



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Issuance Date: September 12, 2022
Deadline for Questions: September 23, 2022
Closing Date: October 14, 2022
Closing Time: 2:00 pm Skopje time

Subject: **Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Request for Application Number: 72016522RFA00009
Citizens Against Corruption (CAC) Activity**

Reference: Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 98.001

Dear Prospective Applicants:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking concept papers from qualified entities to implement the Citizens Against Corruption (CAC) Activity.

The main goal of this program will be to create a broad social movement against corruption in North Macedonia uniting the efforts of like-minded actors to demand zero tolerance of corruption. The activity's principal intent is to increase citizen, civil society, media and private sector knowledge, engagement and collaboration in the fight against corruption.

Eligible parties interested in applying are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, concept papers submission requirements and selection process.

This is a multi-tiered NOFO in accordance with Automated Directives System (ADS) 303.3.6.1(c), Selection under this RFA will be based on a two-phase process as detailed in Section D:

- **Phase 1:** Concept Paper submissions, open to all eligible organizations as described in this RFA.
- **Phase 2:** Full Application submissions, by invitation only to Applicant(s) selected during Phase 1 evaluation.

USAID intends to make an award to the applicant who best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity based on the merit review criteria described in this NOFO subject to a risk assessment.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NOFO and meet the eligibility standards described in Section C of this RFA. This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov and may be amended. It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this NOFO and to ensure that the RFA has been received from the internet in its entirety. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from the transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the RFA, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance. USAID expects that applicants will have

equal access to all local organizations needed to implement this contract and strongly discourages exclusivity agreements with local organizations.

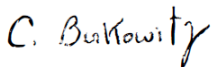
USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifiers and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section D.7. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the process.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section D. The deadline for questions is shown above. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted to www.grants.gov.

Issuance of this notice of funding opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government nor does it commit the Government to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of comments, suggestions, concept papers, or a full application. Concept papers are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,



Chad Berkowitz
Foreign Service Agreement Officer

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SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This concept paper funding opportunity is authorized under the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. The resulting award will be subject to 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, and USAID’s supplement, 2 CFR 700, as well as the additional requirements found in Section F.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Citizens Against Corruption (CAC)

A) INTRODUCTION

The **Citizens Against Corruption (CAC)** activity aims to create a broad social movement against corruption which will unite the efforts of like-minded actors across sectors in demanding zero tolerance of corruption. The goal of the CAC activity is to increase citizen, civil society, media and private sector knowledge, engagement and collaboration in the fight against corruption. By fostering a culture of awareness, integrity and accountability citizens can individually and jointly take action and exert pressure for improved government responsiveness and effectiveness in addressing corruption at the central and local level. The CAC Activity builds upon previous successful anti-corruption work conducted by USAID. The CAC Activity will promote partnerships and facilitate dialogue between the civil society, media, private sector, and the Government with the aim of reducing corruption.

B) BACKGROUND

Despite signs of progress, corruption in North Macedonia continues to erode trust in institutions and weakens accountability and transparency. Corruption is caused by a combination of factors such as political will, anemic adherence to rule of law and impunity, underperformance and lack of capacity and resources of anti-corruption and government institutions as well as limited oversight and collaboration and communication within institutions. In addition, public apathy and acceptance of corruption as part of the system are contributing factors.

The European Commission 2021 Report¹ highlights: North Macedonia is moderately prepared in the prevention and fight against corruption. Some progress has been made, as the country continued to consolidate its track record on investigating, prosecuting and trying several corruption cases, including at high level, and strengthened its institutional framework, especially the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) and the Prosecutor for Organized Crime and Corruption (OCCPO). In April 2021, Parliament adopted the 2021-2025 National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest and related Action Plan, consolidating the country’s commitment to prevent corruption and sanction corrupt behavior. The cases initiated by the former Special Prosecutor’s Office (SPO) continued to move forward, thereby establishing accountability for the illegal wiretaps.

The same report notes the critical need to strengthen the integrity of policies, transparency, and accountability of public institutions, including controls for public procurement, concessions, public/private partnerships, and execution of public contracts. While these developments provide encouraging news, greater accountability, and effectiveness of government institutions, strengthened

¹https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/north-macedonia-report-2021_en

by a powerful expectation of accountability among citizens and individual citizen action to fight everyday corruption, is urgently needed to reverse the entrenchment of norms that bolster and spread corruption.

Recent in-country civil society and international polling data suggest corruption remains a major concern, increasingly undermining citizens' faith in democratic progress and economic well-being. According to a 2021 National Democratic Institute's (NDI)² survey, one-third of respondents cite crime, corruption, poor governance, and self-interested politicians as top concerns. Sixty-four percent of citizens surveyed agreed that corruption is the most important problem, while more than half (54%) report willingness to participate or initiate a civic activity to help combat corruption. The 2022 Freedom House Report also notes that North Macedonia continues to struggle with corruption and clientelism.³

Widespread corruption obstructs economic growth and contributes to political fragility and instability. It also is an entry point for malign actors, including their proxies in the region, to influence political and economic leaders and processes.

The war in Ukraine should serve as a lesson and warning of how the Western Balkans can easily be destabilized through corruption and political economy models that favor a small group of political and economic elites over citizens. This is a strong reason for North Macedonia to seize the moment and double efforts to avoid destabilization in the country and focus on meeting the European Union's (EU) integration requirements, including combating corruption and ensuring that everyone is equal before the law.

This moment is critical as growing "Euroscepticism" has left a door open for malign actors to push citizens away from a Euro-Atlantic future and cultivate political, social and cultural cleavages. North Macedonia was granted EU candidate status in December 2005 but has been blocked from opening accession talks since 2009. While there's been a recent opening to make progress in EU accession negotiations, the stagnant process has increased citizen frustration with the government and with the EU. According to a 2021 analysis on North Macedonia's EU accession process, perceptions of the EU as North Macedonia's biggest ally fell sharply from 43.2 percent in 2019 to 13.1 percent in 2021.⁴

The agreement of the EU in July of 2022 to start accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania is the first negotiation phase that entails a rigorous screening process of the candidate country's legislation to see how well aligned it is with EU law, or the *Acquis Communautaire*. The *Acquis* is divided into 35 negotiating chapters, grouped into six clusters, covering every legislative aspect, which all individually only can be closed with the unanimous blessing of all EU member states. Negotiations begin with the opening of the chapters on so-called "fundamentals," issues like the judiciary and fundamental rights. The criteria requires that a state has the institutions to preserve democratic governance and human rights, has a functioning market economy, and accepts the obligations and intent of the European Union.

