



ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT (APS)

(USAID Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation—2017—01)

“Actions to Address Democracy, Governance, Civic Engagement, and Corruption”

The USAID Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation Project in Albania seeks to award grants to Albanian civil society organizations (CSOs), working alone or in partnerships with other CSOs, to promote anti-corruption and good governance in Albania.

Issuance date:	June 15, 2017
Deadline for questions:	July 15, 2017
Closing date for round 1 concept paper submission:	September 15, 2017
Closing date for round 2 concept paper submission:	December 15, 2017
Closing date for round 3 concept paper submission:	March 15, 2018
Closing date for round 4 concept paper submission:	June 15, 2018
Closing date for Annual Program Statement:	June 15, 2018

USAID Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation Project background

The goal of Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation Project in Albania is to support and strengthen the capacities and accountability of civil society organizations (CSOs), government bodies, and private sector entities in Albania to foster and sustain democratic processes. To achieve this goal, the Project will focus in the following three areas:

Component I: Assessment of Albanian organizations.

In the framework of Component 1, the project will identify beneficiary organizations working in the democracy and governance sector, assess those organizations and develop interventions to improve their ability to effectively work for public participation and government oversight, improved governance services, efforts against corruption, civic education and capacity-building activities, and improved management of organizational resources. The project will work with beneficiary organizations to identify specific areas for organizational improvement and develop an action plan to address the needs.

Component II: Grants under contract.

In the framework of Component II, the project will award grants to Albanian CSOs focusing on (but not limited to) areas of election oversight, women’s empowerment, marginalized population rights, anti-corruption, and increased citizen oversight and/or provide practical experience for the capacity building training they will receive. The grants must further one or more of the three objectives: (1) Local capacity for long-term impact built; (2) Democracy,

governance, and civic education strengthened; and (3) Vulnerable populations' participation more fully in society improved.

Component III: Technical Assistance

The project will design and provide additional technical assistance based on the organizational assessment conducted and accepted under Component I. The support will be in different forms of training and technical assistance. It will focus on (but not limited to) organizational development, financial management, strategic planning, program design and management, networking and fundraising, etc.

By successfully addressing the three program elements, Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation Project in Albania will achieve the **project goal**: to support and strengthen the capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs), government bodies, and private sector entities in Albania to foster and sustain democratic processes. Two **Expected Project Results** will contribute to reaching this objective: (1) Improved organizational and technical capacities of civil society organizations, government bodies, and private sector entities; and (2) Enabled civil society organizations to implement initiatives relating to local capacity for long-term impact, democracy, governance, and civic education, and vulnerable populations' participation in society.

Funding focus area

The USAID Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation Project seeks creative, innovative and collaborative applications in support of activities that will directly further one or more of the three objectives:

- (1) Local capacity for long-term impact built;
- (2) Democracy, governance, and civic education strengthened; and
- (3) Vulnerable populations' participation more fully in society improved.

The project provides grants for civil society organizations to enable them to carry out their initiatives. The civil society organizations that are registered and functional and deal with issues of civic engagement and democratic governance including CSOs involved in election oversight, women's empowerment, marginalized population rights, good governance and anti-corruption at local and central level, increased citizen oversight, capacity development, etc. are encouraged to apply for grants. Types of activities that can be supported through the grants include:

- Capacity building activities aiming at building the capacities at the individual, institutional, coalition/network, and systems level, especially of associations for marginalized people;
- Advocacy, stakeholder dialogue, and joint action initiatives to build trust and foster democracy and inclusive socio-economic growth;
- Training, exchange, and dissemination activities aiming at dissemination of international best practices, introduction of new technologies, and "learning by doing";
- Organization and functioning of the community service delivery oversight committees to enhance government accountability;

- Good governance monitoring (including surveys, production of analysis, corruption assessment reports);
- Activities aiming at establishing and institutionalizing the citizen-government engagement;
- Oversight of election processes;
- Oversight of political processes;
- Participation of vulnerable populations;
- Activities aiming at improving the situation of people living with HIV/AIDS, LGBT, women and other marginalized groups.

