

Concept papers will be reviewed in terms of responsiveness to the APS, appropriateness of subject matter, and creativity. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their proposed work will contribute to Mediji.Inovacije objectives as noted in concept paper template and within geographical region of Serbia.

## **D. Grant Application Process**

If a concept paper is approved, Mediji.Inovacije will contact applicants and provide instructions and templates to complete an application.

Do not submit a full proposal unless requested by Mediji.Inovacije. Only upon receipt of positive feedback on the concept paper is the applicant requested to assemble a full proposal for Mediji.Inovacije consideration, based on instructions provided at that time.

## **E. Unique Entity Identifier Number**

All entities receiving funds more than \$25,000 from the US Government are required to have Unique Entity Number (UEI). As this process might require some time, any applicant organizations that do not already possess a UEI and whose envisioned award amount may exceed \$25,000 are strongly encouraged to apply for UEI at the concept note stage.

[Here](#) you can find instruction for UEI registration.

## **F. Administration of Award**

Awards to U.S. organizations will be administered in accordance with [2 CFR 200](#), [2 CFR 700](#), USAID Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations. For non-U.S. organizations, USAID Standard Provisions for non-U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations would apply.

Applicants may obtain copies of the referenced material at the following websites:

- 2CFR200:

[http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200\\_main\\_02.tpl](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl)

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

<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303mab.pdf>

## **SECTION II – CONCEPT PAPER REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **A. Evaluation Criteria for Concept Paper**

Concept papers will be reviewed in terms of responsiveness to the APS, appropriateness of subject matter, clarity and creativeness. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their proposed work will implement innovative business ideas focused on growth and impact that will increase long-term prospects for business success and long-term sustainability for their media and/or media adjacent organizations.

## **SECTION III - AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Anticipated Start Date of this Award and Performance Period**

Mediji.Inovacije anticipates the start date upon award with a performance period of up to 12 months with possibility to extend.

### **B. Award Type**

Mediji.Inovacije anticipates awarding up to 12 sub-grants (hereafter called Agreement) to fund successful applications submitted in response to this APS.

## **SECTION IV- ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Types of Entities that May Apply**

Registered non-U.S. non-governmental organizations and for-profit organizations willing to forego profit may apply.

This APS is issued as a public notice to ensure that all interested and qualified organizations have a fair opportunity to submit applications for funding. Eligible organizations include:

- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
- Community Based Organizations (CBOs)
- Private Enterprises
- Professional Associations
- Foundations and Associations

## **B. Cost Share**

Applicants are encouraged to contribute resources from their own private or local sources for the implementation of this program where feasible.

## **SECTION V - PROJECT CONTACTS**

The points of contact for this APS and any questions during the APS process are [grants.mi@irex.org](mailto:grants.mi@irex.org).

Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation or interpretation of this APS must request it in writing by the date listed on the cover letter to allow a reply to reach all prospective applicants before the submission of their applications. Oral explanations or instructions given before award of a sub-grant will not be binding. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this APS will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment of this APS, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicants.

## **SECTION VI - OTHER INFORMATION**

Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of IREX, nor does it commit Mediji.Inovacije to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

IREX reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Further, IREX reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this APS.

Environmental Considerations: Activities supported by Mediji.Inovacije will not support or engage in construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or renovation work. Mediji.Inovacije will also not engage in actions that normally have a significant impact on the environment as defined by 22CFR216.2 (d):

- i. Programs of river basin development;
- ii. Irrigation and water management;
- iii. Agricultural land leveling;
- iv. Drainage projects;
- v. Large scale agricultural mechanization;
- vi. Resettlement projects;
- vii. New land development;
- viii. Penetration road building and road improvement;
- ix. Powerplants;
- x. Industrial plants; and
- xi. Potable water and sewerage projects

In addition, Mediji.Inovacije will not support activities that:

- Support project preparation, project feasibility studies, engineering design for activities listed in §216.2(d)(l);

- Affect endangered species;
- Provide support to extractive industries (e.g. mining and quarrying);
- Promote timber harvesting;
- Lead to construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or renovation work;
- Support agro-processing or industrial enterprises;
- Provide support for regulatory permitting;
- Lead to privatization of industrial facilities or infrastructure with heavily polluted property;
- Assist the procurement (including payment in kind, donations, guarantees of credit) or use (including handling, transport, fuel for transport, storage, mixing, loading, application, clean-up of spray equipment, and disposal) of pesticides or activities involving procurement, transport, use, storage, or disposal of toxic materials--pesticides cover all insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, etc. covered under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act; and/or
- Procure or use genetically modified organisms.

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.216 procurement of certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment is prohibited.