



Annual Program Statement

Funding Opportunity Title:	Major Events Response Coverage Initiative
Announcement Type:	Annual Program Statement
Funding Opportunity Number:	APS 2024-04
Issuance Date:	April 24, 2024
Questions for First Round of Evaluations Due By:	Questions are accepted on a rolling basis.
Deadline for Submission of Concept Papers:	Concept papers are accepted on a rolling basis.
Final Closing Date:	October 24, 2024
Submit Concept Papers to:	contact.mp.ge@irex.org

This Annual Program Statement (APS) is to solicit funding applications. USAID Media Program through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking concept papers first and then full applications from media outlets to support objective, fact-based coverage of evolving and breaking national news stories that provide comprehensive and timely non-partisan news about urgent, breaking news events of national significance, in a range of news formats. Concept notes should only be submitted when a major event has occurred or is known to be about to occur.

Media outlets may propose creating a series of stories, visual illustrations, investigative materials, or employing other approaches to offer the public detailed, unbiased, and fact-based information on urgent, breaking news events of national significance. This grant pool is specifically intended to expand fact-based news coverage of such events and does not seek to support advocacy campaigns of any type.

In the digital age, when such events occur, fake and unverified information spreads rapidly, the public needs accurate and thorough information to inform their knowledge and understanding. Many media outlets may lack sufficient resources for such coverage, which could involve travel to various regions, or assigning staff members to handle these unplanned stories.

The USAID Media Program encourages creative ideas and innovative approaches to media, digital journalism, graphics, and storytelling.

Competition for this APS will be open for six months. Concept papers will be reviewed on a continuing basis. It is possible that all the available funds for this APS may be allocated early in the program.

Key Information:

- Available funding for individual projects: up to \$20,000
- Grant duration: Up to 10 months

The USAID Media Program may choose to fully fund or incrementally fund the selected application(s). The 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. IREX reserves the right to close this APS once available funding is no longer sufficient to fund new awards.

Selection Process

USAID Media Program will review candidates for the grants using a two-stage process.

Applicants must first submit a short concept note, describing their project in brief.

If a concept note is approved, USAID Media Program will contact applicants and provide instructions and templates to complete a grant application. Applicants should expect feedback that will help them clarify and improve their ideas.

Awardees will be expected to share evaluation results and key lessons learned. Applicants must demonstrate success in addressing USAID Media Program development objectives outlined below.

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

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 amount of funding available for individual projects is \$20,000 with a period of up to 10 months. The amount of available funding is subject to change.

B. Anticipated Start Date of this Subaward and Performance Period

The USAID Media Program anticipates the start date upon award with a performance period of up to 10 months.

C. Subaward Type

The USAID Media Program anticipates awarding Fixed Amount Awards (hereafter called Agreement) 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 organizations and persons have a fair opportunity to submit applications for funding.

Eligible organizations include:

- Georgian nongovernment organizations with a strong track record of media publishing and a wide audience
- Georgian national, regional, and local online media

The applicant must meet the following requirements:

- 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.
- 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.
- The applicant is not debarred from receiving US government funding.
- Located in Georgia.

SECTION IV- APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Application Process

The USAID Media Program will review proposals using a two-stage process. Applicants must first submit a concept paper of up to two pages to the USAID Media Program before submitting a full proposal. Concept papers must meet the identified needs of this solicitation in accordance with the instructions in section B below.

Please note the following:

Do not submit a full proposal unless requested by the USAID Media Program. Only upon receipt of positive USAID Media Program feedback on the concept paper is the applicant requested to develop a full proposal for consideration, using the criteria below.

Do not submit a concept note unless it specifically responds to a large, nationally significant or emergency event that is unfolding. This grant category is aimed at assisting media to cover such events only.

The concept paper must be submitted to contact.mp.ge@irex.org

B. Concept Paper

In the first stage, all interested applicants are required to submit a short concept paper no longer than two pages that is specific, complete and concise. The concept paper should demonstrate the significance of the proposed coverage and the capacity of the organization to deliver it with respect to achieving the goals of this program. The instructions for developing the concept paper should take into account the instructions listed in the next section.

Concept papers will be reviewed in terms of responsiveness to this APS, appropriateness of subject matter, and creativity. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their proposed work will contribute to USAID Media Program Objective 3, which aims to support initiatives that increase the availability of civically relevant, fact-based, independent sources of information.

[Concept Paper Instructions](#)

The concept paper must be submitted via the provided template, answering all questions indicated.

The USAID Media Program will contact selected applicants to request a full proposal based on the information provided in the concept paper.

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C. Application Process

If a concept paper is approved, the USAID Media Program will contact applicants and provide instructions and templates to complete an application.

Do not submit a full proposal unless requested by the USAID Media Program. Only upon receipt of positive feedback on the concept paper is the applicant requested to put together a full proposal for consideration, based on instructions provided by USAID Media Program.

If your application is selected for funding, you will be expected to get a Unique Entity Identifier number (UEI) before signing the contract. 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.

If you already have it, you will not need to receive it again. *Restrictions:*

- Subaward funds provided under the terms of this RFA 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)(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) 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 according to the criteria set out below. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their proposed work will contribute to availability of civically relevant, fact-based, independent sources of information and provide the public with accurate and thorough information on a major breaking event of national significance.

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 within the timeframe of the APS? [Refer to Section IV]

SECTION VI - PROJECT CONTACTS

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

1. Tamar Rukhadze (trukhadze@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 the 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.