² <https://www.ndi.org/publications/north-macedonia-citizens-concerned-crime-corruption-and-economy>

³ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/north-macedonia/freedom-world/2022>

⁴ https://idscs.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/A5_From-a-poster-to-a-foster-child-2021-public-opinion-analysis-on-North-Macedonias-EU-accession-processENG-2.pdf

To address these challenges and continue to push for reforms, there is a need to focus on the responsibility of citizens to increase their actions to counter corruption and strengthen expectations of transparency and accountability in the public and private sectors. Citizens must take action to reject a culture of corruption and serve as an important check on government so there is little tolerance for and action against everyday corruption, sub-standard services, waste and misuse of public funds and other consequences that result in a lower standard of living.

Civil society needs to continue and strengthen its watchdog role but also work with authorities as a partner in the creation and implementation of anti-corruption policies. The fight against corruption should also integrate the media and the private sector as an integral part of the efforts to tackle corruption. There is a need to create educational awareness about media and disinformation as these efforts are still disjointed and drowned out by the tabloid-driven media environments.

The private sector has profound self-interest and great potential to assume a vital role in the fight against corruption. Corruption is a serious impediment to the private sector as it profoundly affects the environment in which the private sector does business. At the country level, corruption stifles economic growth and discourages investments and becomes an impediment to private sector development and broader economic growth.

Together, with the media and the private sector, CSOs can serve as agents of change in detecting irregularities and sensitizing the public on issues of social importance to systematically build high standards of integrity, professionalism, and transparency. Through collaboration and joint efforts, they can address both “vertical” systems of accountability, (i.e., where citizens hold institutions accountable), and “horizontal” accountability, (i.e., when state institutions engage in mutual scrutiny to correct abuses of office).

- **Relationship to Mission’s Country Development Strategy (CDCS)**

The CAC activity will directly support the USAID/North Macedonia Country Development and Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) 2020-2025. More specifically, it will contribute to the CDCS Development Objective (DO) 3: “Corruption Reduced” and Intermediate Result 3.2 “Culture of Accountability among Citizens Enhanced”. The CDCS is designed to a) create partnerships that enable the country to lead its own development journey; b) promote enterprise-driven development; and c) build resilience against malign influences, particularly among youth. Three complementary and interrelated DOs contribute to the overarching goal of partnering to promote a prosperous, well-governed, and resilient North Macedonia committed to Euro-Atlantic integration.

The CAC activity is also directed linked to the Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) 2022 - 2026 and Mission Goal 1: Deepen North Macedonia’s democracy and implementation of reforms to improve its reliability and capability as a U.S. partner; Mission Objective 1.1: Reduced public corruption and impunity bolster North Macedonia’s rule of law and citizen-responsive governance. The activity is aligned with USG foreign policy and the National Security Council’s Strategy on Countering Corruption as a core national security interest.

- **Other Development Partner Relationships**

The CAC Activity will be implemented in close coordination with other USG and development partner-supported activities in North Macedonia. The collaboration and coordination will ensure synergies, maximize impact and investments and will avoid duplication of efforts. The Activity will

take into consideration other related initiatives and maintain complementarity and collaboration with other donors' approaches.

The European Union's Rule of Law Project (2021-2026) has four components: 1. Improve the capacities of justice institutions to deliver justice in a transparent and accountable manner; 2. Strengthen the capacities to effectively implement modern investigation techniques in fighting organized crime; 3. Improve the prevention and fight against corruption; and 4. Enhance the protection of fundamental rights and strengthen the uptake of alternative means to detention.

The Delegation of the European Union to North Macedonia also supports civil society through calls for proposals. The most current is the Thematic Program on Human Rights and Democracy, the successor of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights program. The global objective of this call is the promotion and protection of: human rights and fundamental freedoms; democracy; and the rule of law in North Macedonia.

The *Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)* is planning to launch a new five-year anti-corruption activity to reduce local governments' vulnerability to corruption. The expected outcomes are: 1) to create a multi-stakeholder network and mechanism to prevent corruption at local level; and 2) to increase the integrity of the public sector at local level.

The British Embassy plans to provide support in the area of rule-of-law. They will focus on equal access to justice for vulnerable groups, quality justice, respect for human rights, and develop justice reform milestones that improve delivery of justice to women and men.

D) PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

This activity is based on the theory of change that IF there is an increased engagement and collaboration from citizens, civil society, media, and private sector in the fight against corruption THEN there will be improved government responsiveness and effectiveness in addressing corruption on the national and local level, and creation of a broad social movement against corruption which will unite the efforts of like-minded actors across sectors in demanding zero tolerance of corruption.

To reach its goal, the program will be directed through the following four objectives:

- 1) Improved citizen knowledge and awareness in fighting corruption and promoting good governance and accountability,
- 2) Civil society plays an active role in the fight against corruption,
- 3) Media plays an active role in revealing and addressing corruption, and;
- 4) Private sector is engaged in the fight against corruption.

During the design process USAID identified several potential areas of focus/illustrative results that can guide the development of activities.

Objective 1: Improved citizen knowledge and awareness in fighting corruption and promoting good governance and accountability

Expected results

- Increased citizens' awareness and empowerment to participate in the fight against corruption
- Efficient mechanisms for communicating citizen voice regarding corruption to authorities, media, and general public established
- Increased public pressure on authorities to address corruption by mainstreaming citizens engagement in government oversight

Illustrative Indicators:

- Percentage change in public understanding of corruption and how to report it
- Number of policy changes addressing anti corruption and transparency issues as a result of assistance to CSOs
- Number of citizens engaged in anti corruption advocacy and oversight activities

Objective 2: Civil society plays an active role in the fight against corruption

Expected results

- CSOs empowered to investigate and disclose corruption on national and local levels
- CSOs partner with relevant government agencies to supplement the institutional lack of resources for empirical research and analysis for improved policies and practices for fighting corruption
- Through cross-sectoral coalitions/networks, CSOs engage citizens, media, academia and private sector in carrying out anti-corruption initiatives
- CSOs engage individual citizens and use their actions and momentum to break the cycles of corruption

Illustrative indicators:

- number of joint anti corruption advocacy campaigns
- number of CSOs receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions (F indicator)

Objective 3: Media plays an active role in revealing and addressing corruption

Expected results

- Increased engagement of media and investigative journalism in detecting and exposing corruption
- Improved collaboration and joint actions by media, civil society, and activists to disclose corruption and demand effective institutional response

Illustrative indicators:

- number of investigative journalism articles/reports published
- number of joint initiatives among media, and civil society on corruption

Objective 4: Private sector engaged in the fight against corruption

Expected results

- Fostered culture of integrity and corporate accountability in private sector organizations
- Enhanced engagement of business associations in the enforcement of national and international normative frameworks against corruption and in raising awareness of the damaging effects of corruption
- Strengthened collaboration among government, private sector and civil society in the development and implementation of effective anti-corruption policies and measures

Illustrative indicators:

- number of joint initiatives among civil society, media and private sector to advocate for effective anti corruption policies
- number of initiatives of the private sector to act as “gatekeepers” to prevent or interrupt illicit financial flows.

