



USAID | CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Issuance Date: May 23, 2012
Questions due date: June 4, 2012, 10 AM, Almaty Time
Closing Date: June 25, 2012
Closing Time: 10 AM, Almaty Time

Subject: Request for Applications No.: RFA-176-12-000007, Development Through Regional Cooperation

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The United States Government (USG), as represented by the United States Agency for International Development Mission to Central Asian republics is seeking applications from local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGOs), local For-Profit Organizations, local Colleges and Universities to implement a three year project entitled "Development Through Regional Cooperation". The authority for the RFA is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

The Recipient will be responsible for ensuring achievement of the program objectives. Please refer to Section I, the "Funding Opportunity Description" for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID intends to provide approximately \$3.9 million in total USAID funding allocated over the three year period of performance. USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

Pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the grant program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (22 CFR 226, OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organization, OMB Circular A-21 for universities, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for-profit organizations), may be paid under the agreement when awarded. For local NGOs the Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental Recipients will apply. Copies of these documents can be accessed via the USAID website: <http://www.usaid.gov>.

Applications received after the deadline will not be considered unless the reason for delayed submission is deemed justified or it is in the best interests of the Agency to waive this requirement.

For the purposes of this program, this RFA is being issued and consists of this cover letter and the following sections:

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For the purposes of this RFA, the term "Grant" is synonymous with "Cooperative Agreement"; "Grantee" is synonymous with "Recipient"; and "Grant Officer" is synonymous with "Agreement Officer".

If you decide to submit an application, it must be received by the closing date and time indicated at the top of this cover letter at the place designated below for receipt of applications.

Applicants are requested to submit both technical and cost portions of their applications in separate volumes in electronic format (email). Applications and modifications thereof shall be submitted electronically with the name and address of the applicant and RFA-176-12-000007 inscribed thereon, to: AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov

Award will be made to the responsible applicant(s) whose application(s) best meet the objectives set forth in this RFA.

If it is determined that the answer to any question(s) is of sufficient importance to warrant notification to all prospective recipients, a Questions and Answer document, and/or if needed, an amendment to the RFA, will be issued. Therefore, questions should be submitted no later than June 4, 2012, 10 AM (Almaty Time) to Ms. Ragheda Rabie, Agreement Officer via email at AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov.

Pre-application conference:

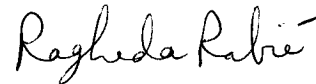
USAID/CAR will be hosting a pre-application conference on TBD, 2012, time: 9:30 am – 12:00 pm (local time). Location: "USAID/CAR, Kazibek bi 41, Almaty, Kazakhstan. Participants are highly encouraged to please respond with a reservation to TBD by COB TBD, 2012 at TBD or by phone at +7-7272-500041 ext. TBD.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. In addition, final award of any resultant grant cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal USAID procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award.

This RFA is being posted through www.grants.gov. This RFA and any future amendments can be downloaded from this website (www.grants.gov). It is the responsibility of the recipient of the application document to ensure that it has been received from www.grants.gov in its entirety. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

If there are any problems in downloading the RFA, please contact Ms. Natalia Portnyagina at nportnyagina@usaid.gov. Applicants should retain for their records one copy of all enclosures which accompany their application.

Sincerely,



Ragheda Rabie
Agreement Officer

SECTION I – FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. TITLE

Development Through Regional Cooperation

B. PURPOSE

The project will focus on creating a dialogue space where civil society groups from different countries of Central Asia can discuss issues relevant to their everyday work, share information, collaborate in training and networking, and conduct joint advocacy activities. Specifically, the central purpose of this project is to strengthen and/or build capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Central Asian region, so that they can effectively participate in a dialogue with their respective government counterparts on all aspects of national and regional democratic debate and policy-making. The regional platform created under this regional project will be available for information exchange and networking for CSOs from Afghanistan, Pakistan and other countries of the South Asia region.

The objectives of this program are:

- Objective 1: Strengthen the institutional capacity of civil society organizations to promote dialogue and coordination mechanisms within civil society and between civil society groups, with a focus on CSOs located in remote and disadvantaged areas and demographic groups in individual Central Asian countries
- Objective 2: Promote networking and comparative research at the regional level to increase cooperation over issues of mutual interest, such as the environment, women's issues, anti-trafficking, or economic development
- Objective 3: Create a sustainable mechanism, such as a virtual platform, for CSOs in the region that could serve as an information portal and list serve beyond the life of the project, for country-specific advocacy groups to share information and tools that can be helpful in their work

C. BACKGROUND

Over the years USAID/CAR has demonstrated a sustained commitment to CSO issues in Central Asia. Through regional large-scale program initiatives beginning in 1994, USAID supported the initial phase of CSO development in different Central Asian countries following the break-up of the former Soviet Union by building the basic capacity of these organizations to unite around specific issues and advocate on the behalf of their respective constituencies. USAID's goal when launching the CSO Support Initiative for Central Asia in Kazakhstan (1994-2000) was to support the civil society sector as broadly as possible. This program was focused on providing support to a large number of civic groups.

In 2000 a newly designed USAID Program of Civil Society Development for the Central Asian Republics (2000-2003) shifted from direct service provision to the CSO community to intensive capacity building for a network of civil society support centers in different regions of the country. The program was then responding to the growing recognition of the need to ensure a sustainable, localized civil society support infrastructure which meets the needs of the growing civil society sectors in Central Asian republics. By the end of 2003, this program had created a network of regional civil society support centers in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. These civil society support centers provided regular services such as basic capacity training, grant management and community mobilization to CSOs in their respective localities. As reported by the 2009 NGO Sustainability Index, civil society support centers are still operational and sustainable in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and to some degree in Tajikistan.

In 2003, the Civil Society Support Initiative (2003-2006) was launched by USAID in the region. This program focused on: (1) customized training, technical assistance and mentoring of the civil society support centers in the regions and (2) the establishment of an umbrella association of civil society support centers in capital cities. In addition, the program provided small grants to CSOs around the country for advocacy activities. Currently, two umbrella organizations created with USAID assistance under this project – Association of Regional Civil Society Support Centers in Almaty and Bishkek – are operational and provide a range of services to CSOs in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

D. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Based on internal assessments conducted by USAID, the CSO sectors in each of the five countries have evolved and diverged significantly in the last five years, both in terms of their breadth (geographical, sectoral, and popular footprint) and depth (the institutional strength and sustainability of civic organizations). This project aims to address three major interconnected issues or gaps that emerged in the CS sector throughout the region since the cessation of large-scale USAID regional civil society programs.

The first issue is a so called “generation gap.” Many leaders from the older generation of CSO leaders that emerged in the early 1990s have retired, emigrated, or left the CSO sector. The newly emerged generation of civil society leaders, unlike their predecessors, speaks their own indigenous languages (increasingly with little knowledge of Russian) and have benefited neither from the professional and academic networks that were created during Soviet times nor from the capacity building projects supported by USAID in later 1990s and early 2000s.

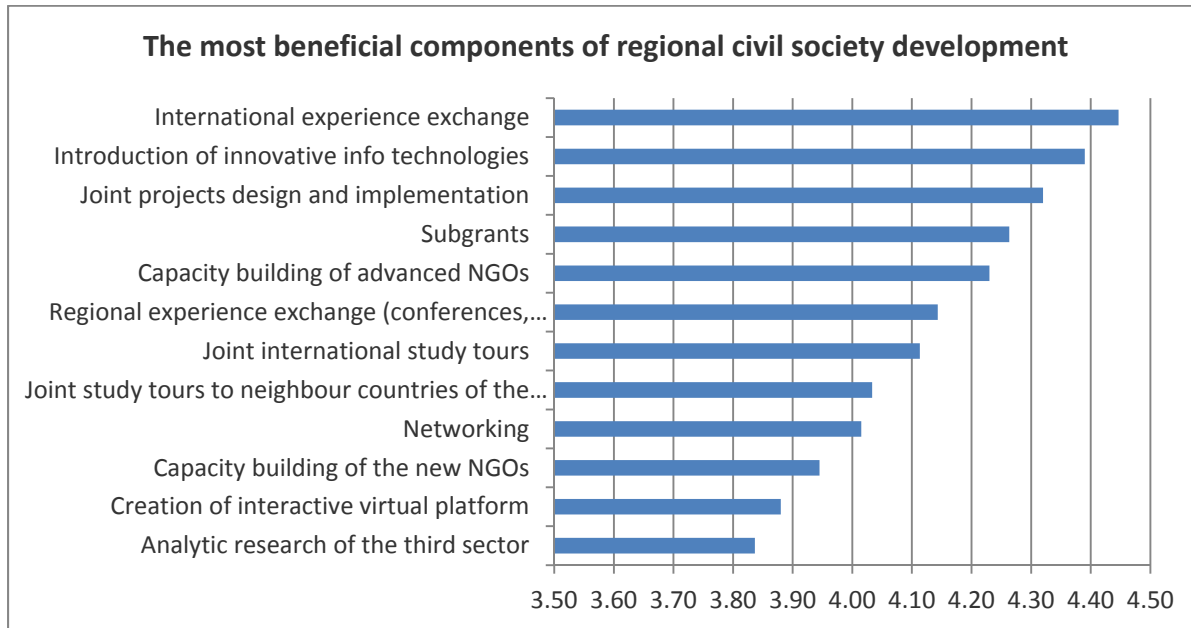
The second major gap is the disconnect between the “first generation” CSOs based in the capitals and the more recently emerged CSOs mainly concentrated in rural and remote areas. As a result, these newly established CSOs are not able to take advantage of the resources, information and expertise available in the cities and remain isolated and limited in terms of their projects and scale of interventions.

The third issue is the gradual disappearance of venues for regional exchange and collaboration between CSOs. Newly emerged civil society leaders are lacking the resources and sustainable venues for information exchange, joint activities and comparative research with their counterparts in other cities and other Central Asian countries. This isolation has damaged CSOs’ ability to respond to challenges and opportunities, many of which are shared across the different Central Asian countries. It is therefore absolutely critical that the sharing of experience and expertise, which now occurs sporadically, be systematized through the establishment of new networks of CSOs and the creation of a database of existing and new resources and materials on organizational development and civil society trends in Central Asia. Previous attempts to generate regional civil society support infrastructure largely ceased when the international organization implementing the effort terminated its program(s).

