



Annual Program Statement

Funding Opportunity Title:	New Business Model Grants
Announcement Type:	Annual Program Statement
Funding Opportunity Number:	APS 2024-05
Issuance Date:	02.23.2024
Questions are accepted on a continuing basis.	
Deadline for Submission of Concept Papers:	07.23.2024
Final Closing Date:	08.23.2024
Submit Concept Papers to:	contact.mp.ge@irex.org

The purpose of this Annual Program Statement (APS) is to solicit applications for funding. The USAID Media Program through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is seeking concept papers first and then full applications from prospective partners to implement activities to support innovative media actors and journalistic start-ups. The USAID Media Program intends to provide grants and managerial guidance for initiatives which aim to support media and information outlets with new, sustainable approaches and business models for reaching Georgian communities and audiences with fact-based, civically-relevant content.

As consumption of news and current events content is constantly evolving and audiences are steadily migrating from single to multi-platform and social media domains, the New Business Model Grants Program seeks to provide modest financing to address evolving shifts in Georgia's media landscape. The grants are intended to trigger and encourage experimentation with new, more financially sustainable journalistic models and support entrepreneurial journalism. In addition to funding support, USAID Media Program will support successful applicants in accessing relevant international models and lessons which can benefit their initiative.

The USAID Media Program encourages creative, out-of-box ideas and approaches to media, digital journalism and storytelling. Illustrative themes could include:

Increasing engagement with targeted and specific audiences. Examples of these models could include strengthening engagement with audiences based on specific demographics (e.g. youth, ethnic minorities), geographic (e.g. local/community media), or interest (youth issues, student media, etc.).

Adopting new technologies: These grants would financially support technology solutions for products and services that increase the potential market share or revenue generation for a media outlet. Examples could include:

- Developing a media platform that combines news, service, and event information that fills a gap in the market and provides new opportunities for further partnership and revenue generation
- Developing a partnership between an existing local media outlet and a retailer or digital platform service provider to introduce new advertising and cross-marketing opportunities
- Launching of a new media platforms or products (such as a podcast) that are appropriate for the Georgian market with a strong revenue model
- Other innovative ideas that introduce technology-based solutions to challenges facing media.

The USAID Media Program anticipates awarding up to five awards to fund successful applications submitted in response to this APS. The total amount of funding currently available for this APS is \$50,000 for a period of 4-8 months. Estimated funding for individual projects is up to \$15,000. USAID Media Program 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 USAID Media Program reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this APS. Competition for this APS will be open for six months and concept papers will be reviewed on a rolling basis. IREX reserves the right to close this APS once available funding is no longer sufficient to fund new awards.

Applicants must demonstrate how their proposed activities support the objectives of the USAID Media Program, outlined in Section 1 below, in particular Objective 2, which seeks to support initiatives addressing economic sustainability and business development efforts of various media actors.

SECTION I - FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Description of the Proposed Program

Background

The USAID Media Program in Georgia is a five-year program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by IREX. The program envisions a vibrant, resilient, networked media sector that provides Georgia's citizens and diverse communities with the civically relevant, fact-based independent information they need to build a more just, prosperous, and inclusive society.

Program Objectives

1. Preserve and strengthen an enabling environment that fosters press freedom and access to information.
2. Increased business innovation and viability of media outlets.

3. Increase the availability of civically relevant, fact-based, independent sources of information.

B. Administration of Subaward

Awards to U.S. organizations will be administered in accordance with 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:

- [2 CFR 200](#), [2 CFR 700](#)
- Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental Recipients:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303mab.pdf>

SECTION II- AWARD INFORMATION

A. Estimated Funding Level

The total amount of funding currently available for this APS is approximately \$50,000 for a period of 4-8 months. The number of awards and amount of available funding is subject to change.

B. Anticipated Start Date of this award and Performance Period

USAID Media Program anticipates the start date upon award with a performance period of 4-6 months.

C. Subaward Type

USAID Media Program anticipates awarding up to five Fixed Amount Awards (hereafter called Agreements) to fund successful applications submitted in response to this APS.

SECTION III- ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Types of Entities that May Apply

This APS is issued as a public notice to ensure that all interested and qualified Georgian organizations and persons 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

SECTION IV- APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Application Process

USAID Media Program will review proposals using a two-stage process. Applicants must first submit a concept paper of no more than 3 pages to USAID Media Program that addresses the identified needs of this solicitation.

Do not submit a full proposal to the USAID Media Program unless requested to do so,

The concept paper must be submitted in accordance with the instructions in section IV B below.

B. Concept Paper

In the first stage, all interested applicants are required to submit a short concept paper no longer than 3 pages that is specific, complete and concise. Instructions for developing the concept paper are provided in the next section.