E) PROGRAM GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The activity must adhere to the following principles:

- The Activity must target areas most vulnerable to high-level corruption, areas that most impact citizen’s lives and trust in institutions, and areas that impact USAID’s strategic priorities.
- The Activity must be results oriented and foster effective partnerships that will last beyond the life of the Activity. USAID encourages creative solutions and results-based activities, and emphasizes local ownership, local investment and local leadership of activities through collaborative design, co-investment and co-leadership of interventions. The Activity must build capacity and commitment, and create effective, sustainable internal systems and norms that will improve good governance and reduce corruption.
- The Activity must build on the existing systems that are in line with the government’s strategies and plans. The activity must seek to bolster meaningful implementation of effective, inclusive and accountable government and non-government policies, strategies, action plans that are sound, sensible and in line with the country’s reform goals.
- The Activity must align with USAID’s Private Sector Engagement policy to the maximum extent possible as the private sector has profound self-interest and great potential to assume a vital role in the fight against corruption. The Activity must leverage market-based approaches

and seek to understand and address private sector constraints in combating corruption.

- The Activity must also incorporate youth in the fight against corruption. Interventions must ensure that the representation, participation, and capacity building of youth at all levels of interventions will be in line with positive youth development approaches. The Activity must integrate a “nothing for them, without them” approach in combating corruption.
- The Activity must integrate collaboration, learning and adaptation principles that will leverage USAID and host-country investments across the different activities and strategic priorities of the Country Development Cooperation Strategy. Ways this can be done are to: 1) identify areas of shared interest and work together where it makes sense, reduce duplication of efforts, and share knowledge across sectoral boundaries; 2) utilize a variety of sources of information (including data from monitoring, portfolio reviews, findings of research, evaluations, analyses conducted by USAID or third parties, knowledge gained from experience) to reflect on approaches; and 3) apply learning and make adjustments during implementation. It is critical that the Activity builds in flexibility in order to respond to the regular shifts in the operating environment and ensure an ability to respond to windows of opportunity.

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID intends to award one (1) Cooperative Agreement award pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide **\$4,000,000 to \$6,000,000 in total USAID funding over a five-year (5) period** for this program. The applicant’s (full) technical and cost application must strictly adhere to the cost principles and propose impactful activities and interventions with associated fair, reasonable, and realistic costs.

2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The anticipated period of performance is (5) five years from the date of the award. The estimated start date will be at or around March, 2023.

3. Substantial Involvement

Consistent with ADS 303.3.11, USAID/North Macedonia will be substantially involved during the implementation of this Cooperative Agreement. The specific areas of USAID involvement will include:

1. Approval of the Recipient’s Annual Work Plans
2. Approval of Key Personnel
3. Agency And Recipient Collaboration or Joint Participation
 - a. Approval of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
 - b. Approval of sub-awards
 - c. Collaboration with USAID on specific technical matters.

4. Agency authority to immediately halt an activity if detailed performance specifications are not met.

4. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for the procurement of commodities and services under this program is 937. Geographic Code 937 is defined as the United States, the cooperating/recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, and excluding prohibited sources.

5. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support. The successful Recipient will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives and the efficient and effective administration of the award through the application of sound management practices. The Recipient will assume responsibility for administering Federal funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreements, program objectives, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award.

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility for this NOFO is not restricted. All U.S. and non-U.S. private, for-profit, and nonprofit organizations, and other non-governmental organizations, are eligible to submit an application. Public International Organizations are not eligible to apply for funding under this program. Further, the organization must be a legally recognized organizational entity under applicable law. USAID will not accept concept papers/applications from individuals. Foreign government- owned parastatal organizations from countries that are ineligible for assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) or related appropriations acts are ineligible.

USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy goal is to identify partners that are ready to co-create and co-invest for better outcomes of joint interventions. This goal embodies the core belief that the country must lead its own development journey and that the local partners should navigate, finance and own the activities. USAID will play a catalytic role by empowering local partners to propose, implement and co-invest solutions for the development challenges. According to the New Partnerships Initiative Action Plan, USAID/North Macedonia's goal is to shift its focus further to locally led solutions and partners.

Entities as defined below are eligible for award. USAID defines a "local entity" as an individual, a corporation, a nonprofit organization, or another body of persons that:

- Is legally organized under the laws of North Macedonia; and
- Has as its principal place of business or operations in North Macedonia; and
- Is majority owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of North Macedonia; and
- Is managed by a governing body the majority of who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the country receiving assistance.

For purposes of this section, 'majority owned' and 'managed by' include, without limitation, beneficiary interests and the power, either directly or indirectly, whether exercised or exercisable, to control the election, appointment, or tenure of the organization's managers or a majority of the organization's governing body by any means.

USAID strongly encourages applications from potential new partners who meet the above eligibility requirements and are willing to be subjected to a Pre-Award Risk Assessment, which is a pre-award audit to determine fiscal responsibility (i.e., whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objective of this program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award).

USAID also welcomes concept papers from organizations that have not previously received financial assistance from USAID.

While not an exhaustive list and provided for illustrative purposes only, the following types of organizations are encouraged to participate:

- Civic groups
- Colleges and universities
- Cooperatives
- Faith-based organizations
- Foundations
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Private businesses
- Trade associations
- Business associations and chambers
- Business support organizations
- Consulting companies

Faith-based organizations are eligible to apply for federal financial assistance on the same basis as any other organization and are subject to the protections and requirements of Federal law.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NOFO and meet eligibility standards in Section C of this NOFO. This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity and to ensure that the NOFO has been received from the internet in its entirety. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the NOFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

Each applicant organization is limited to one concept paper submission as the Prime applicant. There is no limitation on being included as a potential Sub-awardee. USAID discourages the use of exclusive teaming arrangements.

Submissions from organizations that do not meet the above eligibility criteria will not be reviewed and evaluated.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no cost share requirement under this notice of funding opportunity. Applicants may propose cost share, but this will not be subject to evaluation under the merit review criteria.

SECTION D: CONCEPT PAPER AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency Point of Contact

Title Foreign Service Agreement Officer
Mail Address: USAID/Kosovo's Regional Office of Acquisition & Assistance
U.S. Agency for International Development
Embassy of the United States of America
Rr. 4 Korriku Nr. 25 Arberia,
Pristina, Kosovo 10000

2. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this NOFO should be submitted by e-mail, in English language no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment to this NOFO, if that information is necessary in submitting concept papers or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicant.

3. General Content and Form of Concept Papers:

This is a multi-phase process which starts with submission of a concept paper, and depending on the concept paper evaluation, may further continue with collaborative design activities, and ultimately submission of a full application. USAID will inform applicant(s) deemed eligible to participate in collaborative design, and ultimately request submission of a full application from the apparently successful applicant(s).

Concept papers must comply with the following:

- Page limitations. USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections.
- Language requirements. Concept papers must be written in English.
- Page formats. Use standard 8 ½" x 11", single-sided, single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font. A 10-point font can be used for graphs, tables, and charts. Use, 1" margins, left justification, and headers and/or footers on each page that include consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and applicant's name.
- File format: Submit using a single searchable and editable PDF.