In mid-December 2011, the USAID/CAR Democracy and Governance Office (DGO) conducted a survey of active CSOs in Central Asia to assess their needs and current issues. The overall goal of the survey was to ascertain the views of CSO representatives on regional civil society cooperation and to define the most acute regional problems facing civil society in Central Asia. The target groups of the survey were representatives of CSOs with different specializations from the five countries of Central Asia. The total number of respondents was 567. Although the survey results cannot be considered statistically representative, they provide useful insights in the needs of CSOs in the five Central Asian countries.

This research identified key challenges facing the civil society sector, including: organizational development issues (including a lack of education and experience among CSOs’ directors and staff); a lack of strategic planning and legal literacy; weak monitoring and evaluation systems; a continuing failure to secure financial sustainability; and problems with financing administrative expenses, including office rent. Additionally, many respondents identified the issue of poor regional cooperation and information exchange among CSO from different republics of Central Asia as a key problem in the sector. Survey participants also identified the most beneficial components of regional civil society development programming (See Table 1).

Table 1.



Thus based on many years of experience in civil society development in the region and consultations with CSOs, including the above-mentioned survey, USAID/CAR Development Through Regional Cooperation project activities will be bifurcated to meet the country-specific needs and challenges faced by CSOs in each participating country on the one hand, while simultaneously supporting regional activities that will encourage networking and build on experiences and lessons learned in the region, other CIS countries and elsewhere.

E. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND ACTIVITIES

The main goal of this activity is to strengthen networking and dialogue through which civil society groups from different countries of Central Asia can help to improve each other’s organizational development, generate joint positions and shared expertise on key policy issues, share information, and conduct joint advocacy activities. The project is designed to provide a flexible response to the needs of CSOs at different stages of organizational development, and contingent on each country context.

Through the two-tiered approach, consisting of country level and regional level activities, the project seeks to address capacity building of targeted local CSOs of individual Central Asian countries and to offer a regional platform to complement these efforts through exchange and sharing of ideas. Local level activities will depend on country specific context and needs and will range from institutional and advocacy capacity building training to promoting local initiatives in the area of good governance and constructive citizen engagement.

This project will focus on developing a model for civil society development to support organizations operating in more remote localities or servicing disadvantaged populations, in order to improve the capacity of partners who have traditionally not benefited from international assistance programs. For the purposes of this project, disadvantaged populations may include religious and ethnic minorities, the rural and urban poor, labor migrants, people with disabilities, women, men, and youth, depending on each country context. In order to develop this model the project will be piloted in select target localities or populations depending on each country’s context, with a possibility for expansion should it prove successful.

In Kazakhstan the Development Through Regional Cooperation project will focus on strengthening the capacity of initiative groups and CSOs in Kyzylorda oblast, which includes the capital city of Kyzylorda, small towns of Aralsk and Qazaly and villages of the oblast. The worsening ecology of the region makes living conditions in Kyzylorda quite difficult and contributes heavily to deteriorating health and degradation of the environment for the residents of this region. In this area of Kazakhstan, with a high rural poverty rate, the role of civil society to advocate on social,

economic and political issues important to the women, men, and youth of this Kazakh-language and fairly remote geographic area is crucial.

In Tajikistan, USAID has identified the Khatlon region as a pilot location for the project. This region is a target location for the Presidential Initiative on Food Security “Feed the Future” and will rely on strong CSOs for partnership during the implementation of the program. The region’s proximity to Afghanistan, poor social and economic indicators as compared to other parts of the country, and relatively high density of population makes this region important for assistance projects.

Given the similarities in approach to creating a framework of civil society strengthening in disadvantaged locations in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, it is expected that the implementer will be able to conduct a comparative analysis of these two frameworks in order to improve them and to develop best practices in this area of work.

In Uzbekistan the project will focus more on selected topics including environmental protection, youth, disability and women’s issues rather than on specific geographic areas. These issues all concern disadvantaged demographic groups and populations, and were identified by CSOs and international donors in a series of consultations with USAID. If this pilot approach of working with issue-based CSOs delivers positive results, it will be utilized with other CSOs throughout the country. Experience of other donors shows that the most effective way to collaborate with CSOs throughout Uzbekistan is through a combination of two approaches: the National Association of CSOs (NANNOUz) and direct partnership with CSOs on a grass-root level. A partnership with NANNOUz will ease access to the local government bodies and civil society players as it has more than 400 member CSOs and CSO resource centers in the majority of the regions in Uzbekistan.

Unlike Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, where certain localities will benefit from the project, in Turkmenistan, similarly to Uzbekistan, the activities will focus on capacity building of the CSOs working on the long-term and short term initiatives in the areas of environmental protection, women, youth, education and disability. These issues were identified by CSOs in Turkmenistan as key channels for engaging with local authorities at the local and national levels on social partnership issues. The benefiting CSOs may be located in any geographic area of the country and be at any stage of development. Assistance will be provided to CSOs that are willing to engage in advocacy and community development activities.

Following are the overall objectives of the Development Through Regional Cooperation project:

Objective 1. Strengthen the institutional capacity of civil society organizations to promote dialogue and coordination mechanisms within civil society and between civil society groups, with a focus on CSOs located in remote and disadvantaged areas and demographic groups in individual Central Asian countries.

The project shall include activities to improve the organizational capacity of civil society organizations through training and technical support, in order to increase the ability of CSOs from remote locations or representing disadvantaged populations to organize and communicate within their constituencies, to plan and manage internal operations (boards, budgets, financial management, personnel, systems), and to build productive external relationships (with government, donors, private sector, and other CSOs). Although each country narrative below will provide details on remote locations or disadvantaged populations that will be targeted through this project, the broad definition of disadvantaged populations in the context of this project may include religious and ethnic minorities, the rural and urban poor, labor migrants, people with disabilities, women, men, and youth.

Kazakhstan:

Under this objective the project will support civil society organizations located in the Kyzylorda oblast of Kazakhstan. The implementer will be expected to develop a model or framework of engagement and capacity building for rural CSOs and community groups. The model will consist of several components on organizational development and advocacy issues of importance to CSOs in that area, including but not limited to registration, management, communications, and coalition-building. The model could be later revised to include new components and elements for emerging CSOs. The project is expected to create a network of local CSO trainers in the Kyzylorda oblast and provide them with informational and technical support to increase access to CSO management materials in this geographic area (the capital city of Kyzylorda and small towns of Aralsk and Qazaly.) The project will be expected to foster collaboration between larger city-based CSOs and initiative groups and community organizations from the villages of the oblast.

Illustrative activities

- Create an inventory of CSOs and initiative groups in Kyzylorda region;
- Develop and award small grants to CSOs advocating on social, economic, and political issues in Kyzylorda;
- Develop training module(s) or manual(s) on basic organizational development and advocacy principles in Russian and particularly in Kazakh for rural organizations;
- Provide training and exchange programs to CSO leaders of both genders from Kyzylorda and other town and villages of the oblast to other cities in Kazakhstan or to other Central Asian countries;
- Conduct a conference of Kyzylorda based CSOs with the local government of Kyzylorda providing an opportunity for constructive dialogue on issues relevant for this geographic area.

Tajikistan:

Under this objective the project will focus on strengthening CSOs based in the southern part of Tajikistan, Khatlon Oblast. Similar to Kazakhstan, the implementer will be expected to develop a model or framework of engagement and capacity building for rural CSOs and community groups. In addition to working with a broad range of CSOs and community groups, the project aims to development the capacity of disabled people's organizations. This framework will be used to provide organizational development assistance and strengthen linkages and partnerships among these disadvantaged CSOs with counterparts from the capital city of Dushanbe and other parts of the country in order to provide venues for policy dialogue. CSO partners will be encouraged to collaborate with their counterparts in areas bordering Afghanistan and initiate cross-border projects. Through a small grants program, the project will seek to increase the role of CSOs in local governance and decentralization issues, coordinating with other USAID-funded decentralization efforts in the process, build the capacity of CSOs working on disability and other social issues by linking them to stronger advocacy groups in Dushanbe and the region, and to promote a more active role of CSO to conduct advocacy work, promote citizen engagement and initiate policy dialogue at the local level. The project aims to disseminate accumulated resources and best practices in the area of civil society development through publications and workshops.

Illustrative activities

- Provide training on financial and organizational capacity for selected CSOs based in the Khatlon Oblast in the southern part of Tajikistan;
- Encourage selected CSOs to partner with local businesses, state structures, other donors and stakeholders on the local level to leverage capital and resources;
- Conduct workshops and conferences to promote networking, exchange of ideas and policy dialogue among the selected CSOs in Khatlon with partners from Dushanbe and other regions of Tajikistan. This includes CSOs working on a variety of issues, including governance, disability, service provision and advocacy;
- Provide small grants for initiatives focusing on local governance issues, citizen participation in local decision making and other social, economic and political issues on the local level;
- Promote best practices and information sharing through publication of relevant materials, training manuals and research findings.

Turkmenistan:

As mentioned above, the Development Through Regional Cooperation project overall will focus on underserved geographic areas or groups of population. Unlike Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, where certain geographic areas will be targeted by the project, and similar to Uzbekistan, in Turkmenistan the activities will have a thematic, rather than geographic, focus. In Turkmenistan, the project will support capacity building of CSOs working on long-term and short term initiatives in the areas of environmental protection, women, youth, education and disability. An overarching theme for program activities in Turkmenistan will be the establishment and maintenance of independent space for CSOs to conduct outreach and provide support to vulnerable citizens, and to pursue social partnership initiatives with state bodies where possible. The project will provide knowledge, tools and resources to enhance civil society and government dialogue and to build sound social partnership to address selected issues. To increase the project's effectiveness it is expected that the project prime implementer will partner with a leading registered CSO in Turkmenistan in order to ensure nuanced knowledge of local dynamics and context, and to provide a sustainable institutional home for knowledge and resources developed as part of the project. Based on a competitive process, the project will provide differentiated training and grant support to CSOs depending on their organizational maturity and needs.

Illustrative activities

- Provide small grants to support a wide range of local initiatives focusing on social, economic and political issues;
- Provide differentiated, advanced and basic, capacity building training to leading and new CSOs on policy reform, advocacy skills, strategic planning and sound management skills of both genders;
- Increase CSOs awareness on the best international practice in the areas of law, environment, and social policy, including on issues of people with disability, youth, and gender;
- Increase access to information and public awareness through the support of existing resource centers;
- Strengthen the partnership of the three sectors through supporting round tables, small workshops and “tea/coffee” discussions;
- Create dialogue venues for discussion of corporate social responsibility in Turkmenistan;
- Support expertise and views exchange through organizing CSO events outside of the capital city;
- Increase CSOs communication skills with the various stakeholders (government, local governments, business, and mass media.)

