



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)
for USAID Georgian Media Program

Issuance Date: February 27, 2024

Closing Date: March 27, 2024

Closing Time: Midnight

Subject: Request for Applications (RFA) Number FY24-04
USAID Media Program

Reference: **Issued Under an International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) USAID COAG Number 72011422CA000041**

Competition Summary

In media's dynamic landscape, staying technologically relevant is paramount for media companies to maintain competitiveness and deliver high-quality content. Recognizing the need for continuous innovation, the USAID Media Program has designed an in-kind grant pool to support the upgrade or purchase of production equipment for media companies. For the purposes of this RFA, equipment is defined as items with a per unit purchase price of less than \$5,000. Moreover, IREX will procure equipment for the selected applicants for this funding opportunity.

Proposal Instructions

Any questions concerning this RFA should be submitted in writing not later than 5 days prior to the closing date shown above to contact.mp.ge@irex.org. Applicants should retain for their records one copy of all enclosures which accompany their application.

Complete applications must be received by the USAID Media Program no later than the closing date listed on the front page of this RFA. Pre-award costs are not allowable and will not be reimbursed. Applications should be submitted in electronic format to the following email address contact.mp.ge@irex.org with "Proposal submission under USAID Media Program RFA FY24-04" in the subject line.

The complete application packet must include the required attachments:

A. Application For Funding REQUIRED

See Attachment A for the application questions.

B. Budget and Budget Narrative REQUIRED

See Attachment B for the budget form. Please note that this template contains multiple tabs for the line-item budget and budget narrative, both of which must be filled out.

Applicants should verify that the total amount will not exceed \$10,000. The budget may **only** include costs related to the future upgrade or purchase of production equipment. Personnel, travel, contractual, and other unrelated costs are not eligible under this RFA.

Based on the individual application, IREX reserves the right to alter an applicant's budget or to fund some, but not all, components of an application.

Thank you for your interest in the USAID Georgia Media Program.

Sincerely,

Dianne Janes

Chief of Party, USAID Media Program

Request for Applications (RFA) Summary

This Request for Applications outlines the information required from the applicant for the development and submission of a proposal for consideration. The potential applicant is expected to review, understand, and conform with specifications contained in this RFA. Failure to do so will be at the applicant's own risk.

All reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, which are related to the subaward program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards ([2 CFR 200 Subpart E](#) Cost Principles or the Federal Acquisition Regulation ([FAR](#)) [Part 31](#) for-profit organizations), may be charged under the subaward. Construction is not eligible for reimbursement under this award.

This RFA is being issued and consists of this cover letter, Schedule A, and Annexes.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of USAID Georgian Media Program/IREX nor does it commit USAID Georgian Media Program/IREX to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. The application is submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

SCHEDULE A

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION:

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.

This initiative seeks to ensure that media organizations have modern, relevant, and efficient tools that foster creativity, efficiency, and improved content delivery.

This in-kind grant pool will focus on supporting media companies across various platforms, including broadcasting and digital media, to:

- Purchase of camera, audio, lighting and other media production equipment.
- Implementation of post-production tools for enhanced editing and visual effects, including hardware and software.

- Purchase of livestreaming solutions, hardware, and software.
- Purchase of servers and storage solutions for efficient and secure content management.
- Purchase of software or hardware to facilitate digital security.
- Integration of virtual and augmented reality technologies for immersive content.

Applicable US government Regulations:

- [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:

Subject to the availability of funds, IREX expects to award up to six in-kind subawards, ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 each. The total amount available is \$40,000. The expected period of performance is 6 months. IREX reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

SECTION III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION:

The applicant / application must meet the following requirements

- Organizational applicants must be officially registered as a legal entity in Georgia and working in compliance with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations, including, but not limited to pertinent local laws and status. In lieu of official registration, an applicant may show proof of effort to secure registration, exemption from registration, or show cause why such registration is either not optional or practicable.
- Meet the project objectives and principles.
- Contain expected outcomes and results consistent with and linked to the project objectives.
- Demonstrate a commitment to technological innovation and upgrading production capabilities.
- Showcase a clear plan for how the upgraded or new equipment will enhance content quality and production efficiency.
- Have produced a high-quality body of work that consistently demonstrates adherence to strong editorial principles of neutrality, impartiality, and robust fact-checking.
- Be committed to upholding the principles of the Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics (GCJE), or similarly robust journalism principles.
- Be a well-established media organization with the ability to reach a large audience.
- The applicant is not debarred organization from receiving US government funds.

- Have a Unique Entity ID (UEI). Organizations selected for funding will be expected to have a UEI number. A 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.

Types of Eligible Subawardees:

- National and regional broadcast media
- National, regional, and local online media

Cost share is not required.