Full applications must comply with the following:

- Page limitations. USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections.
- Language requirements. Applications must be written in English.
- Page formats. Use standard 8 ½" x 11", single-sided, single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font. A 10-point font can be used for graphs, tables, and charts. Use 1" margins, left justification, and headers and/or footers on each page that include consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and applicant's name.

- File formats. Submit using searchable and editable Microsoft Word or PDF formats, except budget files which must be submitted using Microsoft Excel.
- The cost application must include an Excel spreadsheet with all cells unlocked and no hidden formulas or sheets.

4. Phase 1: Concept Paper

4.1 Submission Instructions

Concept papers must be submitted electronically (via email) to Claudio Ballesteros at cballesteros@usaid.gov and Florentin Emini at femini@usaid.gov no later than the closing date and time indicated in the cover letter (October 14, 2022 at 2 p.m. Skopje Time). Late submissions may be considered, at the discretion of the Agreement Officer. Email submissions must include the following information in the subject line:

“RFA 72016522RFA00009 – [name of organization] – Concept Paper”

The technical section and the cost section of the concept paper must be submitted in separate emails. USAID will not be responsible for errors in compiling electronic concept papers if no instructions are provided or are unclear.

After submitting a concept paper electronically, Applicants should immediately check their own email to confirm that the attachments were indeed sent. If an Applicant discovers an error in transmission, please send the material again and note in the subject line of the email or indicate in the file name if submitted via grants.gov that it is a “corrected” submission. Do not send the same email more than once unless there has been a change, and if so, please note that it is a “corrected” email.

Applicants are reminded that email is NOT instantaneous, and in some cases delays of several hours occur from transmission to receipt. Therefore, Applicants are requested to send the concept paper in sufficient time ahead of the deadline. For this NOFO, the initial point of entry to the government infrastructure is the USAID mail server.

There may be a problem with the receipt of *.zip files due to anti-virus software. Therefore, Applicants are discouraged from sending files in this format as USAID/North Macedonia cannot guarantee their acceptance by the internet server. File size must not exceed 25 MB.

Do not submit concept papers via grants.gov as they will not be accepted.

**SUMMARY TABLE FOR INITIAL TECHNICAL & COST SUBMISSION
FOR PHASE 1: CONCEPT PAPER PHASE:
(DUE by the Closing Date of October 14, 2022 at 2 p.m. Skopje Time)**

CONTENT	PAGE LIMITS
4.2 Contents and Form: Technical Submission	(No more than 9 pages)
4.2.1 Technical Submission: Cover page	(No more than 1 page)
4.2.2 Technical Approach	(No more than 5 pages)
4.2.3 Management Plan	(No more than 2 pages)
4.2.4 History of Performance	(No more than 1 page)
4.3 Contents and Form: Cost Submission	(No more than 2 pages)
4.3.1 Cover Page	(No more than 1 page)
4.3.2 Estimated Summary Budget	(No more than 1 page)
TECHNICAL & COST SUBMISSION	(No more than 11 pages in its entirety.)

4.2 Contents and Form: Technical Submission (up to 9 pages)

Concept papers must not exceed eleven (11) pages in total, including the cover pages and budget. The technical and cost submission must be submitted as separate documents:

 Technical Submission: nine (9) pages

 Cost Submission: two (2) pages

Applicants are advised that any pages exceeding the total page limit or the page limits for each individual section will not be considered for evaluation.

4.2.1 Technical Submission: Cover page (up to 1 page)

Both the technical and cost sections of the concept papers must include a cover page containing the following information:

- Name of the organization(s) submitting the concept paper
- Identification and signature of the primary contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address) and the identification of the alternate contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address)
- Table of contents
- Program name
- Notice of Funding Opportunity number
- Name of any proposed sub-recipients or partnerships (identify if any of the organizations are local organizations, per USAID’s definition of ‘local entity’ under ADS 303.

4.2.2 Technical Approach (up to 5 pages)

Applicants must describe how the proposed concept will achieve the program objectives in the NOFO Program Description and how the concept will contribute towards accomplishing the expected results in the NOFO Program Description. The Technical Approach must include:

1. A results framework supporting the objectives. (A results framework is the program logic that explains how the objectives are to be achieved, including causal relationships and underlying assumptions.)
2. Evidence and the rationale for the results framework.
3. Innovative and informed ideas demonstrating strong knowledge of citizen engagement, as well as transparency, accountability and anti-corruption programming within North Macedonia or the region.
4. Flexibility to act on opportunities to create a broad social movement against corruption.
5. Ability to develop resource partnerships to implement activities of joint interest with the civil society, private sector, media, or government institutions.
6. Focus on local actors, resources, and opportunities.
7. Mutually reinforcing and well-integrated components.

4.2.3 Management Plan (up to 2 pages)

Applicants must provide an organizational chart (with titles and lines of reporting) depicting a notional management and staffing plan that will carry out the results framework described in the Technical Approach. If the Applicant is considering any sub-awardees, they should provide a brief overview of what role they would play in implementation of the program.

4.2.4 History of Performance (up to 1 page)

The Applicant must provide three examples of its most recent projects, or projects most relevant to its concept paper, including:

1. The title of the project;
2. Location;
3. Dates;
4. Total Funding;
5. Donor (if any); and
6. A brief description of the project.

4.3 Contents and Form: Cost Submission (up to 2 pages)

4.3.1 Cover Page (up to 1 page)

The cover page for the cost submission must include the same information as the cover page for the technical submission. A template is provided in Annex 1.

4.3.2 Estimated Summary Budget (up to 1 page)

The Applicant must estimate prime award costs and costs for any proposed subawards. The summary budget must follow the template enclosed as Annex 1.

5. Collaborative Design Process

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID will invite a subset of the most highly selected concept paper applicant(s) to engage in a round of collaborative design discussions and/or workshop(s) prior to submission of a full application. The aim of the collaborative design phase is to further define Activity objectives, design interventions, align timelines and develop budgets. Through this communication, both the applicant and USAID may identify additional resources, partners, or strategies necessary to successfully implement the Activity.

6. Phase 2 – Full Application – Open only to organizations selected in Phase 1

6.1 Full Application Submission Procedures

Invited applicants must submit full applications to this NOFO no later than the closing date and time indicated in the letter requesting a full application. Late applications may be considered at the discretion of the Agreement Officer. Applicants must retain proof of timely delivery in the form of system generated documentation of delivery receipt date and time. Applicants must ensure that all necessary documentation is complete and received by USAID on time.

Full Applications must be submitted in two separate parts: (a) Technical Application and (b) Business/Cost Application. Please indicate in the subject line of the email whether the email relates to the technical application or the cost application. Your subject line should also indicate the desired sequence of emails (if more than one is sent) and of attachments (e.g., “No. 1 of 4”).