Uzbekistan:

- In 2010 civil society development was been identified by the Government of Uzbekistan as a priority area for democratic reforms. Since then, the GOU has initiated three draft laws aimed at increasing the role of the civil society: the Law on Social Partnership, the Law on Public Control over the Executive Branch and the Law on Transparency of Government Agencies. Currently, CSOs in Uzbekistan operate and provide services on a range of social issues. The project activities under this objective will strengthen the capacity of CSOs that address specific issues including environmental protection, women, youth and people with disabilities. It is expected that the implementer of the project will establish a working relationship with the National Association of CSOs in Uzbekistan (NANNOUz) in order to facilitate the in-country training and capacity building component of the project. NANNOUz was established in 2005 to consolidate CSOs and represent their interests, and reports that it has more than 400 member organizations. Regional activities, however, will be open to CSOs that are not registered with the NANNOUz and could be recruited by the implementer directly. The in-country activities should focus on institutional development of CSOs and promoting constructive policy dialogue and partnership on the above-mentioned issues among key players of civil society including CSOs, mass media, private sector, and government agencies.

Illustrative activities

- Strengthen the financial and operational capacity of selected civil society organizations;
- Strengthen the institutional capacity of existing and support the creation of new NANNOUz resource centers in regions;
- Increase CSO participation in legislation drafting process;
- Increase public awareness of CSOs as key partners of the government in addressing good governance and social-economic issues;
- Conduct customized trainings on strategic planning, governance, fundraising, financial and grants management, etc.to the participating CSOs;
- Increase access to information and public awareness through the support of existing resource centers;
- Build CSO capacity in practical and effective communication techniques (working with mass media, public service announcements and social marketing);
- Establish strategic partnership with various stakeholders (CSOs, government, private sector, mass media, etc.) on issues of environment protection, women, youth, and people with disability.

Objective 2. Promote networking and comparative research at the regional level to increase cooperation over issues of mutual interest, such as the environment, women’s issues, anti-trafficking, or economic development

Regional:

Under this objective, the project will increase the networking of CSOs across Central Asia, in order to increase their ability to undertake and produce research and policy analysis and to promote partnerships and cooperation on the regional level. The project will create a systematic approach to regular regional CSO meetings and conferences that

will allow CSOs to find and establish partnership with organizations that are working in their specific area of expertise in the neighboring countries.

The implementer is expected to ensure an open and transparent process of CSO selection for regular regional events. At minimum, criteria for selecting CSO representatives will include the following:

- Good working relationships with other CSOs, including participation in existing coalitions and networks;
- Diverse geographic representation within participant groups in each country;
- Substantial technical expertise in their area of work;
- Special effort on balance among think-tanks, advocacy organizations, and community-based organizations;
- Rotation as appropriate.

The implementer is also expected to provide small research grants, organize regular regional workshops and conduct regional study tours to facilitate regional cooperation and networking. Each of the regional activities will have a small delegation from each country of the Central Asian region. Regional events will take place in different countries of Central Asia depending on the topic and country situation.

Although there will be no in-country activities in Kyrgyzstan in this project, the implementer is expected to directly recruit Kyrgyz participants to participate in regional events and networking.

Illustrative activities

- Organize an annual regional CSO conference;
- Train CSOs on capturing and documenting their data to measure the outcomes and impact;
- Organize regular issue-specific workshops or training events, for example, on women's issues, cross-border environmental issues, etc.;
- Organize regular study-tours on best practices in organizational development;
- Increase number of publications on CSO related issues that can be utilized by wider community of CSOs;
- Encourage participating CSOs to apply advocacy, research and research-related communication practices learned as a part of this program.

Objective 3. Create a sustainable space, specifically a virtual platform for CSOs in the region that could live as an information portal and list serve beyond the life of the project, for country-specific advocacy groups to share information and tools that can be helpful in their work

Regional:

Previous regional civil society support efforts have created a large knowledge base, including but not limited to, training modules, presentations, and databases. Unfortunately, access to these resources has tended to disappear in the past, as donor funding for specific projects ceased. As part of the project, a virtual platform will be created and updated regularly by the project that will include a database of all organizational development tools and success stories and all comparative and country-specific research on civil society issues in Central Asia. The website is expected to become a primary electronic database of all civil-society related materials in Central Asia. The website is supposed to include relevant sections in all state languages of Central Asia and serve as a forum for online discussion of issues of concern among NGOs in the Central Asia region. This virtual platform will utilize other social media tools existing in the region to encourage networking and exchanging information.

It is expected that the implementer will address the issue of sustainability of this virtual platform in their proposal to USAID.

Illustrative activities

- To create a virtual online platform, which will serve as a resource for CSOs in the region to network, exchange information and promote online discussions;
- To create a list-serve of CSOs in the region to link to other existing social media forums and tools in respective countries and the region to reach out to a wider community of CSOs;

The objectives specified above will guide the development and implementation of all project activities and against which the project impact will be assessed through the project's monitoring and evaluation plan.

Expected Results:

- Increased cooperation of CSOs on the regional level via broader access to and exchange of expertise, advocacy tools and resources
- At least 30 CSOs annually benefit from regional study tours
- Increased organizational development of at least 8 CSOs annually per country in remote or disadvantaged populations
- At least 3 advocacy initiatives per country per year carried out by CSOs in coalitions with other key stakeholders (media, businesses, private sector, state, etc.)
- Increased number of CSOs in remote and disadvantaged communities undertake their first advocacy projects
- Increased number of CSOs that disseminate information on their activities/accomplishments through traditional and new media tools;
- Virtual platform for CSOs in Central Asia created and provides a sustainable venue for regional CSO networking and cooperation
- Increased number of CSOs from all countries in the region have access to and benefit from project's produced publications and resources on civil society development
- At least 500 CSOs in the region subscribe to the list-serve and regularly contribute information to the virtual platform

F. LINK TO THE U.S. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

The activities outlined in this document support the Program Objective: Governing Justly and Democratically, Program Areas: Civil Society and Good Governance, and Program Element: Civic Participation.

The project will contribute to the U.S. Government Assistance Objectives in Central Asia by directly providing support to democratic institutions, open and transparent governance and respect for human rights. In addition, it will directly contribute to Development Objective #1: Enhanced Capacity for Transparent and Inclusive Governance of the USAID Central Asian Republics "Development Assistance Assessment and Strategic Focus" (White Paper).

This project contributes to the U.S. Government's Assistance Objective in each of the countries of Central Asia as follows:

- Kazakhstan: Increase the Capable Influence of Civil Society on Public Policy Decision-Making at the National Level. The program also supports the Mission Strategic Resource Plan's (MSRP) Goal : Supporting Democratic Institutions and Practices;
- Kyrgyzstan: Strengthen Democratic Processes. The program also supports MSRP goal: A more representative government, with a developing Parliamentary system, improves access to justice and is increasingly able to deliver citizen service;
- Tajikistan: Improve Local Governance at the Jamoat Level. The Program also supports the MSRP Goal: Encourage expansion of democracy;
- Turkmenistan: Citizens Play a Greater Role in Civil Society. The program also supports MSRP Goal: Promoting effective, accountable governance;
- Uzbekistan: To increase citizens role's in governance. The program also supports MSRP Goal: Advancing democracy, governance and civil society.

G. USAID AND OTHER DONOR RELATED ACTIVITIES

USAID and other international donor programs are actively involved in direct or indirect civil society development in Central Asia. An extensive list of USAID and other donors programs related to civil society issues can be found in Annex 3.

H. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

a. Gender

Gender is a social construct that refers to relations between and among the sexes, based on their relative roles. It encompasses the economic, political, and socio-cultural attributes, constraints, and opportunities associated with being male or female. Gender is dynamic, and can vary across cultures and over time. For these reasons, gender roles should not be assumed but investigated.

As part of the design of any proposed activity, the Applicant should assess and identify gender issues which impact the participation of men and women equally in the participation of this program. The Applicant is expected to examine cultural perceptions, economic barriers, and other factors which impact women and men in terms of access, use and participation in the work of the civil society arena.

Further, the Applicant should ensure that gender issues are suitably integrated into various program components and is required to undertake specific efforts to ensure that activities do not discriminate against or disproportionately benefit either gender. To the greatest extent possible, the Applicant shall seek to encourage the equal participation of men and women in all aspects of this program.

As part of the application submission, the Applicant must provide USAID with an outline of potential gender issues that might be encountered during the implementation of this program and how these issues will be addressed during the course of this program.

Specifically, the Applicant must respond to the below questions:

1. "How will this project affect women-run CSOs?"
2. "Will/How women and men have access to knowledge, training and information sharing?"

Applicants can find the 2010 Gender Assessment for USAID/Central Asian Republics on the USAID public website at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/pubs/CAR_Gender_Assessment_Mar-2010_508.pdf

b. Participating CSO Selection Criteria

The CSO selection criteria for both country-specific and regional are expected to be fair, transparent and competitive. Selection of CSOs for regional events will not be limited to those partners directly involved in the project, but will be drawn from a wider community of active CSOs. Applicants are expected to provide USAID with specific details on how they will identify and select CSO participants in each country of Central Asia for (1) small grants and research scholarships, (2) country-specific and regional trainings and (3) country-specific and regional CSO conferences.

c. Sub-implementer Selection Criteria and Project Management.

It is expected that a potential applicant, a prime implementer of this program, will identify and conduct activities through lead sub-implementers in each country of Central Asia, with the exception of Kyrgyzstan. Recruiting participants from Kyrgyzstan for regional events will be done by the prime implementer in Almaty. As the sub-implementing partners are key to the success of this program it is essential to select the right CSO partners in each country of Central Asia from the outset. USAID anticipates that sub-implementers proposed to implement this program will have previous experience in working on civil society development in their respective countries, advanced understanding of USAID policies and regulations, and capacity to issue sub-grants in their respective country.

d. Persons with Disabilities.

In addition, the Applicants must be aware of USAID policies on reducing barriers to participation for persons with disabilities. As part of its application the implementer is expected to analyze and respond to potential issues that may reduce the participation of persons with disabilities in this program and suggest how program activities will ensure access for persons with disabilities and ways to measure compliance with this requirement. Applicants may want to consult persons with disabilities or organizations representing the disabled community to insure that the program design does not discriminate against nor present barriers that would prevent persons with disabilities from receiving services and participating fully in activities and programs.

