**USAID DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE EAST ACTIVITY (DG EAST)**

**Request for Applications (RFA) No. 05**

**Soft Culture Exposition - From the East to the Whole of Ukraine: Inter-regional cultural and educational Media Centers (IRCEMC) development**

**Issuance Date**: January 15, 2021

Dear applicant,

The USAID Democratic Governance East Activity (hereinafter referred to as DG East)*,* implemented by Chemonics International, is announcing a request for applications for grants to implement the “Soft Culture Exposition - From the East to the whole of Ukraine: Inter-regional cultural and educational Media Centers development” activity. The purpose of this activity will be to promote and develop an active united multi-cultural online community in Ukraine. This community will serve as a basis for an online, education-based system that promotes dialogue on historical and cultural studies, civic and educational activities, research, and partnership building in the eastern Ukraine region. This program also aims to foster the creation and support of online theaters, museums, concerts events, engaging people with disabilities, youth, elder and marginalized groups to improve socialization and encourage dialogue between cultural/historical/media societies in Eastern Ukraine and with other partners on a national and international level.

The activities of the Soft Culture Centers aim, among other things, to improve cultural development and integration of the region, its inclusion into the cultural map of Ukraine and the world, and the formation of a local identity, as well as the development of civil society on a local, regional, and national level based on a SCORE 2019 indicators : **Confidence people from different groups will listen** [5.7. – 6.3](https://www.scoreforpeace.org/en/use/2019-General%20population-127)**, social threat, different groups** [2.9-3.2](https://www.scoreforpeace.org/en/use/2019-General%20population-157)**, identity, citizen of Ukraine** [4.1-4.6](https://www.scoreforpeace.org/en/use/2019-General%20population-0) (see: Annex G)**.**

The grant will be awarded and implemented in accordance with USAID and US Government regulations governing grants under contracts and DG East’s internal grant management policies.

DG East will hold a pre-application online workshop on February 12, 2021 from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm local Kyiv time. This workshop will allow eligible and interested applicants to have the chance to ask questions about the RFA and receive guidance on how to complete the application form. Interested applicants that meet the eligibility requirements defined in Section III below and would like to participate in this workshop must confirm their participation by sending the participant’s name, the organization’s name, participant’s email address, and phone number by February 05, 2021 at the address DGE-Grants@ukraineDG-East.com with a reference to RFA No. 05 in the subject line. When confirming participation, please note if the person has any special needs to access the workshop. No reimbursement for costs of participation will be met.

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.

The following annexes are included with this Request for Applications:

- **Annex A** - Grant Application Form and Implementation Timeline

- **Annex B** – Grant Application Budget Form

- **Annex C** – Mandatory and Required As Applicable Standard Provisions (accessed through links below):

* 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>

**- Annex D** – Required Certifications

* Certification of “Representation by Organization Regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Criminal Conviction (AAPD 14-03, August 2014)”
* Prohibition on Providing Federal Assistance to Entities that Require Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements – Representation (May 2017)

**- Annex E** – Applicant Self-Assessment Form

- **Annex F** – List of DG East pilot cities

**- Annex G** – SCORE 2019 indicators can be accessed through the following URLs: <https://www.scoreforpeace.org/en/use/2019-General%20population-127>; <https://www.scoreforpeace.org/en/use/2019-General%20population-157>;

<https://www.scoreforpeace.org/en/use/2019-General%20population-0>

**Chronology of Solicitation Events**

The following timeline summarizes important dates in the solicitation process. Offerors must strictly follow these deadlines:

* Date RFA issued: **January 15, 2021**
* Due date for submitting Expression Of Interests for pre-application workshop: **February 05, 2021**
* Date of pre-application workshop: **February 12, 2021**
* Due date and time for questions: **6:00 pm Kyiv time on February 17, 2021**
* Due date for response to questions: **February 22, 2021**
* RFA closing date and time: **6:00 pm Kyiv time on March 1, 2021**
* Estimated award date: **April 02, 2021**

The dates above may be modified at the sole discretion of Chemonics. Any changes will be published in an amendment to this RFA.

**SECTION I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

**IA. OBJECTIVE**

DG East anticipates awarding one grant to a Ukrainian public organization able to demonstrate its ability to implement the “Soft Culture Exposition - From the East to the Whole of Ukraine: Inter-regional cultural and educational Media Centers development” activity, which will contribute to the overall objectives of the Project, including cultural development and integration of the region, its integral inclusion into the cultural map of Ukraine and the world, continuation of the formation of local identity, and the development of civil society on a local, regional and national level. Innovative solutions in the cultural development play an important role in attracting more citizens to the actions and a wide variety of exploratory activities. The division between East and West of Ukraine is not along the Dnieper river, but primarily in the minds of the people. Soft culture exposition is a key element toward united Ukrainian civic identity. The Inter-regional cultural and educational media centers will promote visionary and innovative media and cultural productions enhancing United through Diversity vision of united Ukraine both locally and internationally, seeking connections, networks, relations and exchanges that enhance media, cultural and digital literacies and education.