Applicants are reminded that applications that are: (i) aligned with the goals of USAID Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation project; (ii) feasible; and (iii) innovative will receive consideration.

CSOs that represent women, sexual minorities, disabled persons, remote regions, and ethnic minorities are encouraged to apply.

Funding amount, timing, and eligibility requirements

The Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation Project will award Fixed Amount Awards (FAA) for civil society organizations. Fixed Amount Awards allow for grants that focus on milestone accomplishment rather than monitoring costs incurred in the performance of the award by the Grantee. FAAs are generally awarded where there is certainty about the cost, when the achievement of results or milestones is readily discernible, and when the costs can be segregated by milestones.

The USAID Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation Project plans to award multiple grants for projects spanning 12 (twelve)-18 (eighteen) months. Albanian civil society organizations will be asked to submit concept ideas proposing the types of activities that will be supported through the grants (as mentioned above) that will be evaluated on a quarterly basis. It is expected that 5-6 concept ideas will be developed in full project proposals. About 2-3 projects will be granted each quarter (10 projects in total for the APS).

The maximum grant amount is 30,000 USD. Approximately 300,000 USD will be allocated to this type of grants. The actual number of awards under this APS is subject to the availability of funds and the interests and requirements of USAID Albania as well as viability of applications received.

Grant funds may be used only for activities directly related to the implementation of the project.

Only CSOs legally registered in Albania are eligible to apply under this RFA. Applicant organizations should also meet the following criteria:

- Have at least one year of operational experience.
- Have a governance structure that ensures proper rotation of leadership and delegation of power, including, at least: a Board of Directors, a Chairperson, and/or an Executive Director.
- Have a transparent system of bookkeeping that complies with Albanian legislation and International Accounting Standards (IAS).

- Must not be a debtor, and must have cancelled any debt to the state or arranged for full debt payment prior to receiving the first disbursement of the USAID Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation project grant funds.
- Must operate as an independent non-politically affiliated organization.
- Must not be debarred, suspended, excluded or otherwise ineligible to receive US Federal funding.
- Members of public administration and/or leaders of political parties cannot participate in a grant project, as a director or as grant-remunerated participant.

Evaluation of concept notes and full project proposals

USAID Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation Project will review concept papers and subsequently applications on an ongoing basis until the cutoff date as stated above, and select those that it intends to fund, and will proceed to negotiate an award with each successful applicant subject to the availability of funding. The final decision for funding will be based on both a technical review and the availability of USAID funding. USAID Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation Project reserve the right to fund one or more or none of the applications which may be submitted. If the solicitation becomes irrelevant for any reason or funding is unavailable, USAID Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation Project reserve the right to close the solicitation.

This APS will be open for the period of one year from June 15, 2017 to June 15, 2018. The initial cutoff date for submission of concept papers is September 15, 2017. At that time, all concept papers received will be considered to be a reasonable number, even if it is just one. Concept papers submitted after this initial due date will be reviewed by the end of next three-month period. All applicants may be subject to a pre-award financial and management review and must demonstrate that they have a rigorous financial and monitoring system in place that will ensure auditable systems and records.

Deadline for Submission of Questions Interested applicants may submit questions related to the APS by e-mail to ngoctr@icc-al.org through July 15, 2017. Responses to queries and questions will be posted on the website at <http://anttarc.org>. No requests for meetings or phone calls with any project staff will be accepted during the application process.

Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of the USAID Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation project, nor does it commit the project to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

The submission process will include two steps: 1) submission of a concept paper; and, 2) if instructed by USAID Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation project, submission of a full-blown application. All submissions must be in English.

Preparation of Concept Papers

Concept papers must be strictly limited to no more than two pages in length (excluding the cover page and budget sheet) using 12- point font. Concept papers should be sharply focused, technically sound, and demonstrate a clear sense of the applicant's key objectives and ability to carry out the program. The concept paper format is included in Annexes.

Concept Papers should be submitted electronically to ngocenter@icc-al.org. All concept papers submitted should quote APS number and title as referenced above.