I. MARKING AND BRANDING

All USAID funded foreign assistance (including programs, projects, activities, public communications, or commodities) must be communicated, promoted, and marked as coming from the American people through USAID. Specific communications and promotion measures shall be described in the “Branding Strategy” and “Branding Implementation Plan,” and specific marking will be described in the “Marking Plan” for the this award. Branding and marking under this award shall comply with the USAID Automated Directive System Chapter 320 Branding and Marking (ADS320). A Branding Implementation Plan and a Marking Plan are to be submitted by the applicants as part of the response to this RFA. The selected applicant’s Branding Implementation Plan and Marking Plan will be finalized in coordination with USAID and included in the cooperative agreement. In preparation of the branding implementation plan and the marking plan, the Applicant will use templates for these documents available at <http://centralasia.usaid.gov/page.php?page=article20>. Additional guidance is available at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding>. The cost application must incorporate the estimated cost of the proposed Branding Implementation and Marking Plan.

SECTION II – AWARD INFORMATION

A. ESTIMATE OF FUNDS AVAILABLE

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID intends to provide approximately \$3.9 million in total USAID funding for the life of the activity.

B. NUMBER AND TYPE OF AWARD CONTEMPLATED

USAID intends to award one cooperative agreement as a result of this RFA. USAID reserve the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

C. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The anticipated period of performance is 3 years with an estimated start date on/about October 2012 through October 2015.

D. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENTS

USAID/CAR will be substantially involved in the administration of the agreement to help the Recipient achieve the agreement objectives:

a) Approval of the Recipient's Work Plans:

The initial draft Annual Work Plan shall be submitted with the application under this RFA. The draft Work Plan must be finalized no later than 30 days after the award is made. The AOR must provide written comments on the draft Work Plan within three weeks of receipt and when the plan is finalized, the AOR will provide written approval.

Annual Work Plans for subsequent years are due to the AOR no later than 30 days prior to the end of the USG's fiscal year or approximately August 30th. Work plans may be submitted electronically. Upon acceptance of the work plan by the AOR, any substantial revisions to the plan shall require the written approval of the AOR.

The work plan should include a description of the activities to be completed during the year, the expected results, provide quantitative targets for all indicators outlined in the performance monitoring and evaluation plan (PMEP), list of commodities to be procured and key benchmarks to be met throughout the fiscal year and provide a timeline for the implementation of activities. The work plan shall include a detailed budget with a pipeline analysis of costs incurred and projections of costs for the life of the award implementation plan for achieving project outputs.

Regardless of the start date of this award, work plans will be adjusted to the fiscal calendar of October 1-September 30.

b) Approval of Specified Key Personnel: The Applicant shall propose Key Personnel positions for USAID approval. Key Personnel positions are limited to 5 individuals or 5% of the recipient's total team size, whichever is greater. All changes to specified Key Personnel will require approval of the Agreement Officer's Representative and the Agreement Officer.

The following personnel have been identified as key for the purposes of this program:

- Chief of Party (Regional Director)
- Deputy Chief of Party (Regional Deputy Director)
- Tajikistan Country Director
- Turkmenistan Country Director
- Uzbekistan Country Director

c) Approval of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP): Within 30 days of award, the recipient shall finalize the PMEP in conjunction with the AOR. The Work Plan must set forth a comprehensive PMEP that measures impact and progress toward achieving results over the life of the award. The PMEP must include indicators, targets, data sources and collection methods, baseline information, benchmarks and periodic evaluations, and data quality assessment reports. Data collected under the PMP shall be submitted with the final report. Regardless of the start date of this award, the PMEP will be adjusted to the fiscal calendar of October 1-September 30. As necessary, the PMEP may be updated each year of this award as part of the work plan approval process.

The Recipient shall adhere to the relevant ADS provisions with respect to monitoring and evaluation activities for the design and final program. The designed activity must include indicators against which results will be measured. These indicators are expected to include USG standard indicators and additional indicators as identified by the recipient in their application.

d) Agency and Recipient Collaboration as follows: USAID and recipient collaboration or joint participation, which includes one or more of the following:

- i. Collaborative involvement of selection of advisory committee members (USAID may also choose to become a member), if applicable;
- ii. USAID concurrence on the selection of sub-award recipients and/or the substantive technical/ programmatic provisions of sub-awards. Agreement Officer's Representative concurrence is required in the selection of any sub-award recipients and on the substantive provisions of these subawards.
- iii. USAID monitoring to permit direction and redirection because of interrelationships with other projects;
- iv. USAID authority to immediately halt a construction activity, if applicable.

e) Any involvement that results in a change in the program or approved budget must be approved by the Agreement Officer.

E. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the grant program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (22 CFR 226, OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organization, OMB Circular A-21 for universities, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for-profit organizations), may be paid under the grant.

F. AUTHORIZED GEOGRAPHIC CODE

The authorized geographic codes for procurement of goods and services under this grant are 937, and 110. Code 937 is defined as the United States, the cooperating/recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, and excluding prohibited sources. Code 110 is defined as the United States, the independent states of the former Soviet Union, or developing country, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source. Procurement of Agricultural commodities and related products, motor vehicles and pharmaceuticals is subject to the limitations in 22 CFR 228.19 and will require a waiver.

G. COST-SHARE

Cost share is defined by USAID as "contributions, both cash and in-kind, which are necessary and reasonable to achieve program objectives and which are verifiable from the recipient's records." Cost-sharing will be subject to 22 CFR 226.23 and the standard provision entitled "Cost-Sharing (Matching)" for non-U.S. NGOs.

H. PROGRAM INCOME

If the successful applicant(s) is/are a non-profit organization, any program income generated under the award(s) will be added to USAID funding (and any cost-sharing that may be provided), and used for program purposes. Pursuant to 22 CFR 226.82 "Program Income", if the successful applicant is a for-profit or commercial organization, any program income generated under the award will be deducted from the U.S. Government share of this award. Program income will be subject to the standard provision entitled "Program Income" for non-U.S. NGOs.

[END OF SECTION II]

SECTION III – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. APPLICANTS

All qualified local organizations are eligible to apply. USAID encourages applications from local organizations. USAID is particularly interested in applications which include coalitions or other partnership arrangements among local organizations that draw on each organization's unique skills. Assistance provided under this program is intended to develop and complement rather than to supplant local initiatives and resources.

USAID will not accept applications from individuals. All applicants must be a legally recognized organizational entity under applicable law. The following types of organizations may apply for funding under this RFA:

1. Local NGOs

To be eligible for this program, Local NGO applicants must:

1. Be a local Non-Governmental Organization organized under the laws of the cooperating country or under the laws of a country in the region of the proposed activity;
2. Have its principal place of business in the cooperating country or region;
3. Be managed by a governing body, the majority of whom are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the cooperating country or region; and
4. Be able to provide official documentation of their formal legal status as an NGO in the host country or in a country in the region.

2. Local For-Profit or Commercial Organizations

Local private for-profit organizations may apply for funding under this RFA. Foreign government-owned parastatal organizations from countries that are ineligible for assistance under the FAA or related appropriations acts are ineligible. Potential for-profit applicants should note that, pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, the payment of fee/profit to the prime recipient under grants and cooperative agreements is prohibited. However, if a prime recipient has a (sub)-contract with a for-profit organization for the acquisition of goods or services (i.e., if a buyer-seller relationship is created), fee/profit for the (sub)-contractor is authorized.

In addition, local private for-profit organizations shall meet the following:

1. Be a local for-profit Organization organized under the laws of the cooperating country or under the laws of a country in the region of the proposed activity;
2. Have its principal place of business in the cooperating country or region;
3. Be managed by a governing body, the majority of whom are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the cooperating country or region; and
4. Be able to provide official documentation of their formal legal status as in the host country or in a country in the region.

3. Local Colleges and Universities

Local colleges and universities may apply for funding under this RFA. USG and USAID regulations generally treat colleges and universities as NGOs, rather than governmental organizations; hence, both public and private colleges and universities are eligible.

In addition, Local Colleges and Universities shall meet the following:

1. Be a Local College and University organized under the laws of the cooperating country or under the laws of a country in the region of the proposed activity;
2. Have its principal place of business in the cooperating country or region;
3. Be managed by a governing body, the majority of whom are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the cooperating country or region; and
4. Be able to provide official documentation of their formal legal status in the host country or in a country in the region.

“New” Partners

USAID encourages applications from new partners. However, organizations that have not received U.S. Government funding in the past, will undergo a pre-award survey or audit before an award can be made. This process can delay the pending award, therefore, organizations should take this into account and plan their implementation dates and activities accordingly.

Other U.S. Government Agencies

Other USG agencies may not apply for funding under this RFA.

“Responsibility” of Applicant

In order for an award to be made, the Agreement Officer must make an affirmative determination that the applicant is “responsible,” as discussed in ADS 303.3.9. This means that the applicant must possess, or have the ability to obtain, the necessary management and technical competence to conduct the proposed program, and must agree to practice mutually agreed-upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided or funded by USAID.

In the absence of an affirmative “responsibility” determination, an award normally cannot be made to a recipient with a negative responsibility determination. However, in rare cases, an award can be made with “special award conditions” (i.e., additional non-standard award requirements designed to minimize the risk presented to USAID of making an award to an organization for which an affirmative determination of “responsibility” cannot be made), but only when it appears likely that the applicant can correct the deficiencies in a reasonable period.

B. COST-SHARE REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must:

1. Provide a cost-share match equivalent to or greater than 3 percent for LNGOs of the total project amount. The match may be in cash, in-kind, or a combination of both. All cash and in-kind contributions committed by partners must be documented;
2. If proposing a public-private alliance with an organization or business, provide a copy of informal or formal agreements stipulating cash and/or in-kind contributions.

[END OF SECTION III]

SECTION IV – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. POINT OF CONTACT

Any questions concerning this RFA should be submitted in writing to Ms. Ragheda Rabie, Agreement Officer via email at AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov not later than June 4, 2012, 10 AM (Almaty Time). Applicants should retain for their records one copy of all enclosures which accompany their application.

If there are problems in downloading the RFA, please contact Ms. Natalia Portnyagina, Negotiator, via email at nportnyagina@usaid.gov.

B. REQUIRED FORMS

All Applicants must submit the application using the SF-424 series, which includes the:

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
- SF-424A, Budget Information - Nonconstruction Programs, and
- SF-424B, Assurances - Nonconstruction Programs

Copies of these forms may be found at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>.

C. PRE-AWARD CERTIFICATIONS, ASSURANCES AND OTHER STATEMENTS OF THE RECIPIENT

In addition to the certifications that are included in the SF 424, local NGOs must provide the following certifications, assurances and other statements. Complete copies of these Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements may be found at <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>.