**IB. BACKGROUND**

DG East is a five-year project financed by USAID and implemented by Chemonics International Inc. The goal of the project is to strengthen the connection and trust between citizens and their government in Eastern Ukraine. 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 seeks to 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**

**IС.1 Geographical coverage and areas of activity**

The Grantee will be responsible for the establishment of new Inter-regional culture and education media centers (IRCEMC) or provision of assistance to existing educational or cultural centers in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to expand their activities to all regions of Ukraine. DG East expects the grantee to establish at least two centers for activities. Since the city of Mariupol won the Ukrainian Culture Fund nomination of Culture Capital of Ukraine-2020, DG East encourages the applicants to consider the option to establish the Donetsk oblast IRCEMC in Mariupol. The applicants should also included a detailed plan on how to engage CSOs from DG East target areas (for the list of DG East pilot cities, see: Annex. F). Illustrative activities to engage CSOs include, production of documentary educational short films, online theater opera scene events, the provision of specialized training in the field of soft culture expansion, the establishment of a cross-regional partnerships within and outside of Ukraine, and the creation of videos to popularize Eastern Ukraine culture heritage as a part of united Ukraine culture. Considering current and possible future COVID-19-related restrictions, it is expected that applicants will use online tools in the course of the award implementation to the maximum extent possible.

**IC.2 Specific Activities**

Applicants shall:

* Propose a concept of development of online IRCEMCs in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, i.e. equipping, furnishing and supporting online/web tool for remote activities and engagement of local CSOs to support the IRCEMCs activities;
* Develop and produce a series of documentary educational short films about the identity and uniqueness of the Eastern Ukraine and its cultural code including stories about people in the region;
* Support the creation of several cycles of online theater/opera/scene events from DG East target areas about life in the Eastern Ukraine conflict area, people’s fate during and after the war, youth/elder/PWD/LGBTI/gender issues and ways of resolving these complex issues and sound solutions;
* Conduct a training-of-trainers program for designated local government officials, CSOs staff, and media representatives on how to promote Eastern Ukraine culture traditions and inclusion in to One Nation-One Country strategy;
* Develop online educational courses for culture managers certification program (for example, exploring Prometheus Platform) as well as self-education courses;
* Demonstrate innovate approaches in engagement of HUBs/NGOs organizations and experts from Western Ukraine for joint development and implementation of a cross-regional partnership model of Eastern and Western Ukraine;
* Produce a series of video interviews with the inclusive participation of foreign and national museums and cultural institutions on topics related directly to the cities of Eastern Ukraine.

**IC.3 Expected Results**

The award must directly contribute to and ensure the achievement of the following expected results (please, specify numeric indicators):

1. Number of IRCEMCs established in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts \_\_\_ and number of CSOs engaged in the activity implementation\_\_\_;
2. Number of documentary educational short films on Eastern Ukraine identity, uniqueness and culture heritage produced with DG East assistance\_\_\_;
3. Number of innovative online theater/opera/scene events from the DG East target areas\_\_\_;
4. Number of trainers certified by TOT program\_\_\_ and potential number of people completed self-education/certification courses segregated by sex, age, PWD and LGBTI participation in the Activity\_\_\_;
5. Number of HUBs/NGOs organizations and experts from Western Ukraine participated in the Activity\_\_\_ and number of cross-regional partnerships established\_\_\_;
6. Number of video interviews produced and distributed trough appropriate media channels\_\_\_.

Applications showing the most significant impact on soft culture exposition activity implementation will receive greater consideration during the selection process. It is therefore crucial to include numerical targets when specifying expected results. It is expected that the applicant will propose a sustainability plan to continue this activity in the future based on findings, lessons learned, and self-reliance principles.

DG East recognizes that some grantees may need technical assistance to more effectively carry out the project activity and encourage the applicants to specify their needs for technical assistance and/or training in their applications.

**ID. AUTHORITY/GOVERNING REGULATIONS**

DG East grant awards are made under the authority of the U.S. Foreign Affairs Act and USAID’s Advanced 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](https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303), “Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations” and will be within the terms of the USAID Standard Provisions as linked in the annexes, as well as the DG East grant procedures.

ADS 303 references two additional regulatory documents 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](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=2e11c56f4c402a68fd92aee657de8475&mc=true&node=sp2.1.200.e&rgn=div6) (U.S. applicants are subject to 2 CFR 200 in its entirety)
* 2 CFR 700, USAID’s [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=531ffcc47b660d86ca8bbc5a64eed128&mc=true&node=pt2.1.700&rgn=div5) (only applicable to U.S. Applicants)

Full text of 2 CFR 200 can be found at and 2 CFR 700 at <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=531ffcc47b660d86ca8bbc5a64eed128&mc=true&node=pt2.1.700&rgn=div5>. DG East is required to ensure that all organizations receiving USAID grant funds comply with the guidance found in the regulations referenced above, 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’s grant-making authorities.

