



USAID DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE EAST ACTIVITY (DG EAST)

Request for Applications (RFA) No. RFA01

MEDIA SECTOR SUPPORT IN EASTERN UKRAINE

Issuance Date: **April 15, 2019**

Closing Date: **May 15, 2019**

Dear Applicant:

USAID Democratic Governance East Activity (DG East), implemented by Chemonics International, is seeking grant applications for implementation of projects aimed at greater acceptance of a shared civic culture based on common values and understandings, DG East team will support various activities instrumental to increased understanding of reforms and participatory governance process among the residents of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The grants will be awarded and implemented in accordance with USAID and US Government regulations governing grants under contracts and DG East internal grant management policies.

The applicants are granted a period for open questions and answers until **April 25, 2019**.

Please submit all questions concerning this solicitation via email to DGE-Grants@ukraineDG-East.com (subject line: Questions RFA01). Answers to all questions submitted by that date will be combined into a single "Frequently Asked Questions" file and sent to all those who sent them, before **April 30, 2019**.

Please note that the DG East Project staff will not assist any organization in preparing their applications. Requests for meetings or phone calls related to this grant competition will not be accepted during the period of submission of applications. Potential candidates are invited to apply in accordance with the instructions provided in this solicitation.

Project and Chemonics employees may not ask for, and applicants are prohibited from offering, any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, thing of value, or compensation to obtain or reward improper favorable treatment regarding this solicitation. Any improper request from a project employee should be reported to the chief of party or BusinessConduct@chemonics.com.

Annexes included with this Request for Applications:

Annex A - Grant Application Form (including Implementation Plan)

Annex B – Grant Application Budget Form and Notes

SECTION I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

IA. OBJECTIVE

DG East is awarding grants to Ukrainian NGOs (including local media outlets that are registered as not-for-profit) to develop locally relevant, objective, and professional quality information about Ukraine's reforms, European trajectory, and efforts to counter malignant propaganda. The objective of the activity is to support non-governmental organizations in promoting civic awareness, social entrepreneurship, citizen engagement, and the benefits of reforms and broad integration into the Euro-Atlantic community through community-level improvements in services and more responsive local governance in areas most affected by conflict and divisive influences.

IB. BACKGROUND

Chemonics International within the framework of the USAID Democratic Governance East Activity (hereinafter referred to as DG East) announces the call for applications.

The objectives of the DG East Activity are:

Objective 1: Greater acceptance of a shared civic culture based on common values and understandings

SO 1.1: Increased interaction of citizens with civil society groups

SO 1.2: Increased understanding of reform and participatory governance processes

SO 1.3: Further development of Ukrainian civic identity

Objective 2: Increased participation to improve Ukraine's governance and form processes and help resolve community problems

SO 2.1: Increased integration of separated, marginalized, or isolated populations

SO 2.2: Effective advocacy by local actors on relevant national and regional-level policies

SO 2.3: Improved local governance processes and capacities

DG East will aspire to achieve the following results:

- Increased interaction of citizens with civil society groups
- Increased understanding of reform and participatory governance processes
- Further development of Ukrainian civic identity
- Increased integration of separated, marginalized or isolated populations
- Effective advocacy by local actors on relevant national regional-level policies
- Improved local governance processes and capacities

DG East will provide opportunities for citizens to engage with their government, provide government with resources to support their citizens, and create opportunities for citizens of Ukraine to create hope in their future and positive changes in their daily lives.

IC. DETAILED PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

DG East will work with Ukrainian NGOs and local media outlets (registered as not-for-profit) to develop locally relevant, objective, and professional quality information about Ukraine's reforms, European trajectory, and efforts to counter malignant propaganda. Apart from traditional reporting, we encourage

content development that includes or comprises data visualization, multimedia production and the application of social media platforms.

Applicants are encouraged to propose long-term and short-term projects involving a single or series of TV programs, radio programs and podcasts, online or print content, as well as traditional and social media campaigns addressing these topics. Content may be intended for regional and national distribution via traditional or online information channels.