- a. A signed copy of the Certification and Disclosure forms for “Restrictions on Lobbying” (see 22 CFR 227);
- b. A signed copy of the “Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers” for covered assistance in covered countries;
- c. A signed copy of the “Certification Regarding Terrorist Funding”;
- d. A signed copy of “Key Individual Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking”
- e. Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants;
- f. All applicants must provide a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number;
- g. A signed copy of Key Individual Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking when applicable;
- h. A signed copy of Participant Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking, when applicable;

D. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Submit applications to the USAID/CAR Mission according to the instructions below.

1. **Electronic.** Applications and modifications thereof shall be submitted in two separate volumes (electronically): (a) technical and (b) cost applications. Email submissions must include the following in the subject line:
 - a. “Technical application under RFA RFA-176-12-000007, submitted by: [name of Applicant organization].”
 - b. “Cost application under RFA RFA-176-12-000007, submitted by: [name of Applicant organization].”
2. Send emails the following email address: AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov.
3. **Fax:** Faxed applications will not be accepted.

All applications received by the deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness to the specifications outlined in these guidelines and the application format. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this RFA. Failure to do so will be at the applicant's risk.

Each applicant shall provide the information required by this RFA. Applicants shall sign the application and print or type their name on the Cover Page of the technical and cost applications. Erasures or other changes must be initialed by the person signing the application. Applications signed by an agent shall be accompanied by evidence of that agent's authority, unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

Applicants who include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation purposes, should:

(a) Mark the title page with the following legend:

"This application includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the U.S. Government and shall not be duplicated, used, or disclosed - in whole or in part - for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, an award is awarded to this applicant as a result of - or in connection with - the submission of this data, the U.S. Government shall have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting award. This restriction does not limit the U.S. Government's right to use information contained in this data if it is obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in sheets; and

(b) Mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following legend:

"Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application."

The application should be prepared according to the structural format set forth below.

E. TECHNICAL APPLICATION FORMAT

Technical applications must not exceed **28** pages, utilizing Times New Roman 12-font size, single spaced. Cover Page, dividers, table of contents, annexes (e.g. performance monitoring and evaluation plan; personnel resumes; applicant past performance reports short-form, see Annex 2; certificates; forms; acronym list etc.) will not count toward the page limitation. Any pages that exceed the page limitation will not be furnished to the Evaluation Committee. There is no page limit on attachments or cost application.

The technical application should demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this project. Therefore it should be specific, complete and presented concisely. It should take into account and be arranged in the order of the technical evaluation criteria specified in Section V.

Application Contents: The Technical Application, at a minimum, shall contain the following:

- 1. Cover Page** (does not count toward the page limitation) A single page with the project title and RFA number, the names of the organizations/institutions involved, and the lead or primary Applicant clearly identified. Any proposed sub grantees (or implementing partners) should be listed separately. In addition, the Cover Page should provide a contact person for the prime Applicant, including the individual's name (both typed and his/her signature), title or position with the organization/institution, address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address. State whether the contact person is the person with authority to bind the organization, and if not, that person should also be listed with contact information. If applicable, the TIN and DUNS numbers of the Applicant shall also be listed on the cover page.
- 2. Table of Contents** (does not count toward the page limitation): Listing all parts of the technical application, with page numbers and attachments.
- 3. Executive Summary (2 pages):** Briefly describe a) the proposed goals, b) the key activities and anticipated results, and c) managerial resources of the Applicant, and how the overall project will be managed.
- 4. Technical Approach (15 pages):**
In this section, applicants are not to merely repeat what is already described in this RFA. Applicants shall describe how they propose to achieve the project objective(s) and how the project will make a significant contribution towards achieving the strategic objectives and areas for action identified in the project description. Applicants shall elaborate in their technical approach the most effective way to develop and realize the objectives of this project including the reasonable course of action and tasks that are relevant to the current needs of Kazakhstan,

Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Applicants should present a convincing and compelling articulation of their technical approach.

At a minimum, the approach shall address the following:

- Discussion of the concrete expected results and how they will be achieved, including results and interventions applicants believe should be prioritized and why;
- Discussion on the coordination with other USAID activities, stakeholders and other donor activities. Applicants should provide specific examples on how to capitalize on possible synergies with other implementing partners, and therefore strengthen the impact of “Development Through Regional Cooperation”;
- Strategy for the phase-out and sustainability of project activities and impact; Substantive attention on how applicants will incorporate gender considerations and other cross-cutting themes under the USAID Mission Strategy into the implementation of the program ; Implementation timelines schedule; and
- The proposed plan for effective rapid launch of activities.

As an annex to this section, applicants shall submit a draft Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP). The PMEP must explain how the applicant proposes to monitor the project performance and measure indicators and impact. The PMEP must include results, indicators, targets, consisting of data sources, frequency of data collection, collection methods, data verification, and responsible parties of data collection, baseline information, and benchmarks. The applicant must discuss the ways in which the collection, analysis and reporting of performance data will be managed under the project. All data collected must be disaggregated. It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that all costs, if any, related to the implementation of the PMEP are included in the cost proposal.

The application shall also include as an annex, a draft Annual Work Plan for the first year, including a detailed Implementation Schedule for achieving expected program results. The applicant is encouraged to propose innovative implementation mechanisms to reach the desired results and an aggressive but realistic schedule of performance milestones as steps toward achieving proposed results. The implementation plan should clearly outline the links between the proposed results, conceptual approach, and performance milestones, and should include a realistic timeline for achieving semi-annual, annual, and end-of-program results.

5. Key Personnel (5 pages)

Applicants are expected to propose five key personnel positions to include a Chief of Party and other key senior professionals. The evaluation will assess the appropriateness of professional backgrounds of the proposed key personnel, their work experience related to the project components, management qualifications, and experience in the Former Soviet Union and/or Central Asia.

1. Chief of Party: The Chief of Party will be the primary point of contact with USAID/CAR with regard to day-to-day activity implementation and management matters relating to the Agreement. The Chief of Party must have overall responsibility for assuring that all assistance provided under the award is technically sound and appropriate for the needs to be addressed and for adequately managing and supervising the work of the regional team and country teams.

The Chief of Party should possess the following:

- Relevant experience in managing civil society programs, with a minimum of 5 years in a senior management position.
 - Excellent negotiation, conflict prevention and resolution skills and the ability to lead and build consensus, cooperation, and coalitions among individuals with competing interests.
 - Technical experience in several of the following areas: lobbying, advocacy, coalition-building, grant management, media relations, and organizational capacity building. Experience mentoring staff and organizations and transferring skills and knowledge.
 - Ability to coordinate with other donor programs on civil society and seek synergies, and complementarities to maximize results.
 - Advanced English language skills.
2. Other Senior Professionals (Deputy Chief of Party, Tajikistan Country Director, Uzbekistan Country Director, and Turkmenistan Country Director): Applicants should propose sufficiently qualified and experienced professional staff to technically support project implementation and local office operations throughout the project.

As an annex to this section, applicants shall submit resumes for the key personnel. The resumes must be no more than two pages each and should include at least three professional references with current telephone numbers or email addresses for each reference. Each resume shall be accompanied by a SIGNED letter of commitment from each candidate indicating his/her (a) availability to serve in the stated position on a specific date and for a definitive term of service and (b) agreement to the compensation levels as set forth in the cost proposal. Please note that documentation that reflects an exclusive relationship between an individual and an applicant is NOT requested and should NOT be submitted.

6. Management Plan and Organizational Capacity (3 pages):

The applicant should have experience in civil society development and be able to propose a staffing/teaming structure which will provide a wide range of strategic and technical assistance to grantees at varying levels. The applicant shall propose an organizational arrangement that clearly demonstrates an effective mechanism for managing project resources and working with partners. The applicant must provide an organizational chart.

This section shall address the following:

- a) Composition and organizational structure of the proposed regional project team and a description of key personnel team member's role, technical expertise, estimated amount of time to be devoted to the activity for each person,
- b) How the structure will ensure effectiveness and efficiency, in order to achieve maximum benefits and results at minimum cost,
- c) Proposed sub-partners and a clear rationale for the choice and technical capacity of sub-contractors/technical partner organizations, including a) grant making capacity; b) direct experience in civil society strengthening; and c) capacity to participate in/conduct regional events,
- d) A clear and realistic description of project start-up/mobilization, including when (specific dates) and how key and non-key personnel will be hired and office space secured and fully functional for each participating country.

7. Institutional Capacity and Past Performance (2 pages):

This section shall address the following in brief summary:

- a) Brief description of organizational history and experience.
- b) Examples of accomplishments in developing and implementing similar projects.
- c) Relevant experience with proposed approaches.
- d) Institutional strength as represented by breadth and depth of experienced personnel in project relevant disciplines and areas.

The applicant shall include a description of all contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements which the organization has implemented involving similar or related programs over the past three years. This information should also be provided for sub-applicants.

Please include the following information in an annex under past performance information using Applicant Past Performance Reports Short-Form, see Annex 2:

- a) Name, address, current telephone number and email address of responsible representative(s) from the organization for which the work was performed;
- b) Contract/grant name and number, if any, annual amount received for each of the last three years and beginning and end dates;
- c) Brief description of the project/assistance activity and a summary of results achieved.

8. Cost Share Component (1 page) – Required but not scored

It is required that a minimum of 3% for LNGOs of the proposed budget will be generated from non-US Government funding or in-kind support for the proposed program. The match may be a combination of cash and in-kind. The Applicant must demonstrate ability to raise the match proposed. Actual and/or expected sources and amounts of the cost-share amount from all sources (other donors, community members, businesses, etc.) must be stipulated.

Funds received by the Applicant directly from the U.S. Government or USAID intermediaries are not allowable elements of the match but should be identified as sources in the overall budget if they are critical to the program.

Applications should identify all critical sources of support for the program, including private and public cash receipts recorded in the organization’s accounts and in-kind contributions of goods and services and other contributions not recorded in the organization’s accounts but directly supporting its grant program activities. Criteria for acceptance and allowability for the non-U.S. federal contributions are set forth in 22 CFR 226. (Copies of 22 CFR 226 may be obtained through the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20401 or from Internet address: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/cfr.html#22>.)

F. COST APPLICATION FORMAT

The Cost Application shall be submitted under separate cover from the technical application. Certain documents are required to be submitted by an applicant in order for Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility. However, it is USAID policy not to burden applicants with undue reporting requirements if that information is readily available through other sources.

The following sections describe the documentation that applicants for Assistance award must submit to USAID prior to award. While there is no page limit for this portion, applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible, but still provide the necessary details.