For example, if your cost application is being sent in two emails, the first email will have a subject line which says: “[RFA 72016522RFA00009], [organization name], Cost Application, Part 1 of 2”.

All applications received by the submission deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness to the NOFO and the application format. No additions or modifications will be accepted after the submission date.

After the application has been sent electronically, immediately check your own email to confirm that the attachments were included. If a transmission error is discovered, please send the material again. Do not submit the same document unless there has been a change or send the same email more than once unless there has been a change; and if so, please note that it is a “corrected” email.

6.2 Technical Application Format

The technical application must be specific, complete, and concise. The application must demonstrate a clear understanding of the work to be undertaken, the responsibilities of all parties involved, offer critical thinking and analysis for each component, demonstrate how the programmatic approach and operational principles will be implemented, and tie the technical approach to the Objectives to be achieved. The application must take into account the requirements of the Activity and merit review criteria found in this NOFO.

The technical application consists of eight sections as described below. Each section must comply with the section page limit listed. Pages outside the page limits will not be considered.

- a. Cover Page (one page)
- b. Table of Contents (one page)
- c. Acronym List (one page)
- d. Technical Approach (15 pages)
- e. Management, Staffing Plan and Key Personnel (five pages)
- f. Outline of Year One Work Plan (two pages)
- g. Resumes and References for Key Personnel (two pages for each key personnel position)
- h. Key Personnel Letters of Commitment (one page each)

Additional guidance, where needed, is provided for the following sections:

6.2.1 Cover Page (one page)

The Cover Page must include the following information

- a. Activity title
- b. RFA number
- c. Name of primary or lead organization (s) applying
- d. Any partnerships and/or proposed sub-awardees
- e. Contact person, telephone number, fax number, address, and types of name(s) and title(s) of person(s) who prepared the application, and corresponding signatures.
- f. The Tax Identification Number (TIN)/Employer Identification Number (EIN) and SAM Unique Entity ID (UEI) numbers of the Prime Applicant and any proposed sub-applicants.

6.2.2 Technical Approach (15 pages)

The technical approach must provide a clear description of the Applicant's proposed plan for achieving the objectives in the NOFO and results in the submitted Concept Paper Results Framework. The approach must describe how interventions will drive behavior-led changes. The Applicant must demonstrate clearly how the Objectives and Results will be achieved. The Applicant must also present a plan which describes how they will meaningfully engage with local partners.

The Applicant must also demonstrate a strategy and approach to systems strengthening and capacity building. It should be linked to evidence and past sustainable success in sustainably building the skills and capacity of host government actors to successfully fulfill their government roles.

The technical approach must also reflect how the Applicant plans to learn and adapt its program to the changing needs and capacity-building requirements of the local government.

6.2.3 Management and Staffing Plan and Key Personnel (five pages)

Applicants must submit a Management and Staffing Plan that includes the following:

- An organizational chart showing all positions proposed across all objectives, inter-staff relationships, proposed office structure, and integration of consultants (as applicable).
- An overview of how activities and communication will be managed and coordinated between the prime and sub-recipients.

- The proposed approach to recruitment and staffing for efficient program launch and effective performance.
- A description of how adaptive management will be expressed through staffing skills, management structure, project organizational culture, business processes, and stakeholder engagement throughout project implementation.

The Applicant must propose and justify up to five “Key Personnel” positions within its staffing plan and provide the following information for each:

- Brief description of the role and responsibilities,
- Qualifications and relevant work experience of individuals proposed,
- Rationale for the appropriateness of proposed individual, and
- Description of how the position and the individual filling it support effective implementation.

6.2.4 Outline of Year One Work Plan (two pages)

Applicants must submit an outline of the first year Work Plan, which illustrates the Applicant’s proposed activities and their planned timing and sequence.

6.3 Cost Application Format

The Cost Application must be submitted separately from the Technical Application. While no page limit exists for the full cost application, Applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible while still providing the necessary details. The business (cost) application must illustrate the entire period of performance, using the budget format shown in the SF-424A.

Prior to award, Applicants may be required to submit additional documentation deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to assess the Applicant’s risk in accordance with 2 CFR 200.205. Applicants will not submit any additional information with their initial application.

Applicants should indicate the Exchange Rate of Ghana Cedi per US dollar that they use in developing their budget.

The Cost Application must contain the following sections (which are further elaborated below this listing with the letters for each requirement)

6.3.1 Cover page

The Business/Cost application must include a cover page containing the following information:

- a. Activity title.
- b. RFA number.
- c. Name of lead or primary organization(s) applying.
- d. Any partnerships and/or proposed sub-awardees; and
- e. Contact person, telephone number, fax number, address, and types of name(s) and title(s) of person(s) who prepared the application, and corresponding signatures

6.3.2 SF 424 Form

The Applicant must sign and submit the cost application using the SF-424 series. Standard Forms can be accessed electronically at www.grants.gov or using the following links:

Instructions for SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html
Instructions for SF-424A Budget Information (SF-424A)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html
Instructions for SF-424B Assurances (SF-424B)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html

Failure to accurately complete these forms could result in the rejection of the application.

6.3.3 Required Certifications and Assurances

The Applicant must complete the following documents and submit a signed copy with their full application:

- a. “Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient” document found at <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303mav.pdf>
- b. Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
- c. Certificate of Compliance: Please submit a copy of your Certificate of Compliance if your organization's systems have been certified by USAID/Washington's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA).

6.3.4 Budget and Budget Narrative

The Budget must be submitted as one unprotected Excel file (MS Office 2000 or later versions) with visible formulas and references and must be broken out by project year, including itemization of the federal and non-federal (cost share) amount. Files must not contain any hidden or otherwise inaccessible cells. Budgets with hidden cells lengthen the cost analysis time required to make an award and may result in a rejection of the cost application. Applicants must use the budget template in Annex 2 of the NOFO.

The Budget Narrative must be a written narrative in Word or PDF formats that explains individual cost elements and how they were estimated. The narrative must contain sufficient detail to allow USAID to understand the proposed costs.

The Applicant must ensure the budgeted costs address any additional requirements identified in Section F, such as Branding and Marking. The Budget Narrative must be thorough, including sources for costs to support USAID’s determination that the proposed costs are fair and reasonable.

The Budget must include the following worksheets or tabs, and contents, at a minimum:

- Summary Budget, inclusive of all program costs (federal and non-federal), broken out by major budget category and by year for activities implemented by the Applicant and any potential sub-Applicants for the entire period of the program. See Section H for Summary Budget Template
- Detailed Budget, including a breakdown by year, sufficient to allow the Agency to determine that the costs represent a realistic and efficient use of funding to implement the Applicant’s program and are allowable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E.
- Detailed Budgets for each Sub-Recipient, for all federal funding and cost share, broken out by budget category and by year, for the entire implementation period of the project.