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 USAID Media Program Objective 2 to support initiatives addressing economic sustainability and business development efforts of various media actors.

Concept Paper Instructions

The concept paper must be submitted in Arial 11 pt. font and must include page numbers. Each page must be marked with the APS title and number.

Prepare the application for the concept paper according to the structural format set forth below:

1. Cover Page
 - a. The APS number.
 - b. Address of the organization/applicant
 - c. Type of the organization¹ (e.g., for-profit, non-profit, etc.)
 - d. Lead contact
2. Technical approach. This section should address the program summary and selected objectives, including:
 - a. Give a brief description of your organization and current operations.
 - b. Please describe your idea, including relevant (anticipated) audience engagement.
 - c. Please summarize the capabilities and expertise needed to achieve the concept's goal.
3. Proposed Total costs:
 - a. Brief cost breakdown of proposed estimated cost.

¹ Group of individuals may apply, but if the idea will be selected for funding organization will be asked to register and form a legal entity

The USAID Media Program will contact selected applicants to request a full proposal based on the information provided in the concept paper, and may request to meet applicants to jointly develop concepts further.

C. Application Process

If a concept paper is approved, USAID Media Program will contact applicants and provide instructions and templates to complete an application. If your application is selected for funding, you will be expected to get a UIE number before signing the contract. If you already have it, you will not need to receive it again. A Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is a unique number assigned to public and private companies, individuals, or organizations that receive funding from the US federal government. UEI numbers are obtained from www.sam.gov.

Restrictions:

- Subaward funds provided under the terms of this APS shall not be used to finance any of the following commodities as per ADS 312 Eligibility of Commodities:
 - **Ineligible Commodities:** Military equipment, surveillance equipment, commodities, or equipment for the support of police or other law enforcement activities, abortion equipment and services, luxury goods, gambling equipment, weather modification equipment.
 - **Restricted commodities include** Agricultural commodities, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, contraceptives and condoms, pesticides, used equipment, fertilizer.
 - **Others:** Purchases of goods or services restricted or prohibited under the prevailing USAID source and nationality and other regulations found under ADS 310 or from countries and suppliers as may be identified by USAID's consolidated list of debarred, suspended, or ineligible subcontractors at <http://www.epls.gov/>.
 - Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to successfully complete the activity, including any Sub awardee headquarters expenses that are not directly linked to the implementation of the proposed project.
 - Previous obligations and/or bad debts.
 - Fines and /or penalties.
 - Other costs unallowable under USAID and/or federal regulations such as referenced 2 CFR 200 Subpart E Cost Principles and FAR 31.2 Cost Principles for Commercial Organizations.

Environmental Considerations: Activities supported by the USAID Media Program will not support or engage in construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or renovation work. The USAID Media Program will also not engage in actions that normally have a significant impact on the environment as defined by [22 CFR 216 \(2\) \(d\)](#):

1. Programs of river basin development;
2. Irrigation and water management;
3. Agricultural land leveling;
4. Drainage projects;
5. Large scale agricultural mechanization;
6. Resettlement projects;
7. New land development;
8. Penetration road building and road improvement;
9. Power plants;
10. Industrial plants; and

11. Potable water and sewerage projects

In addition, the USAID Media Program will not support activities that:

- Support project preparation, project feasibility studies, engineering design for activities listed in §216.2(d)(1);
- 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) 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.

SECTION V – CONCEPT PAPER REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Evaluation Criteria for Concept Paper

Concept notes will be reviewed as follows:

1. IREX will conduct an initial review of the submitted concept note, based on the following criteria for responses, and disqualify applicants and concept notes that are not eligible for consideration.
 - Does the concept note satisfy the basic parameters? [Refer to Section I]
 - Does the applicant meet the minimum eligibility criteria? [Refer to Section III]
 - Is the concept note complete and submitted on time? [Refer to Section IV]
 - Is the concept note responsive to the APS requirements?
 - Is the subject matter clear, appropriate and does it offer creative solutions?
 - Does the concept note show promise for developing into a new business model solution that can increase financial viability for the applicant's organization?

Selected applicants will be invited to discuss their ideas further and develop a detailed application. Applicants should expect feedback and collaborative discussions that will help them clarify and improve their ideas.

SECTION VI - PROJECT CONTACTS

The points of contact for this APS and any questions during the APS process are:

1. Dachi Grdzlishvili (dgrdzlishvili@irex.org)
2. Eka Chemia (echemia@irex.org)

Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation or interpretation of this APS must request it in writing. Oral explanations or instructions given before award of a subaward will not be binding.

SECTION VII - OTHER INFORMATION

Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of IREX, nor does it commit USAID Media Program 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. IREX reserves the right to close this APS once available funding is no longer sufficient to fund new awards.