The cost application must include all direct costs associated with the implementation and completion of activities, as well as any indirect costs and program costs such as those related to any sub-agreements and/or contracts as detailed below. These amounts are subject to revision depending on availability of funds. The application will provide the following detailed information:

1. The Cost Application must submit the SF-424 and SF-424A “Application for Federal Assistance” with each activity identified.
2. The **Detailed Budget** shall be submitted in the Development-Focused Budget format ((DFB) by each proposed activity) and broken-down by years.

Cost information should be summarized in both the SF424A and DFB categories by the corresponding program elements. If an input serves multiple development results and program elements, the applicant must allocate the input across the corresponding results and provide a rationale in the budget narrative for the method used for each allocated input.

The Cost application should include sufficient detail information to evaluate and support your proposed costs. At a minimum, this should include an explanation of the salaries, supplies, travel, other direct costs and indirect cost components of your budget. Please indicate which items, if any, are being cost-shared and their value.

a) Summary Cost Breakdown

Please provide a breakdown, by activity and years, in the following format:

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>USAID</u>	<u>Other Sources</u>	<u>Total</u>
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b) Salaries

Please provide a separate line item for each proposed individual and identify each by name, title and the level of effort and salary rate. Also include position descriptions for all employees and consultants whose compensation will be charged as a direct cost to the agreement. This information will also be required for subrecipients. Also, specify key personnel and all essential personnel under the program and include CVs for all those individuals and salary history.

c) Fringe Benefits

Please provide a breakdown of proposed fringe benefits. This breakdown should include the rate at which the benefit is charged and the base against which it is applied.

d) Travel/Per Diem

Please provide the destination and duration of each trip, the individuals traveling, and a breakdown between the per diem and airfare and the basis for each.

e) Other Direct Cost

Please provide a breakdown and explanation for all other direct costs (ODCs).

3. **Budget Notes:** The application shall provide budgetary notes for all costs and explain how the costs were derived.

Salary and Wages - Direct salaries and wages should be proposed in accordance with the applicant's personnel policies.

Fringe Benefits - If the applicant has a fringe benefit rate that has been approved by an agency of the Government, such rate should be used and evidence of its approval should be provided. If a fringe benefit rate has not been so approved, the applicant should propose a rate and explain how the rate was determined. If the latter is used, the narrative should include a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., unemployment insurance, workers compensation, health and life insurance, retirement, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in dollars and as a percentage of salaries.

Travel and Transportation - The application should indicate the number of trips, domestic and international, and the estimated costs. Specify the origin and destination for each proposed trip, duration of travel, and number of individuals traveling. Per diem should be based on the applicant's normal travel policies (applicants may choose to refer to the Federal Standardized Travel Regulations for cost estimates).

Other Direct Costs - This includes communications, report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams and inoculations, insurance (other than insurance included in the applicant's fringe benefits), equipment (procurement plan for commodities), office rent abroad, etc. The narrative should provide a breakdown and support for all and each other direct costs.

Branding and Marking. The cost application must incorporate the estimated cost for Branding and Marking. Additional guidance is available in ADS 320 <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/320.pdf>.

Local Institutions usually do not have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) letter with the US Government. Therefore no indirect costs should be included in the cost/business application submitted by local NGOs. Local institutions submitting applications should treat all indirect costs as direct costs.

Seminars and Conferences - The applicant should indicate the subject, venue and duration of proposed conferences and seminars, and their relationship to the objectives of the program, along with estimates of costs.

Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences: Funds in this agreement may not be used to finance the travel, per diem, hotel expenses, meals, conference fees or other conference costs for any member of a foreign government's delegation to an international conference sponsored by a public international organization, except as provided in ADS Mandatory Reference "Guidance on Funding Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences or as approved by the AOR [<http://www.info.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/300/refindx3.htm>].

4. Pursuant to the requirements set forth in 22 CFR 226, please provide details on cost-sharing contributions that will be leveraged or provided for this program, including the donors, a narrative explanation of the contributions and other information allowing us to evaluate cost-efficiency of the proposed contributions, if any.
5. In the case of a group application, the Cost Application must include a copy of the legal relationship between the prime applicant and its partners. The application document should include a full discussion of the relationship between the applicant and its partners, including identification of the applicant with which USAID will treat for purposes of Agreement administration, identity of the applicant which will have accounting

responsibility, how Agreement effort will be allocated and the express Agreement of the principals thereto to be held jointly and severally liable for the acts or omissions of the other.

6. The required Representations and Certifications should be included with the cost proposal. Complete copies of these Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements may be found at <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>.
7. The proposed budget should provide cost estimates for the management of the program (including program monitoring). Applicants should minimize their administrative and support costs for managing the project to maximize the funds available for project activities. Accordingly, those applications with minimal administrative costs may be deemed to offer a "greater value" than those with higher costs for program administration. Additionally, those applications with a greater proportion of cost share may be deemed to offer a "greater value."
8. The cost/business portion of the application should describe headquarters and field procedures for financial reporting. Discuss the management information procedure you will employ to ensure accountability for the use of U.S. Government funds. Describe program budgeting, financial and related program reporting procedures.
9. Please include information on the organization's financial status and management, including:
 - (a) Audited financial statements for the past three years,
 - (b) Organization chart, by-laws, constitution, and articles of incorporation, if applicable,
 - (c) Copy of its personnel (especially regarding salary and wage scales, merit increases, promotions, leave, differentials, etc.), travel accounting management and procurement policies.
10. The application should include information that substantiates that the applicant:
 - (a) Have adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the Agreement.
 - (b) Has the ability to comply with the Agreement conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the applicant, non-governmental and governmental.
 - (c) Has a satisfactory record of performance. In the absence of evidence to the contrary or circumstances properly beyond the control of the applicant, applicants who are or have been deficient in current or recent performance (when the number of grants, contracts, and Cooperative agreements, and the extent of any deficiency of each, are considered) shall be presumed to be unable to meet this requirement. Past unsatisfactory performance will ordinarily be sufficient to justify a determination of non-responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance. The Agreement Officer will collect and evaluate data on past performance of applicants using information from sources provided in accordance with Paragraph 6 above.
 - (d) Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics.
 - (e) Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a Cooperative Agreement under applicable laws and regulations (e.g., EEO).

Applicants may submit any additional evidence of responsibility considered necessary in order for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility. Please note that a positive responsibility determination is a requirement for award, and all organization shall be subject to a pre-award survey to verify the information provided and substantiate the determination.

11. Unnecessarily elaborate applications: unnecessarily elaborate brochures or other presentations beyond those sufficient to present a complete and effective application in response to this RFA are not desired and may be construed as an indication of the applicant's lack of cost consciousness. Elaborate artwork, expensive paper and bindings, and expensive visual and other presentation aids are neither necessary nor wanted.

[END OF SECTION IV]

SECTION V – APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The criteria presented below have been tailored to the requirements of this particular RFA. Applicants should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant matters which applicants should address in their applications and (b) set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated.

Recognizing that various approaches may have merit, this RFA seeks an implementing partner that, on the basis of its experience, can propose cost-effective ways of implementing this program. USAID may reject all applications if they are not deemed sufficiently responsive.

An award will be made based on the ranking according to the evaluation criteria below. Applications will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth below in the relevant order of importance:

- Technical Approach
- Key Personnel
- Management Plan and Organizational Capacity
- Past Performance

1. Technical Approach

1) The degree to which: the proposed approach is technically and managerially sound, meets the objectives of the project as described in this solicitation, provides a logical and sequential approach indicating achievable milestones through measurable outputs and outcomes, seeks to maximize results within budgeted resources, proving cost effectiveness and reflecting, realistically, the cost of design, implementation and finalization of project.

2) The degree to which the application can demonstrate expert level knowledge and understanding of country-specific and regional issues related to civil society strengthening. Also, demonstrate overall knowledge and understanding of civil society strengthening, including best practices, lessons learned, proven successful approaches, and international trends and debates.

3) The degree to which the application addresses a longer-term sustainability vision for this project, especially after USAID funding will end.

2. Key Personnel

The evaluation will assess the appropriateness of professional backgrounds of the proposed key personnel, their work experience related to the project components, management qualifications, and experience in the Former Soviet Union and/or Central Asia.

Demonstrated capability, field and relevant management experience in similar projects, education and qualifications of proposed Chief of Party.

Demonstrated relevant experience in similar projects, appropriate academic backgrounds, and qualifications of proposed other Key Personnel.

3. Management Plan and Organizational Capacity

a) The extent to which the overall management plan is adequate, and technically sound for the implementation of the proposed activities, as well as, the extent to which the applicant convincingly demonstrates an effective management approach, in which composition and structure of the project management team adds value to project implementation. The extent to which the applicant's corporate and institutional capability allows to promptly launch and effectively implement the proposed activity. Demonstrated utilization of local expertise and local organizations involved in program implementation.

b) Proposed sub-partners partners, and a clear rationale for the choice and technical capacity of sub-contractors/technical partner organizations, including a) grant making capacity; b) direct experience in civil society strengthening; and c) capacity to participate in/conduct regional events.

4. Institutional Capacity and Past Performance

Applicants and any proposed partners will be evaluated in accordance with ADS 303.3.6.3. The Technical Evaluation Committee will validate an applicant's past performance reference information by relying on existing evaluations to the maximum extent possible; and making a reasonable, good faith effort to contact all references to obtain verification or corroboration on the below evaluation criteria:

- How well an applicant performed,
- The relevancy of that the program work,
- Instances of good performance,
- Instances of poor performance,
- Significant achievements,
- Significant problems, and
- Any indications of excellent or exceptional performance in the most critical areas.

5. Cost Application

The Applicant's cost application will be reviewed for cost reasonableness, allowability and allocability. The cost application will also be reviewed for accuracy and congruity with the activities proposed in the technical application. USAID is looking for innovative applications that clearly articulate how limited USAID funds can be best applied for maximum impact and results.

B. AWARD

Award will be made to responsible applicant whose application offers the greatest value, cost and other factors considered. The final award decision is made, while considering the recommendations of the TEC, by the Agreement Officer.

The Agreement Officer's decision about the funding of an award is final and not subject to review. Any information that may impact the Agreement Officer's decision shall be directed to the Agreement Officer.

Authority to obligate the Government: the Agreement Officer is the **only** individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Agreement may be incurred before receipt of either an Agreement signed by the Agreement Officer or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

[END OF SECTION V]

SECTION VI – AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Notice of Award signed by the Agreement Officer is the authorizing document, which shall be transmitted to the Recipient for countersignature to the authorized agent of the successful organization electronically, to be followed by original copies for execution.