Media outlets and CSOs are welcomed to cooperate and produce content raising public awareness of local civil society activities/initiatives.

DG East encourages applications to develop engaging media products, platforms, campaigns, and/or content that:

- **Raise awareness of and support for about reforms, European integration, and Ukraine’s democratic development targeted to the issues most relevant to eastern Ukrainians.**

DG East will support production of media materials to promote a deeper understanding of the ongoing changes that will impact people living in GOU-controlled Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Specifically, proposed content should highlight of the tangible benefits of Ukraine’s key reforms (including but not limited to decentralization, healthcare, education, public administration, judiciary, housing and communal services), as well as broader narratives about Ukraine’s democratic, European transition.

- **Combat disinformation.**

DG East will encourage specific actions aimed to establish alternative information channels producing and disseminating objective local content. Through this RFA, the grants can be provided to fact-checking groups, media hubs or journalists’ networks involved in counteracting propaganda. Proposed activities should result in strengthening resilience to disinformation against the background of narratives that attempt to undermine mutual trust and create divisions between the eastern oblasts and the rest of Ukraine.

- **Highlight people, activities, and/or organizations in eastern Ukraine that demonstrative inclusive civic values.**

DG East will seek to amplify narratives of eastern Ukrainians demonstrating positive, democratic civic values (such as social engagement, innovation and creativity, pluralism, tolerance, and respect), connecting these with a modern conception of Ukrainian identity. This will include narratives that highlight the inclusion of vulnerable groups, including but not limited to IDPs, youth, elderly, Persons with Disabilities (PwD), LGBTI+, ethnic minorities, coal miners and their families, ATO veterans, people living in the “grey zone”, and others. Applications should ensure gender sensitivity and a Do No Harm approach particularly when proposing activities/topics related to vulnerable groups.

DG East recognizes that some grantees may need technical assistance to more effectively carry out the activity. Consequently, applicants are encouraged to specify their needs for technical assistance and/or training in their application.

ID. AUTHORITY/GOVERNING REGULATIONS

DG East grant awards are made under DG East grants procedures under the authority of the U.S. Foreign Affairs Act and USAID's Automated Directive System (ADS) 302.3.5.6, "Grants Under Contracts." Awards made to non-U.S. organizations will adhere to guidance provided under [ADS Chapter 303](#), "Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations" and will be within the terms of the USAID Standard Provisions as follows:

- Standard Provisions for U.S. and Non-U.S. Nongovernmental organizations receiving a fixed amount award can be accessed through the following URL: <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mat.pdf>
- Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental recipients receiving all other types of grants can be accessed through the following URL: <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf>

ADS 303 references an additional regulatory document issued by the U.S. Government's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the U.S. Agency for International Development:

- 2 CFR 200 [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, Subpart E](#)

Full text of 2 CFR 200 can be found at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl. DG East is required to ensure that all organizations receiving USAID grant funds comply with the guidance found in these circulars, as applicable to the respective terms and conditions of their grant awards.

Under the DG East grant program, USAID retains the right at all times to terminate, in whole or in part, DG East grant-making authorities.

SECTION II. AWARD INFORMATION

DG East anticipates awarding up to UAH 33 750 000 through grants under this RFA, with each individual grant award up to an anticipated amount of UAH 6 750 000. However, the final grant amount will be dependent upon grant activities and final negotiation and may be lower or higher than that range. The duration of any grant award under this solicitation is expected to be no more than *12 months*. The estimated start date of grants awarded under this solicitation is *July 2019*.

SECTION III. ELIGIBILITY

IIIA. ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS

DG East grant support may be extended to the following applicants:

- NGOs/Civil Society Organizations (CSO)/not-for-profit media outlets officially registered in Ukraine.
- Applicants must have a history of performance in Donetsk and Luhansk regions.
- Applicants are strongly advised to create partnerships to apply for funding under this RFA. CSOs and media organizations are welcome to submit joint applications under this RFA.