The Detailed Budget must contain the following budget categories and information, at a minimum:

a. Salary and Allowances - Must be proposed consistent with 2 CFR 200.430 Compensation - Personal Services. The Applicant's budget must include position title, salary rate, level of effort, and salary escalation factors for each position. Allowances, when proposed, must be broken down by specific type and by position. Applicants must explain all assumptions in the Budget Narrative. The Budget Narrative must demonstrate that the proposed compensation is reasonable for the services rendered and consistent with what is paid for similar work in other activities of the Applicant. Applicants must provide their established written policies on personnel compensation. If the Applicant's written policies do not address a specific element of compensation that is being proposed, the Budget Narrative must describe the rationale used and support market research.

b. Fringe Benefits - (if applicable) If the Applicant has a fringe benefit rate approved by an agency of the U.S. Government, the Applicant must use such rate and provide evidence of its approval. If an Applicant does not have a fringe benefit rate approved, the Applicant must propose a rate and explain how the Applicant determined the rate. In this case, the Budget Narrative must include a detailed breakdown of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., superannuation, gratuity, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in U.S. dollars and as a percentage of salaries.

c. Travel and Transportation - Provide details to explain the purpose of the trips, the number of trips, the origin and destination, the number of individuals traveling, and the duration of the trips. Per Diem and associated travel costs must be based on the Applicant's normal travel policies. When appropriate please provide supporting documentation as an attachment, such as company travel policy, and explain assumptions in the Budget Narrative.

d. Procurement or Rental of Goods (Equipment & Supplies), Services, and Real Property- Must include information on estimated types of equipment, models, supplies and the cost per unit and quantity. The Budget Narrative must include the purpose of the equipment and supplies and the basis for the estimates. The Budget Narrative must support the necessity of any rental costs and reasonableness in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable property, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased.

e. Subawards – Specify the budget for the portion of the program to be passed through to any subrecipients. See 2 CFR 200.330 for assistance in determining whether the sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor. The subrecipient budgets must align with the same requirements as the Applicant's budget, including those related to fringe and indirect costs.

f. Knowledge Management - The Applicant must incorporate the estimated cost for knowledge management as described in Section A.

g. AMELP - The Applicant must allocate sufficient human and financial resources within the budget necessary for successful implementation of the AMELP.

h. Reports – The activity will require various reports throughout the life of the Activity as included in section F.

i. Security – The Applicant must clearly identify security costs in the budget and budget narrative that demonstrates it has undertaken a thoughtful review of their security needs to successfully implement the Activity as presented in its technical approach

j. Environmental Compliance – The Applicant must include enough resources in the budget to ensure it can comply with environmental requirements for this Activity.

k. Other Direct Costs - This may include other costs not elsewhere specified, such as report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams, and inoculations, as well as any other miscellaneous costs which directly benefit the program proposed by the Applicant. The Applicant should indicate the subject, venue and duration of any proposed conferences and seminars, and their relationship to the objectives of the program, along with estimates of costs. Otherwise, the narrative should be minimal.

l. Indirect Costs - Applicants must indicate whether they are proposing indirect costs or will charge all costs directly. In order to better understand indirect costs please see Subpart E of 2 CFR 200.414. The application must identify which approach they are requesting and provide the applicable supporting information. Below are the most commonly used Indirect Cost Rate methods:

Method 1 - Direct Charge Only

Eligibility: Any Applicant

Initial Application Requirements: See above on direct costs

Method 2 - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)

Eligibility: Any Applicant with a NICRA issued by a USG Agency must use that NICRA

Initial Application Requirements: If the Applicant has a current NICRA, submit your approved NICRA and the associated disclosed practices. If your NICRA was issued by an Agency other than USAID, provide the contact information for the approving Agency. Additionally, at the Agency's discretion, a provisional rate may be set forth in the award subject to audit and finalization. See USAID's Indirect Cost Rate Guide for Non Profit Organizations for further guidance.

Method 3 - De minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC)

Eligibility: Any Applicant that has never received a NICRA

Initial Application Requirements: Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate an indirect rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. The Applicant must describe which cost elements it charges indirectly vs. directly. See 2 CFR 200.414(f) for further information.

Method 4 - Indirect Costs Charged as A Fixed Amount

Eligibility: Non U.S. non-profit organizations without a NICRA may request, but approval is at the discretion of the AO

Initial Application Requirements: Provide the proposed fixed amount and a worksheet that includes the following:

- Total costs incurred by the organization for the previous fiscal year and estimates for the current year.

- Indirect costs (common costs that benefit the day-to-day operations of the organization, including categories such as salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting, or that benefit and are identifiable to more than one program or activity, such as depreciation, rental costs, operations and maintenance of facilities, and telephone expenses) for the previous fiscal year and estimates for the current year
- Proposed method for prorating the indirect costs equitably and consistently across all programs and activities of using a base that measures the benefits of that particular cost to each program or activity to which the cost applies.

If the Applicant does not have an approved NICRA and does not elect to utilize the 10% de minimis rate, the Agreement Officer will provide further instructions and may request additional supporting information, including financial statements and audits, if the application is still under consideration after the merit review. USAID is under no obligation to approve the Applicant's requested method.

m. Cost Sharing - The Applicant must include the amount of cost-sharing resources to be provided over the life of the agreement and specify the sources of such resources, and the basis of calculation in the budget narrative. Applicants must also provide a breakdown of the cost share (financial and in-kind contributions) of all organizations involved in implementing the resulting award.

7. Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407

Inclusion of an item of cost in the detailed application budget does not satisfy any requirements for prior approval by the Agency. If the Applicant would like the award to reflect approval of any cost elements for which prior written approval is specifically required for allowability, the Applicant must specify and justify that cost. See 2 CFR 200.407 for information regarding which cost elements require prior written approval.

8. Approval of Subawards

The Applicant must submit information for all subawards that it wishes to have approved at the time of award. For each proposed subaward the Applicant must provide the following:

- Name of organization
- SAM UEI Number
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not appear on the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) list
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not have active exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM)
- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not listed in the United Nations Security designation list
- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not suspended or debarred
- Confirmation that the Applicant has completed a risk assessment of the subrecipient, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.331(b)
- Any negative findings as a result of the risk assessment and the Applicant's plan for mitigation.

9. SAM and UEI Requirements

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements. Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is exempted from requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

1. Provide a valid UEI number for the applicant and all proposed sub-recipients;
2. Be registered in SAM before submitting the award takes place. SAM is streamlining processes, eliminating the need to enter the same data multiple times, and consolidating hosting to make the process of doing business with the government more efficient (www.sam.gov).
3. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award, concept paper, full application, or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin the process early. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements above by the time USAID is ready to make an award, USAID may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

SAM registration: www.sam.gov

Non-U.S. applicants can find additional resources for registering in SAM, including a Quick Start Guide and a video on how to obtain an NCAGE code, on www.sam.gov, navigate to Help, then to International Registrants.