The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. Applicants are advised that costs incurred prior to receipt of either a fully executed Agreement (in electronic or print form) or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer are not allowable and therefore are ineligible for reimbursement under the Agreement.

USAID may choose to change the Applicant's proposed award type, Grant or Cooperative Agreement, prior to award.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. Government to make any awards, nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Please be advised that only limited funding is currently available.

1. PRE-AWARD SURVEYS

For organizations that are new to working with USAID or for organizations with outstanding audit findings, USAID may perform a pre-award survey to assess the applicant's management and financial capabilities. If notified by USAID that a pre-award survey is necessary, applicants must prepare, in advance, the required information and documents. Please note that a pre-award survey does not commit USAID to make any award.

2. RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

Resulting awards to Local NGOs will be administered in accordance with Chapter 303 of USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS-303), 22 CFR 220 for universities (formerly OMB Circular A-21), 2 CFR 230 for non-profit organizations (formerly OMB Circular A-122), or 48 CFR 31.2 (for for-profit organizations), and Standard Provisions for non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations.

These policies and federal regulations are available at the following web sites:

- ADS-303:
<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>
- 22 CFR 220 (formerly OMB Circular A-21)
http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/omb/fedreg/2005/083105_a21.pdf
- 22 CFR 230 (formerly OMB Circular A-122)
http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/omb/fedreg/2005/083105_a122.pdf
- OMB Circular A-133 - Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html>
- 48 CFR 31.2:
<http://www.arnet.gov/far/>
- Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations:
<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303mab.doc>

3. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Financial Reporting

Financial reporting will depend on the payment provisions of the award, which cannot be determined until after the successful applicant(s) is/are selected. Quarterly program performance reports will be due 30 days after each reporting period. The final report will be due not later than 90 days after the expiration of the agreement.

2. Program Reporting

The Recipient shall provide the following reports to the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) and to the Agreement Officer at AlmatyAAReporting@usaid.gov as specified below and the Substantial Involvement provisions.

a) Quarterly/Annual Performance Reports: Pursuant to TBD the Recipient shall submit quarterly performance reports within 30 calendar days after the end of each standard USG fiscal quarter (i.e. October 30, January 30, April 30, July 30) to the AOR. The fourth quarterly report (October 30) shall serve as an annual report summarizing the fiscal year achievements including participant training and indicator data for the fiscal year. Reports may be submitted electronically. Regardless of the start date of the cooperative agreement all reporting will be adjusted to the USG fiscal year calendar.

The report should include the following:

- An analytical description of overall program progress toward results that reflects and synthesizes achievements. This should not be a description of activities but rather a broader analysis that examines the progress in the context of program objectives and expected results.
- A summary of activities conducted. This section should highlight conducted activities, and include a description of progress toward results in relevant trends and clippings of press articles that mention the project.
- Data on all indicators established in the monitoring and evaluation plan for this cooperative agreement. Data should be disaggregated by gender and other historically disenfranchised populations, where relevant. See monitoring and evaluation plan for further guidance on reporting on indicators.
- A comparison of accomplishments to the goals and objectives established for the period.
- Problems encountered, reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate, and how challenges or problems will be overcome during the next reporting period.
- A comparison of actual expenditures with budget estimates, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, and any other pertinent information, as relevant.
- Priorities for programming during the next reporting period including a quarterly list of public events to be organized by the project during the coming three months, including approximate date, location, and audience. Note: The project will coordinate with USAID about all planned events with press participation, press activities, press releases, as well as inclusion of USAID promotional materials for the participants, participation of USAID/USG representatives.
- Reports shall also contain, as an attachment, a summary list of sub-grants and loans (if any) issued during the quarter.
- Reports shall also contain, as an attachment, an indicator data table outlining quarterly indicator achievements. A sample table is provided below:

Indicator	Year 1: 1 st Quarter Results	Year 1: 2 nd Quarter Results	Year 1: 3 rd Quarter Results	Year 1: 4 th Quarter Results	Year 2: 1 st Quarter Results	Year 2: 2 nd Quarter Results	Year 2: 3 rd Quarter Results	Year 2: 4 th Quarter Results

As Part of Quarterly Performance reporting the recipient will address the following:

1. Participant Training Reports. The recipient will collect training data on technical trainings (i.e., conferences and workshops) provided for beneficiaries that were held in the United States, third countries, or in-country under this cooperative agreement. The training data will be entered into TraiNET and submitted to the AOR quarterly no later than 45 days following the end of each fiscal quarter measured from October 1, as relevant. The recipient will follow ADS 252 policy, which provides detailed information regarding visa compliance guidelines, and ADS 253, which provides guidance on how to implement USAID funded training programs.

TraiNet and USAID Sponsored J-1 Visas

All host country nationals being funded fully, partially, directly, or indirectly by USAID must enter the U.S. on a J-1 Visa, regardless of the type or duration of the activity. In order to secure a J-1 visa, each participant must first secure a DS-2019 form (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor J-1 Status). TraiNet is the only means of obtaining a DS-2019 for USAID-funded Exchange Visitors.

USAID/CAR delegates the TraiNet data entry, verification, and reporting responsibilities to its implementing partner who is responsible for data entry (the R1 role) and verification (the R2 role) of all training programs and participants that are funded by USAID. USAID/CAR/SPO is responsible for approval (the R3 role) and the COR/AOR and Program Managers are responsible for working with their implementing partners to obtain the data needed by the R3. USAID/Washington is responsible for submission of the data (the R4 role) to SEVIS. The DS-2019 approval process is as follows:

- Data is entered into TraiNet by the implementing partner's Data Entry Initiator (R1);
- The R1 submits the information to the Visa Compliance System (VCS);
- The designated Verifier (R2) verifies the accuracy of the data in the VCS, uploads documents, and either submits the information to the R3 if all is correct, or rejects the file if there are errors in the data;
- A designated United States citizen in the Central Asia Mission – the Approver (R3) – reviews the electronic versions of documents and either approves or rejects the files (for missing data or other concerns based on review of the files) sending them back to the R1 with comments;
- When the R3 approves a file, the information is electronically transferred to the Responsible Officer (R4) in USAID/Washington who provides the final approval before the information is submitted to the Department of Homeland Security SEVIS database;
- The DS-2019 form is created, printed and mailed to the R3;
- The R3 gives the form to the USAID COR or AOR who provides it to the implementing partner. The implementing partner is responsible for delivering the form to the participant so that he/she can present it to the Consular Officer during their appointment for a J-1 visa at the U.S. Embassy consular section, or designated Consulate. Exchange visitors apply online at the U.S. State Department's website in each respective CAR countries. When asked to enter a "Program Number", applications should enter USAID's Exchange Visitor Program Number **G-2-00263.**"

2. Marking and Branding

As per USAID/CAR's Mission Order on Marking and Branding, the recipient will be requested to provide the following information:

- An updated quarterly list of public events to be organized by the project during the coming three months, including approximate date, location, and audience. The project will coordinate with USAID about all planned events with press participation, press activities, press releases, as well as inclusion of USAID promotional materials for the participants, participation of USAID/USG representatives.
- Two success stories a year for each country where the project is implemented with an accompanying photograph (see item c. for specifications). The success stories will be provided in a Word Document format, using a standard USAID success story template (available at www.usaid.gov/templates.html).
- The fourth quarterly performance report shall also include a CD with a collection of minimum of 20 photographs a year that are illustrative of project's achievements in jpeg format. The photographs will comply with a guidance provided in the USAID Graphic Standards Manual, and be at least 1MB in size each. Each photograph will have a brief explanation about its subject, and identify: the author and his/her organization, person(s) featured in the photograph, and the location where the photograph was taken.
- Clippings of press articles that mention the project.
- At least 2 copies of all public communications materials produced by the project. In addition, the recipient shall submit one electronic and/or one hard copy of all final documents to USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse.

3. Gender Reporting. As part of its regular reports, the recipient shall collect, analyze and submit sex-disaggregated data and propose actions that will address any gender-related challenges that might arise from that data. The recipient shall report any challenges to the AOR who, in turn, shall work with the USAID/CAR Mission's gender specialist to find reasonable solutions.

b) Final Report: The Recipient shall submit the original copy to the Agreement Officer's Representative, one copy to the Agreement Officer, and one copy to USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse, ATTN: Document Acquisitions, 1611 N. Kent Street, Suite 200, Arlington, VA 22209-2111 (or e-mail: docsubmit@dec.cdie.org).

The final report shall be submitted no later than 90 calendar days after the expiration of the award. The final report shall also consolidate activities and analyses of all partners into one document and their activities and progress towards results. The final performance report shall contain the below information, as relevant.

- An executive summary of the accomplishments and results achieved;
- An in-depth analysis of progress and results that synthesizes achievements that contributed towards program objectives. This section shall clearly describe activities, major accomplishments and results achieved, including results for all of the activities under the cooperative agreement;
- Final data, compared to baseline data, for all indicators included in the monitoring and evaluation plan. This section should include disaggregated data by gender, historically disenfranchised groups and other relevant groups identified.

- A summary of problems/obstacles encountered during the implementation, and how those obstacles were addressed and overcome if appropriate;
- Lessons learned, best practices, and other findings, along with recommendations for future programming in this sector.
- A comparison of actual expenditures with budget estimates, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, and any other pertinent information, as relevant.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) Parts 201.5.10 g and 204 (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ADS/204/>), which require that any potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities should be identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities.

In addition, the Applicant must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter shall govern.

No activity funded under this Agreement will be implemented unless an environmental threshold determination, as defined by 22 CFR 216, has been reached for that activity, as documented in a Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE), Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), or Environmental Assessment (EA) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO).

The BEO-approved IEE (Democracy and Conflict Mitigation Office's Amendment #6 to its Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) is included as ANNEX 1.

USAID has determined that project activities including technical assistance, training, analyses, studies and information transfers qualify for a Categorical Exclusion under 22 CFR Part 216.2(c)(2) (no effect on the natural or physical environment) and, therefore, these activities are excluded from an environmental review.

USAID has determined that a Negative Determination with Conditions qualifies for activities, when following normal good practices, engineering methods, and standard instructions will help to avoid potential environmental problems. This includes possible limited procurement of equipment, including electric and electronic equipment (computers, printers, etc.). The proposed action is that the Implementer should provide evidence that equipment is procured from certified retailers; environmental safety and quality certificates conforming with national and/or international standards are available; it's used in an environmentally sound and safe manner, and properly disposed of, when applicable, at the end of its useful life in a manner consistent with best management practices according to USG, European Union or equivalent standards acceptable to USAID.