Section IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION:

Any questions concerning this RFA should be submitted in writing no later than five days prior to the closing date shown above to contact.mp.ge@irex.org. Applicants should retain for their records one copy of all enclosures which accompany their application.

The application must be received by USAID Media Program no later than the closing date listed on the front page of this RFA. Pre-award costs are not allowable and will not be reimbursed. Applications should be submitted in electronic format to the following email address contact.mp.ge@irex.org with "Proposal submission under USAID Media Program RFA Equipment Upgrade Initiative" in the subject line.

The complete application packet must include the required attachments:

- a. Application For Funding – use supplied template.
- b. Budget and Budget Narrative – use supplied template.
- c. UEI number

The templates for Attachments A and B will be provided by IREX.

Late Application

Late applications are marked as "late" and are ineligible for review or award; however, IREX reserves the right to accept and include late applications in the review and award process when it is considered within the best interest of IREX to do so and if applications that were received on time have not been opened and reviewed. Applications that are submitted late or incomplete run the risk of **not** being considered for review.

SECTION V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION:

Within 10 working days of the deadline for submitting applications, IREX will hold a technical review committee (Note: Under unusual circumstances the technical review committee may be delayed). Throughout the evaluation process, the USAID Media Program shall take steps to ensure that members of the committee do not have any conflicts of interest or the appearance of such regarding the organizations whose applicants are under review. An individual shall be considered to have the appearance of a conflict of interest "if that person, or that person's spouse, partner, child, close friend or relative works for or is negotiating to work for or has a

financial interest (including being an unpaid member of a Board of Directors) in any organization that submitted an application currently under the panel's review." Members of the committee shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from parties to the awards.

Verification of the application submission requirements will be conducted by the USAID Media Program's grants manager. Awards will be made within one month after the technical evaluation committee completes its review.

The application will be evaluated according to the evaluation criteria set out below. Negotiations may be conducted with shortlisted applicants.

Evaluation Criteria:

a. Technical Merit 40 points

- Relevance to program goals
- Sustainability / long term benefit of grant
- Anticipated impact on the organization's ability to deliver fact-based, quality reporting
- Evidence demonstrating that the equipment is necessary and required to achieve the stated objective.

b. Feasibility and Cost Effectiveness: 20 points

- Are costs reasonable, allowable, and allocable, according to the budget guidelines?
- Is the proposal cost effective and a reasonable use of funds?

c. Organizational capacity: 40 points

- Technical capacity of the organization (including human and technical resources)
- Adherence to professional and ethical standards. The grant review committee reserves the right to request further assessment of shortlisted applicants by the Georgian Charter for Journalistic Ethics.
- Written property management procedures (organization's inventory system, organization's internal policies regarding disposition of equipment, how the organization will ensure adequate safeguards to prevent loss, damage or theft of the equipment used under the in-kind award).
- Capacity to adhere to USAID financial guidelines.

Applicants with an average score of less than 70 of the 100 available points will be automatically rejected.

During the review of shortlisted applicants, the Media Program reserves the right to conduct on-site visits to the media company. This visit aims to familiarize the reviewing team with the enterprise processes, facilitate interviews, and administer assessment of needs as part of the evaluation process.

Section VI: AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

The recommendation or selection of an application in accordance with established procedures does not guarantee an award. All applicants must demonstrate that they possess, or can obtain, the necessary management competence to practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided.

A successful applicant can expect to receive an Award Letter, signed by the program. The award letter will be addressed to the organization's point of contact as stated in the application. Applicants that were not successful can expect a letter explaining the reason for their unsuccessful application.

Following the Award Letter, final negotiations will take place before the signing of a Subaward agreement.

Reporting Procedures:

A description of reporting requirements will be included in the Subaward Agreement. The types of reporting required, along with the schedule of reporting, will depend on the Subaward type and project duration. Reporting forms will be provided to Subaward recipients. Types of reporting will include the following:

A brief program report to be submitted during project implementation according to a schedule described in the Subaward agreement. This report will include a description of progress made during the period, problems in project implementation; actions taken to overcome them; and activities planned for the next period.

A brief final program report will describe how the project objectives and goals were reached, results of the project, and problems and solutions during implementation. Final program report should include an inventory report, including description of the property, quantity received, a serial number or other identification number, the current value of the property, the location, use and condition of the property.

Links to all content produced under the grant and associated social media posts. These links will be shared immediately after they have been broadcast and as a list included in the final program report.

SECTION VII - OTHER INFORMATION

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of the USAID Media Program, nor does it commit the USAID Media Program to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

The USAID Media Program 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 RFA.

Annex 1: Mandatory Standard Provisions

[2 CFR 200](#), [2 CFR 700](#)

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

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