The concept papers will be evaluated based on a set of criteria including:

1. *Collaborative Posture [10%]*. The extent to which the applicant organization plans to foster cooperation among CSOs, government, media, and citizens to better achieve the project goal and collaborate with other CSOs to implement innovative advocacy and civic engagement, and technology in fulfilling project goals.
2. *Problem Statement and Implementation Plan [50%]*. The conceptualization of the problem/solution, strategic visioning in how to implement the proposed conceptualization, the plan showing how the strategic vision will be achieved; Plans for monitoring and evaluation of the proposed implementation plan and periodic reporting; Plans for public outreach/interaction with the media.
3. *Management and Programmatic Capacity (10%)*. Capability to undertake and accomplish the proposed activities and positively strengthen the civic engagement; Organizational effectiveness in terms of internal structure, technical capacity, and key personnel; Adequate financial management capability.
4. *Beneficiaries [15%]*. Description of the target group(s) who will benefit from the proposed removal of a problem and the extent to which the target beneficiaries include girls, women, people with disabilities, the LGBT community, Roma, and other marginalized groups.
5. *Impact [15%]*. Description of how the proposed solution will be objectively measured as it pertains to the success or extent of success in addressing the issue/problem. The extent to which the project highlights, contributes to, and influences important policy issues, which may be addressed by local, regional, and national policy makers.
6. *Sustainability [10%]*. Description of how the proposed solution(s) will be sustained once the grant funding expires.

Applicants with successful concept papers will be asked to develop full project proposals. However, favorable evaluation of the concept paper in the tier one review does not automatically imply USAID funding.

Preparation of Full Applications

Successful applicants will be asked to submit a more detailed submission limited to 10 pages single-spaced using 12-point font. The Application Form is included in annexes.

Full applications will undergo a comprehensive evaluation using the factors described below. Invitations for full applications will be sent 30 days after the deadline for receiving concept papers. Full project proposals will be evaluated based on a set of criteria including:

a. Technical Approach (60 points)

1. Project Design and Feasibility

- The degree to which the application is responsive to the request for applications and adequately addresses Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation Project goal and results;
- The potential of the project to successfully achieve the objectives outlined in the PWP and AWP;

- The geographic focus of the proposed project and its relevance to stated objectives and anticipated results;
- The extent to which the project introduces innovative and potentially replicable approaches;
- The level of coordination of the project activities with other USAID or other similar foreign programs.
- The degree to which the project accomplishes Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation Project work plan tasks or advances USAID and Accelerated Civic Development and Cooperation Project goal and results (or whether the project accomplishes goal and results more properly within the scope of another USAID project or other donor project).

2. Impact

- The effectiveness of the proposed method(s) to reach out to and engage targeted project beneficiaries in project activities;
- How wide the target group will be who will benefit from the proposed activity of the grant;
- The potential of the project to make a substantial and measurable impact;
- The extent to which the project highlights, contributes to, and influences important policy issues, which may be addressed by local, regional, and national policy makers.
- Whether the project results will be sustainable.

b. *Organizational, Technical and Management Capability (40 points)*

1. Technical and Management Capacity:

- The track record and demonstrated commitment of the applicant to implement proposed activities and demonstrated ability to work well with other organizations and partners;
- The experience and expertise of the management team and proposed project personnel; and
- The provision for appropriate project monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms and staff.

2. Organizational Capability

- The general financial strength of the applicant;
- The organizational structure and good governance practices of the applicant;

c. *Cost Proposal – Pass/Fail test (no points allocated)*

1. The budget must be (i) complete and fully documented, (ii) reasonable, and (iii) allocated to appropriate budget categories.
2. The budget must demonstrate a clear and direct relationship between proposed activities and the proposed use of funds;
3. Proposed expenditures must be allowable and allocable to the project

To download the application package, please see the APS announcement at www.anttarc.org.

Annexes (included in GUC Manual annexes)

Annex 1.1: Concept Paper Application Form

Annex 1.2: Concept Paper Budget Form

Annex 2.1: Full Project Proposal Application Form

Annex 2.2: Full Project Proposal Budget Form