If new information becomes available which indicates that activities to be funded by the project might have some adverse effects on the environment, an implementer will report to USAID in accordance with requirements outlined in the IEE Amendment #6, specifically they will submit Environmental Review and Assessment Checklists for USAID approval

As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the recipient, in collaboration with the AOR and Mission Environmental Officer shall review all ongoing and planned activities under this CA to determine if they are within the scope of the approved IEE Amendment #5. If the recipient plans any new activities outside the scope of the approved IEE, it shall prepare an amendment to the documentation for USAID review and approval. No such new activities shall be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval of environmental documentation amendments. Respondents to the RFA should include as part of their proposal their commitment to achieving environmental compliance and management.

5. MARKING AND BRANDING

All USAID-funded foreign assistance (including programs, projects, activities, public communications, or commodities) must be communicated, promoted, and marked as coming from the American people through USAID. Specific communications and promotion measures shall be described in the "Branding Strategy" and "Branding

Implementation Plan,” and specific marking will be described in the “Marking Plan” for the this award. Branding and marking under this award shall comply with the USAID Automated Directive System Chapter 320 Branding and Marking (ADS320).

ADS 320 requires that, after the evaluation of the applications, the USAID Agreement Officer will request the Apparently Successful Applicant to submit a Branding Strategy that describes how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and cooperating country citizens, and identifies all donors and explains how they will be acknowledged. USAID will not competitively evaluate the proposed Branding Strategy. ADS 320 may be found at the following website:

[http://iapp1.usaid.gov/notices/LoadAttachmentFileName.cfm?Attachment=3626;](http://iapp1.usaid.gov/notices/LoadAttachmentFileName.cfm?Attachment=3626)

In preparation of the branding implementation plan and the marking plan, the Applicant should request from the Agreement Officer the templates for these documents. Additional guidance is available at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding>. The cost application must incorporate the estimated cost of the proposed Branding Implementation and Marking Plans.

[END OF SECTION VI]

ANNEX 1 - Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) – Amendment #6)

(See enclosed as a separate file)

Annex 2. APPLICANT PERFORMANCE REPORT SHORT FORM

APPLICANT PERFORMANCE REPORT - SHORT FORM
PART I: Applicant Information (to be completed by Prime)
1. Name of Awarding Entity:
2. Award Number:
3. Award Type:
4. Award Value (TEC): (if subaward, subaward value)
5. Problems: (if problems encountered on this award, explain corrective action taken)
6. Contacts: (Name, Telephone Number and E-mail address)
6a. Agreement officer:
6b. Technical Officer (COR):
6c. Other:
7. Recipient/Contractor(Applicant):
9. Information Provided in Response to RFA No. :
PART II: Performance Assessment (to be completed by Agency)
1. Quality of product or service, including consistency in meeting goals and targets, and cooperation and effectiveness of the Prime in fixing problems. Comment:
2. Cost control, including forecasting costs as well as accuracy in financial reporting. Comment:
3. Timeliness of performance, including adherence to award schedules and other time-sensitive project conditions, and effectiveness of home and field office management to make prompt decisions and ensure efficient operation of tasks. Comment:
4. Customer satisfaction, including satisfactory business relationship to clients, initiation and management of several complex activities simultaneously, coordination among subawardee and developing country partners, prompt and satisfactory correction of problems, and cooperative attitude in fixing problems. Comment:
5. Effectiveness of key personnel including: effectiveness and appropriateness of personnel for the job; and prompt and satisfactory changes in personnel when problems with clients were identified. Comment:

[Note: The actual dollar amount of subawards, if any, (awarded to the Prime) must be listed in Block 4 instead of the Total Estimated Cost (TEC) of the overall award. In addition, a Prime may submit attachments to this past performance table if the spaces provided are inadequate; the evaluation factor(s) must be listed on any attachments.]

Annex 3 - List of USAID and other donors programs

Donor	Project title	Description
Kazakhstan		
<u>USAID</u>	Kazakhstan Civil Society Strengthening Program	Increases the capacity of Kazakhstan's leading civil society organizations (CSOs) to conduct their operations more effectively and be better equipped to represent the interests of their constituencies to government. By the end of this program, up to twelve leading CSOs will be pre-certified to directly receive and accountably manage USAID and other USG and donor funding.
<u>U.S. Embassy</u>	Program of small grants	Supports democracy and governance projects. These grants are project-specific and do not support organizational development of recipients.
<u>European Union</u>	Strengthening NGO capacities for sustainable civil society development in the rural areas of South Kazakhstan oblast	Develops democratic society in rural areas of the SKO through strengthening the capacity of local NGOs, promoting broad-based citizen dialogue and participation in their communities and developing replicable community action models
	The capacity building of society to propagate a human rights agenda in the Kazakh language	Provide Kazakh-language information about human rights by teaching participants the basics of fundamental rights protection as set out in the Constitution of Kazakhstan and ratified international covenants on human rights.
<u>The BOTA Foundation</u>	Social Service Program (SSP)	Provides Kazakhstan NGOs with funding via grants for support to children and youth from impoverished families. Includes both grant and non-grant components, including trainings on capacity building of NGOs for successful planning, development, management, monitoring and evaluation.
<u>Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)</u>	Program of small grants	Promotes the strengthening of civil society, in particular through support for local human rights and women's organizations, as well as support for efforts by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to monitor the human rights situation and engage with government officials.
<u>World Bank</u>	Civil Society Social Development Fund	Promotes dialogue and dissemination of information, and enhance partnerships with key players in support of the development process with special attention on building capacity of civil society
Kyrgyzstan		
<u>USAID</u>	Collaborative Governance and Civil	Supports a collaborative relationship between government and civil society; broadens the constituency

	Society Strengthening Program	for local civil society organizations; encourages government adherence to the “good governance” agenda; develops institutionalized mechanisms to ensure the long-term viability of the civil society sector.
<u>U.S. Embassy</u>	Program of small grants	Supports democracy and governance projects. These grants are project-specific and do not support organizational development of recipients.
<u>European Union</u>	Strengthening of dialogue between NGOs and the public sector on social protection of vulnerable people	Aims to solve social problems in rural areas, by lobbying for the rights and interests of the non-governmental sector, developing proposals for improvement of NGO legislation, and establishment of effective social partnerships. □
	Active involvement of civil society in decision making processes and self-governing development	Furtheres democratic reforms through the active involvement of civil society in political decision-making processes.
<u>World Bank</u>	Social Development Civil Society Fund Program (CSF) (former Small Grants Program - SmGP)	Supports civic engagement of marginalized and vulnerable groups to make development more inclusive and equitable. Accordingly, grants focus on empowering people who have been historically excluded from society's decision-making processes, such as women, youth, and people from racial and ethnic groups, with low-income, and from rural areas.
<u>UNDP</u>	DGP Civil Society Project Strengthening the role of the civil society institutes in the state (municipal) governance process in Kyrgyz Republic	Strengthens good governance practices and democratic processes by building the capacity of civil society through enhancing their representative role in the decision making process and the elaboration of social and economic policies. The project aims at supporting state agencies and civil society organizations in developing a constructive dialogue.
Tajikistan		
<u>U.S. Embassy</u>	Program of small grants	Supports democracy and governance projects. These grants are project-specific and do not support organizational development of recipients.
<u>European Union</u>	Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development	Supports development activities implemented by non-state actors and/or local authorities, and focuses on achieving more efficient cooperation with these groups. In particular, the NSA/LA program fosters synergies and facilitates a structured dialogue between civil society networks and local authorities associations from the EU and acceding countries.
<u>Aga Khan Development Network</u>	Civil Society Program	Ensures that CSOs achieve sufficient levels of quantity, quality, geographic distribution and spectrum of activities so that civil society has an unmistakable positive impact on the quality of life for significant segments of the national population. CSP provides technical advice and assistance in an effort to help build the capacity of individual organisations. At a broader level, it works with other

		CSOs, the private sector and the government to create an enabling environment that will further reinforce the work of AKDN agencies.
<u>The World Bank</u>	Civil Society Fund Program (CSFP) in Tajikistan	Projects funded range from those supporting farmers through dissemination of information on land use rights, piloting student self-governance in secondary schools, dissemination of legal information on labor migration to projects promoting integration of disabled children into the society, broadening access of the target groups to up-to-date global information through use of Internet technologies, and others.
Uzbekistan		
<u>USAID</u>	Political and Civic Development	Strengthens the capacities of political and civil society organizations (CSOs) to represent constituent interests and articulate effective political and/or advocacy campaigns. The project: Enhances dialogue and communication between political parties and their constituents; Assists CSOs in mentoring a new generation of CSO leaders and advocating on behalf of the public on various issues. Contributes to the familiarity of government and elected officials with internationally recognized democratic principles and practices.
<u>U.S. Embassy</u>	Program of small grants	Supports democracy and governance projects. These grants are project-specific and do not support organizational development of recipients.
<u>OSCE</u>	Capacity building for civil society	Enhances the institutional capacities of the National Association of NGOs. Through a number of roundtables in the regions the program has fostered dialogue between state and civil society on women's empowerment in entrepreneurship, legislative improvement in the sphere of protecting women's health, the role of NGOs in realization of national health programmes, and the role of women in public and political life.
<u>The World Bank</u>	Social Development Civil Society Fund Program	Promotes debate on economic and social policy issues; encourages measures designed to improve public services, transparency and public accountability; promotes small business and private entrepreneurship.
Turkmenistan		
<u>U.S. Embassy</u>	Program of small grants	Supports democracy and governance projects. These grants are project-specific and do not support

		organizational development of recipients.
CAR Regional		
<u>USAID</u>	Legal Support for Civil Society	Strengthens the legal, regulatory, institutional, and information environment which protects and enables the growth of civil society organizations. The program also assists CSOs in their efforts to comply with the rapidly changing legal and regulatory environment. This is a regional project implemented in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
<u>Soros</u>	Strengthening Civil Society Through Arts & Culture	Encourages broad-based critical reflection and catalyzes social action in parts of the world where open societies are absent or weak, and where the
	The Central Eurasia Project	Provides small grants to international and regional NGOs, academic institutions, think tanks and other structures to support their work, help build local capacity, bring international expertise to bear on the region and promote cooperation between local activists and international civic movements. The goal is to strengthen civic leaders in the region and to construct support networks for them within international structures and movements. In addition, the Central Eurasia Project manages Open Society Foundations activities related to the countries in the region without local foundations, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

[END OF RFA-176-12-000007]