- Applicants may only submit one application per prime organization under this RFA.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate successful past performance in implementation of media- or communications-related projects.
- Applicants must have established outreach capabilities with linkages to target audiences identified in the program description. This should be reflected by the incorporation of the target audience perspective in the application.
- Applicants must be able to successfully complete all of the activities within the grant.
- Applicants must display sound management in the form of financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures and present a system of internal controls that safeguard assets; protect against fraud, waste, and abuse; and support the achievement of program goals and objectives. DG East will assess this capability prior to awarding a grant.
- Additionally, applicants must sign the required certifications prior to receiving a grant.
- For any grant award(s) resulting from this solicitation that is other than in-kind and equivalent to UAH 656 324 or more, grantees will be required to provide a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number at the time of award. If the applicant already has a DUNS number it should be included in their application. Otherwise, applicants will be expected to get a free DUNS number before an award is made. DG East will assist successful applicants with this process. DUNS numbers can be obtained online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>
- The project will work with the successful grantee to draft a branding and marking plan which will be annexed to the grant agreement.

DG East encourages applications from new organizations who meet the above eligibility criteria.

The following organizations or programs MAY NOT submit concept papers/applications for grants within the present RFA:

- Commercial organizations, political parties, or private individuals.
- Organizations on the list of organizations excluded from the Federal Excluded Parties List System – www.sam.gov
- Organizations on the Specially Designated Nationals List of the Office of Foreign Assets Control – www.sam.gov
- Organization on the list of terrorist organizations of the UN Security Council – www.sam.gov

SECTION IV – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

IVA. INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

Applicants must propose strategies for the implementation of the program description described above, introducing innovations that are appropriate to their organizational strengths.

IVA1. GRANT APPLICATION

Templates to be utilized when developing the *Application* are provided in Annex A-B. Applicants shall present their technical application and budget in the formats provided and shall follow the instructions and guidelines listed in these annexes.

All grant activity costs must be within the normal operating practices of the Applicant and in accordance with its written policies and procedures. For applicants without an audited indirect cost rate, the budget may include direct costs that will be incurred by the Applicant to provide identifiable administrative and management costs that can be directly attributable to supporting the grant objective.

The *application* must be signed by an authorized agent of the Applicant.

IVA2. INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Unallowable costs are further described in Subpart E-Cost Principles in 2 CFR 200 for non-profit organizations and FAR 31.2 “Cost principles for Commercial Organizations”. All costs must be reasonable, allocable, and allowable. DG East grant funds cannot be used for the following:

- Private ceremonies, parties, celebrations, or "representation" expenses.
- Purchases of restricted goods, such as certain agricultural commodities, motor vehicles (including motorcycles), pharmaceuticals and contraceptive items, pesticides, used equipment, U.S. government excess property and fertilizers without prior approval by the USAID CO.
- Prohibited goods under USAID regulations, including but not limited to: military and surveillance equipment, police or law enforcement equipment, abortion equipment and services, weather modification equipment, luxury goods, and gambling equipment.
- Purchases of goods or services restricted or prohibited under the prevailing USAID source/nationality regulations per 22 CFR 228 and relevant Standard Provisions; or from countries or suppliers as may be identified by USAID's consolidated list of debarred, suspended, or ineligible subcontractors at www.sam.gov or in the Visual Compliance system. • Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by Chemonics, including any grantee headquarters expenses that are not directly linked to the implementation of the proposed program.
- Any construction or refurbishment activities.
- Previous obligations and/or bad debts.
- Fines and/or penalties.
- Creation of endowments.
- Other costs unallowable under USAID and/or federal regulations, such as alcoholic beverages.
- Indirect costs such as but not limited to overhead or indirect fringe (unless the applicant has documented proof of such rates through audits or USAID-issued NICRA). Indirect costs are never allowed under simplified grants.
- In general, costs not included in the approved budget may not be allowed unless approved in writing by Chemonics.

IVB. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Applications shall be submitted in Ukrainian or English and may not be more than eight (8) pages (Word format, Times New Roman, Font size 11, Single Spaced) using the template in Annex A.