**SECTION II. AWARD INFORMATION**

DG East anticipates awarding up to UAH **4,500,000** through one grant under this RFA. Based on the assessment of the innovative nature of methodological approaches offered by applicants and the merit criteria specified in Section V below, DG East may consider selecting more than one applicant to form a joint program, or awarding two coordinated grants. The final amount will be dependent upon award activities and final negotiation and may be lower or higher than that range. The estimated start date of the grant awarded under this solicitation is on or around April 2021. The grant period will be one year from the date of signing. Depending on performance of the selected grantee in the initial period of performance, there may be an option to renew for a period of up to one additional year. For the grant to be considered for renewal, the grantee must submit a renewal application with an updated budget and proposal for the second year of implementation two months prior to the end of the initial grant. The exact timeline will be defined in the initial grant agreement. Renewal is contingent upon the following:

* Availability of funds;
* Satisfactory progress towards meeting the award objectives;
* Submittal of required reports; and
* Compliance with the terms and conditions of the award, including the conditions for renewal.

Should the grant be renewed, the second year will include the development of a post-Soft-Culture Exposition activity management plan.

**SECTION III. ELIGIBILITY**

**IIIA. ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS**

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

* Applicants must be a registered Ukrainian for-profit or not-for-profit legal entities including NGOs based on supporting civil society groups and organizations, associations, and/or think tanks formally registered, constituted, recognized by and in good standing with appropriate Ukrainian governmental authorities and laws of Ukraine, and compliant with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations.
* Applicants must have a history of performance in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.
* Applicants are encouraged to create partnerships to apply for funding under this RFA. CSOs and consulting firms 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 civil society organizations’ capacity building training, mentoring, couching, training program design-related projects.
* Applicants should prove the ability of the established connections to target groups identified in the program description. This ability should be reflected by the incorporation and descripting of the target groups in the application.
* Applicants must display its ability to sound management in the form of financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures and present own 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.
* The following certifications are required to be submitted as part of the application package in response to an RFA found in Annex D.
	+ Representation by Organization Regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Criminal Conviction (AAPD 14-03, August 2014)
	+ Prohibition on Providing Federal Assistance to Entities that Require Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements – Representation (April 2015)
* For any grant award(s) resulting from this solicitation that is other than in-kind and equivalent to $25,000 USD 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 DUNS number before an award is made. The 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 marking and branding project plan which will be annexed to the grant agreement.

* Faith-based and community groups will receive equal opportunity for funding in accordance with the mandated guidelines laid out in ADS 303.3.28 except for faith-based organizations whose objectives are for discriminatory and religious purposes, and whose main objective of the grant is of a religious nature.

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

**IIIB.** **INELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS**

The following organizations or programs **may not** submit concept papers/applications for grants within the present RFA:

* State/government entities, including state educational institutions.
* 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

**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. APPLICANT SELF-ASSESSMENT**

All organizations selected for award are subject to a pre-award risk assessment conducted byDG East, to ascertain whether the organization has the minimum management capabilities required to handle US government funds. The applicant self-assessment is the first step in the pre-award risk assessment process. The Applicant Self-Assessment Form is contained in Annex E.

**IVA2. GRANT APPLICATION**

Templates to be utilized when developing the application are provided in Annex A and Annex 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 cover 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.

**IVA3. INELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

DG East grant funds may not be utilized for the following:

* Construction or infrastructure activities of any kind.
* Ceremonies, parties, celebrations, or “representation” expenses.
* Purchases of restricted goods, such as: restricted agricultural commodities, motor vehicles including motorcycles, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, contraceptive products, used equipment; without the previous approval ofDG East, or prohibited goods, prohibited goods under USAID regulations, including but not limited to the following: abortion equipment and services, luxury goods, etc.
* Alcoholic beverages.
* Purchases of goods or services restricted or prohibited under the prevailing USAID source/ nationality (Cuba, Iran, North Korea, and Syria).
* Any purchase or activity, which has already been made.
* Purchases or activities unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by DG East.
* Prior obligations of and/or, debts, fines, and penalties imposed on the Grantee.
* Creation of endowments.

**IVB. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

Applications shall be submitted in Ukrainian **OR** English and may not be more than twelve **(12)** 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 have reference to RFA05 in e-mail title. Applications must be submitted no later than **18:00 local time, on March 01, 2021**. 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:

* Signed and dated Required Certifications listed under section III.A;
* Applicant Self-Assessment form;
* A copy of the Applicant’s valid legal registration;
* A copy of their latest audited financial statements for the most recent fiscal year available;
* A copy of the Applicant’s non-profit certificate;
* A copy of the Applicant’s Charter or bylaws;
* CVs of the key personnel and experts/consultants.