10. Funding Restrictions

Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients under this award. See 2 CFR 200.331 for assistance in determining whether a sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor.

Construction **will not be** authorized under this award.

USAID will not allow the reimbursement of pre-award costs under this award without the explicit written approval of the Agreement Officer.

Except as may be specifically approved in advance by the Agreement Officer, all commodities and services that will be reimbursed by USAID under this award must be from the authorized geographic code specified in Section B.4 of this NOFO and must meet the source and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR 228.

11. Branding Strategy & Marking Plan

The Successful Applicant must provide a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan (BSMP) to be evaluated and approved by the Agreement Officer within 30 days of the award being made, which will be incorporated into the resulting award. It must include all estimated costs associated with the branding and marking of the Activity, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events and materials, etc.

Applicants must briefly describe (not to exceed two pages) how they will promote USAID identity, U.S. Government's support for this Activity and the Activity's achievements in Ghana. It is a Federal statutory and regulatory requirement that all overseas programs, projects, activities, public communications, and commodities that USAID partially or fully funds under an assistance award or sub-award must be appropriately marked with the USAID identity.

The branding and marking plan must be consistent with USAID's Branding and Marking Policy. USAID's Agreement Officer will have final approval of the branding strategy and marking plan. The branding and marking plan will be included in and made a part of the resulting associate cooperative agreement.

Branding Strategy – Assistance (June 2012)

- a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Branding Strategy," describing how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, and how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and host country citizens.
- b. The request for a Branding Strategy, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.
- c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Branding Strategy within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.
- d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.
- e. The Branding Strategy must include, at a minimum, all of the following:
 1. All estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth.
 2. The intended name of the program, project, or activity.
- i. USAID requires the applicant to use the "USAID Identity," comprised of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline "from the American people" as found on the USAID Web site at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding>, unless Section VI of the RFA or APS states that the USAID Administrator has approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.

- ii. USAID prefers local language translations of the phrase “made possible by (or with) the generous support of the American People” next to the USAID Identity when acknowledging contributions.
 - iii. It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.
 - iv. If branding in the above manner is inappropriate or not possible, the applicant must explain how USAID's involvement will be showcased during publicity for the program or project.
 - v. USAID prefers to fund projects that do not have a separate logo or identity that competes with the USAID Identity. If there is a plan to develop a separate logo to consistently identify this program, the applicant must attach a copy of the proposed logos. Section VI of the RFA or APS will state if an Administrator approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.
3. The intended primary and secondary audiences for this project or program, including direct beneficiaries and any special target segments.
 4. Planned communication or program materials used to explain or market the program to beneficiaries.
 - i. Describe the main program message.
 - ii. Provide plans for training materials, posters, pamphlets, public service announcement, billboards, Web sites, and so forth, as appropriate.
 - iii. Provide any plans to announce and promote publicly this program or project to host country citizens, such as media releases, press conferences, public events, and so forth. Applicant must incorporate the USAID Identity and the message, “USAID is from the American People.”
 - iv. Provide any additional ideas to increase awareness that the American people support this project or program.
 5. Information on any direct involvement from host-country government or ministry, including any planned acknowledgement of the host-country government.
 6. Any other groups whose logo or identity the applicant will use on program materials and related materials. Indicate if they are a donor or why they will be visibly acknowledged, and if they will receive the same prominence as USAID.
 - f. The Agreement Officer will review the Branding Strategy to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.
 - g. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Branding Strategy will be 4 included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement

Marking Plan – Assistance (June 2012)

- a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a “Marking Plan,” detailing the public communications, commodities, and program materials, and other items that will visibly bear the “USAID Identity,” which comprises of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline “from the American people.” The USAID Identity is the official marking for the Agency, and is found on the USAID Web site at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding>. Section VI of the RFA or APS will state if an Administrator approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.
- b. The request for a Marking Plan, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.
- c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Marking Plan within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.
- d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.
- e. The Marking Plan must include all of the following:
 1. A description of the public communications, commodities, and program materials that the applicant plans to produce and which will bear the USAID Identity as part of the award, including:
 - (i) Program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects or other sites physical in nature;
 - (ii) Technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audiovisual productions, public service announcements, Web sites/Internet activities, promotional, informational, media, or communications products funded by USAID;
 - (iii) Commodities, equipment, supplies, and other materials funded by USAID, including commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs; and
 - (iv) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.
 - (v) Events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences and other public activities. If the USAID Identity cannot be displayed, the recipient is encouraged to otherwise acknowledge USAID and the support of the American people.
 2. A table on the program deliverables with the following details:
 - (i) The program deliverables that the applicant plans to mark with the USAID Identity;
 - (ii) The type of marking and what materials the applicant will use to mark the program deliverables;

(iii) When in the performance period the applicant will mark the program deliverables, and where the applicant will place the marking; (iv) What program deliverables the applicant does not plan to mark with the USAID Identity, and

(iv) The rationale for not marking program deliverables.

3. Any requests for an exemption from USAID marking requirements, and an explanation of why the exemption would apply. The applicant may request an exemption if USAID marking requirements would:

(i) Compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program or materials where independence or neutrality is an inherent aspect of the program and materials. The applicant must identify the USAID Development Objective, Interim Result, or program goal furthered by an appearance of neutrality, or state why an aspect of the award is presumptively neutral. Identify by category or deliverable item, examples of material for which an exemption is sought.

(ii) Diminish the credibility of audits, reports, analyses, studies, or policy recommendations whose data or findings must be seen as independent. The applicant must explain why each particular deliverable must be seen as credible.

(iii) Undercut host-country government “ownership” of constitutions, laws, regulations, policies, studies, assessments, reports, publications, surveys or audits, public service announcements, or other communications. The applicant must explain why each particular item or product is better positioned as host-country government item or product.

(iv) Impair the functionality of an item. The applicant must explain how marking the item or commodity would impair its functionality.

(v) Incur substantial costs or be impractical. The applicant must explain why marking would not be cost beneficial or practical.

(vi) Offend local cultural or social norms, or be considered inappropriate. The applicant must identify the relevant norm, and explain why marking would violate that norm or otherwise be inappropriate.

(vii) Conflict with international law. The applicant must identify the applicable international law violated by the marking.

f. The Agreement Officer will consider the Marking Plan's adequacy and reasonableness and will approve or disapprove any exemption requests. The Marking Plan will be reviewed to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.

g. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Marking Plan, including any approved exemptions, will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement, and will apply for the term of the award unless provided otherwise.

SECTION E: CONCEPT PAPER AND APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Merit Review & Selection Process

The review process will occur in two phases in accordance with ADS 303.3.6.1(c). Selection under this NOFO will be based on a two-phase process.

Phase 1: Concept paper submissions, open to all eligible organizations as described in this NOFO. Based on the evaluation of their concept papers, applicants may be invited to participate in a collaborative design process, and/or may be invited to submit a full application. Applicants who are not invited to proceed to Phase 2 will be notified.