Applications (Technical and budget proposals and supporting documentation) should be submitted electronically to DG East at the address below and should reference RFA No. RFA01. Applications must

be submitted no later than 23:59 local time, on **May 15, 2019**. Late or unresponsive applications will not be considered.

USAID Democratic Governance East Activity (DG East)
DGE-Grants@ukraineDG-East.com

In addition to the application forms and budget, applicants should submit the following to DG East:

- A copy of the Applicant’s valid legal registration,
- A copy of the Applicant’s non-profit certificate, and
- A copy of the Applicant’s Charter

Please submit all questions concerning this solicitation before **April 25, 2019** via email to DGE-Grants@ukraineDG-East.com (subject line: Questions RFA01). Answers to all questions submitted by that date will be combined into a single “Frequently Asked Questions” file and sent to all those who asked them, before **April 30, 2019**.

SECTION V. APPLICATION MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA

All applications will be reviewed by an internal review panel/committee comprised of DG East technical implementation staff and recommendations may be vetted by a larger group.

Full applications will be evaluated against the merit review criteria in the table below.

Merit Review Category	Rating (Points)
A. Program Expertise	30
B. Technical Approach	30
C. Organizational Capacity and Project Management	15
D. Sustainability	15
E. Awareness of Gender and Socially Inclusive Programming	10
Overall Rating (out of 100 points)	100

These merit review criteria elements are described more fully below.

A. Program Expertise. DG East will assess whether the applicant has sufficient technical knowledge and experience required for the implementation of the proposed project. Does the organization have staff who have the necessary qualifications and experience for implementation of the proposed project? Does the candidate have previous experience (programming and managerial) in implementation of projects of similar type and complexity, and achievement of the required results? Is the candidate represented in the geographical region where they offer to implement a project? If not, is the proposed plan to ensure the presence realistic and economically feasible? Does the organization have access to the respective target group? **(30 points)**

B. Technical Approach. DG East will evaluate to what extent the full application meets the technical description. A strong project application should be based on local conditions and contain a clear description of the existing needs of the target group, gaps in service provision to that target group, as well as a description of how the project will contribute to addressing those gaps. The committee will consider whether the proposed methodology is appropriate and innovative for achieving project objectives. Does the

organization have partners among other media outlets/NGOs in the region to successfully implement project activities? The grant committee will evaluate the clarity of the implementation plan. **(30 points)**

C. Organizational Capacity and Project Management. DG East will assess whether the candidate has managerial, administrative and financial experience required to implement the proposed project. Does the organization have the potential for development of financial resources to implement the program? Does the organization have the appropriate staff? Is the project implementation schedule realistic in terms of time and the proposed budget? The project budget will be assessed from the perspective of relevancy and feasibility of expenditures. **(15 points)**

D. Sustainability. DG East will assess whether the proposed project is cost effective. How does the application reflect improvement of the organization's sustainability? What steps are envisaged to ensure that the project activities continue after the project completion? **(15 points)**

E. Awareness of Gender and Socially Inclusive Programming. DG East will assess the extent to which the proposed activity includes a gender component, represents a strong commitment to women as beneficiaries, is committed to and accommodates for inclusion of marginalized, vulnerable or isolated groups. **(10 points)**

Additionally, DG East will ensure environmental soundness and compliance in design and implementation as required by 22 CFR 216.

SECTION VI. AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

All grants will be negotiated, denominated, and funded in *local currency*.

All costs funded by the grant must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Grant applications must be supported by a detailed and realistic budget as described in Section IV.

Issuance of this RFA and guidance on application development do not constitute an award or commitment on the part of DG East, nor does it commit DG East to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, DG East reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received and reserves the right to ask further clarifications from the offerors.

Applicants will be informed in writing of the decision made regarding their application.

ANNEX A - Grant Application Form (including Implementation Plan)
It is attached in a separate Word file.

ANNEX B – Grant Application Budget Form and Budget Notes.
It is attached in a separate Excel file.