Please submit all questions concerning this solicitation to the attention of Oleksandr Riabyi, Regional Director, no later than **6:00 pm Kyiv local time, on February 17, 202**1 via email to DGE-Grants@ukraineDG-East.com (subject line: Questions RFA05). DG East will aim to respond to all questions received no later than **February 22, 2021.** Questions must be submitted in writing; phone calls will not be accepted. Questions and requests for clarification—and the responses thereto—that Chemonics believes may be of interest to other applicants will be circulated to all RFA recipients who have indicated an interest in applying. Only the written answers issued by Chemonics will be considered official and carry weight in the RFA process and subsequent evaluation.

DG East will hold a pre-application online workshop on **February 12, 2021** from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm local Kyiv time. This workshop will allow eligible and interested applicants to have the chance to ask questions about the RFA and receive guidance on how to complete the application form. Interested applicants that meet the eligibility requirements defined in Section III below and would like to participate in this workshop must confirm their participation by sending the participant’s name, the organization’s name, participant’s email address, and phone number by **February 05, 2021** to the address DGE-Grants@ukraineDG-East.com with reference to RFA No.05 in the subject line. DG East will assist applicants in understanding the application process and can provide coaching in application development at the request of applicants.

**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. Feasibility of Design and Technical Approach | 40 |
| B. Management and Programmatic Capacity | 30 |
| C. Cost effectiveness and Project Budget | 10 |
| D. Past Performance | 10 |
| E. Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) considerations | 10 |
| **Overall Rating (out of 100 points)** | **100** |

These merit review criteria elements are described more fully below.

1. **Feasibility of Design and Technical Approach (40 points).** Quality and feasibility of the application in terms of viability of the proposed technical approach (i.e., one can reasonably expect to achieve anticipated results by using the proposed technical approach), feasibility of the proposed methodology, a clear description of the existing needs of the target group, gaps in service provision to that target group, a description of how the project will contribute to addressing those gaps, and a work plan to achieve the award objectives. The technical approach must directly contribute to the achievement of award expected results and must be measurable under one or more of the DG East indicators. The evaluation of approaches may include either proven approaches or new, untested but promising approaches. Proposed mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation with objectively measurable indicators will also be appraised.
2. **Management and Programmatic Capacity (30 points).** Evidence of the applicant’s capability to undertake and accomplish the proposed activities. The application must demonstrate applicant’s effectiveness in terms of internal structure, technical capacity and key personnel involved in award implementation. (Key personnel are: 1) Project Coordinator designated by the Applicant to implement the award activities. Project Coordinator must have higher education and minimum 3 years of practical experience in organizing provision of advisory and outreach services and training, and 2) 2 or 3 experts/consultants with higher education and minimum 2 years of practical experience of work in the area of soft culture exposion, development of IRECMCs or related field. Please include the CVs of candidates nominated for the Key personnel positions. DG East will review candidates’ CVs to evaluate responsiveness to the RFA requirements). In addition, applicant must demonstrate adequate financial management capability. The evaluation will be based principally on the background, qualifications, reputation, appropriateness, and skills of its key personnel, as well as on the "track record," reputation and achievements (including the development of self-sufficient, sustainable activities) of the organization itself. Please include the contact information for minimum 3 (three) clients who can provide feedback on applicant’s previous work (name, position, email, or telephone).
3. **Cost Effectiveness and Project Budget (10 points**). The degree to which planning, and budgeting is clear and reasonable and reflects best use of award resources to achieve the activity objectives. The ratio of co-financing share to DG East share will also be evaluated (the extent to which the budget includes contributions - in cash or in kind - from the part of the target firms/beneficiaries/industries and third parties, which indicate commitment of the applicant) as well as sources of funding, justification, completeness, and appropriateness of costs. The activity budget should contain a detailed estimate and explanation of costs for each category. The project budget will be assessed from the perspective of relevancy and feasibility of expenditures.
4. **Past Experience (10 points)**. Previous or ongoing experience implementing similar activities. This examines an Applicant’s references and experience, which is a critical factor in assessing the capacity of the organization to implement the activity.
5. **GESI Considerations (10 points).** The extent to which the proposed activity includes a gender equality and social inclusion component and creates opportunities for women and men, youth, IDPs, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and other vulnerable groups and represents a strong commitment to above categories as beneficiaries.

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 UAH.

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 assistance with 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.

**LIST ANNEXES**

- **Annex A** - Grant Application Form and Implementation Timeline

- **Annex B** – Grant Application Budget Form

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