Phase 2: Submission of full applications upon request, and merit review by USAID of full applications.

Applicants must first submit a concept paper for review. All concept papers will be evaluated according to the criteria specified in this NOFO. If the concept is determined to warrant further evaluation per the selection criteria established, USAID will request a full application.

2. Merit Review Phase 1: Concept Papers

The merit review criteria prescribed here are tailored to the requirements of this particular NOFO. Applicants should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant matters which the applicants should address in their concept papers, and (b) set the standard against which all concept papers will be evaluated. The concept papers will be evaluated based on the following criteria (the Technical Approach factor is more important than the Management Plan factor):

Criterion 1: Technical approach

The extent to which the proposed technical approach and interventions convincingly demonstrates an understanding of the technical requirements and an ability to achieve the activity's goal and objectives specified in the Program Description.

Criterion 2: Management Plan

The extent to which the Applicant convincingly demonstrates a logical and well-thought out management approach, organizational structure and staffing plan that demonstrates how the Applicant will effectively and efficiently organize, mobilize, and manage the necessary resources to implement the proposed interventions to achieve the Activity goal and expected results.

3. Collaborative Design

It is crucial that USAID can fully embrace a co-developing and co-investment model with our partners, which will build ownership and achieve practical and sustained results. The collaborative design process will enable activity design that focuses on local priorities and relevant solutions and relies on the knowledge of the people who will carry out the activities.

USAID anticipates undertaking the collaborative design process after the initial evaluation of the submitted concept notes and the selection of those with the most merit.

4. Merit Review Phase 2: Full Application–Open only to organizations selected in Phase 1

The merit review criteria utilized in Phase 2 will mirror those used in Phase 1 above.

5. Cost Review

The applicant's budget will not be evaluated at the concept paper phase. However, it will be reviewed to assess the realism of the proposed cost elements, within the Applicant's technical and management capability. The Agency will evaluate the cost section of the concept paper(s) acknowledging the limited information provided at this stage.

A more thorough cost review will be performed at a full application phase, to determine whether the costs are allowable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E.

Proposed cost share, if provided, will be reviewed for compliance with the standards set forth in 2 CFR 200.306, 2 CFR 700.10, and the Standard Provision "Cost Sharing (Matching)" for U.S. entities, or the Standard Provision "Cost Share" for non-U.S. entities.

6. Pre-Award Survey (Only for Local Entities)

Prior to making an award under this competition, the Agreement Officer may perform a pre-award survey of a prospective NGO recipient if he/she determines that any of the following criteria apply, in accordance with USAID ADS Chapter 303.3.9.1. Accounting systems, audit issues, and management capability questions may be reviewed as part of this process in order to determine whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills in order to achieve the objectives of the program, or whether specific conditions will be needed. If notified by USAID that a pre-award survey is necessary, applicants must prepare in advance the required information and documents. A pre-award survey does not commit USAID to make an award to any organization.

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

Award of the agreement contemplated by this NOFO cannot be made until funds have been appropriated, allocated and committed through internal USAID procedures. While USAID anticipates that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award.

2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

The resulting award from this NOFO will be administered in accordance with the following policies and regulations.

For U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations:

[Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations - A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 303](#)

For Non US organizations:

[Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations.](#)

3. Reporting Requirements

- **Financial Reporting**

Financial reporting requirements will depend on the method of payment. Recipients will comply with the financial reporting requirements set forth in the USAID standard provisions. If advance payments are provided, reporting periods are calendar quarters or parts thereof. Quarterly financial reports are due not later than 30 days after the end of each calendar quarter. If payment is on a reimbursement basis, financial reports may be submitted monthly, but not less frequently than 30 days after the end of each calendar quarter. Regardless of whether payments are on an advance or reimbursement basis, the final financial report is due not later than 90 days after the estimated completion date of the award. The Recipient must also comply with the USAID standard provision entitled “Reporting Host Government Taxes.”

- **Performance Reporting**

The Recipient will be required to adhere to all reporting requirements listed below and in the resulting agreement. The recipient may consult with the Agreement Officer’s Representative (AOR) on the format and expected content of reports prior to submission. Periodic reporting through USAID/North Macedonia performance monitoring systems is required, which will be included in any resulting award. The reporting requirements of the resulting agreement will include:

- Annual Work Plan
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan

- Quarterly Reports
- Annual Reports
- Closeout Plan
- Final Report

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

1. NOFO Points of Contact

Primary:

Claudio Ballesteros
Regional Office of Acquisition and Assistance (ROAA)
Email: cballesteros@usaid.gov

Secondary:

Florentin Emini
Acquisition and Assistance Specialist
Email: femini@usaid.gov

2. Acquisition and Assistance Ombudsman

The A&A Ombudsman helps ensure equitable treatment of all parties who participate in USAID's acquisition and assistance process. The A&A Ombudsman serves as a resource for all organizations who are doing or wish to do business with USAID. Please visit this page for additional information: <https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/acquisition-assistance-ombudsman>

The A&A Ombudsman may be contacted via: Ombudsman@usaid.gov

SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the concept papers submitted. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. Any award and subsequent incremental funding will be subject to the availability of funds and continued relevance to Agency programming.

1. Concept Papers and Applications with Proprietary Data:

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 purpose, should mark the cover page with the following:

“This concept paper includes data that must not be duplicated, used, or disclosed – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this concept paper. If, however, an award is made as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government will 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 {insert sheet numbers}.”

Additionally, the applicant must mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following:

“Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this concept paper.”

2. VAT Guidance:

USAID Programs in North Macedonia are VAT Exempt. The awardee must initiate the activity registration procedure with the Secretariat for European Affairs and the Public Revenue Office. For more details, please lookout for the project registration guidance available at: <https://www.sep.gov.mk/page/?id=34#.Yf1fEP7MLGh>

ANNEX 1 - SUMMARY BUDGET TEMPLATE

(The excel spreadsheet will be attached to the NOFO separately in Grants.gov)

ANNEX 1

A. NOFO (Request for Concept Papers) Number: 72016522RFA00009

B. Activity Title: Citizens Against Corruption (CAC)

C. Name of the organization applying as the lead applicant:

D. Organization type and country of legal registration: foundation, Republic North Macedonia

E. Contact person for the lead applicant (name, title or position with the organization, phone number and email address):

F. UEI No: _____

G. Name, contact information, and country of legal registry of other partner organization(s) collaborating on the Technical Application:

H. Amount of Funding Requested from USAID \$ _____

Annex 1								
Budget Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total	Total USAID Contribution	Cost Share	Total Program Costs
Salaries	\$	\$		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Fringe Benefits	\$	\$		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Consultants	\$	\$		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Travel & Transportation	\$	\$		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Equipment	\$	\$		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Other Direct Costs	\$	\$		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Subcontracts								
Subgrants								
Indirect cost								
Total								