

**DEVELOPMENT GRANTS PROGRAM 2012
RFA-OAA-12-000025**

**MINUTES
of the DGP Bidders Workshop**

USAID/Macedonia Representatives:

Siena Fleischer **(SF)**, Joseph Lessard **(JL)**, Lela Jakovlevska, **(LJ)**, Ivica Vasev **(IV)**, Risto Rieliev **(RR)**

Proceedings recorded by: Agnesa Lamaxhema

Attendees: 56

Venue: Economic Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of Macedonia

Date: June 18, 2012

Time: 10:00 – 12:00

To commence the workshop Education Officer Siena Fleischer **(SF)** introduced herself, and the USAID/Macedonia team, to the attendees. General background on the 2012 Development Grant Program (DGP) was given, and **SF** presented the DGP objectives, introduced the website www.grants.gov in case they need more detailed information and highlighted key areas of emphasis for the DGPs: innovation and capacity strengthening. The participants received an overview of all the DGP requirements and timeline regarding the concept paper, starting with the language, required format for submission, as well as the type, maximum size and life of the potential award.

It was stated, in line with the country specific guidance for Macedonia, that USAID/Macedonia will accept DGP proposals in three areas this year: democracy and governance, education, and economic growth. Technical office representatives then expounded on the areas they are targeting this year through the DGP:

Lela Jakovlevska **(LJ)** presented for the Education Office. She explained that the Education sector is included in the DGP program for the first time this year. This program area aims to increase capacity for assessments of early grade reading and numeracy skills of students while building the capacity of local service providers. Illustrative activities were highlighted, and all concept papers must stay aligned with the new USAID Education Strategy.

Joe Lessard **(JL)** gave a brief outline of the Economic Growth Office. Economic Growth supports new ideas, which is the main reason why this program exists, to encourage nascent organizations in areas of new program implementation. The main focus of this sector for the DGPs this year is on private sector competitiveness, local economic development, and social entrepreneurship, and by this they aim to strengthen key capacities of a growing pool of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to drive economic growth and create new jobs.

Ivica Vasev (IV) covered the Democracy and Governance Office. It was explained that this office is interested in three areas connected to civil society organizations in the area of human rights and public advocacy (media, government engagement, and monitoring of the government institutions). Responses that offer innovative approaches to stimulating civic activism, engaging with the government on substantive issues, and civic monitoring and oversight are particularly welcomed.

Concept Paper Presentation

Risto Ricliev (RR) explained the overall application process. He highlighted the most important elements of the application process by providing appropriate explanations and clarifications. RR explained how applicants need to focus most on the first step of the applications process, preparation of the concept paper. He said that all material discussed at the Bidders Workshop (presentation accompanied by the concept paper format and content, sample budget) will be posted on the USAID/Macedonia web site during the day or tomorrow morning at the latest.

During the presentation RR talked about the General Overview of the DGP, applicants eligibility, partnerships and alliances, concept paper format and content, eligible costs & budget, programs that cannot be financed under this DGP, cost share requirements, concept paper selection criteria, etc. He highlighted that concept papers must be submitted to: Mr. Ricliev Risto at: rricliev@usaid.gov with a copy to: Ms. Siena Fleischer at sfleischer@usaid.gov, as well as DGP@usaid.gov and that the subject line must read: *Concept paper for DGP-4, submitted to USAID/Macedonia by [name of Applicant organization]*. In addition RR mentioned that USAID/Macedonia accepts only electronic submissions and that the deadline is July 2, 2012, at 17:00 local Macedonia time.

RR provided detailed information on the format/required content of the concept paper and the budget as well. Regarding the concept paper format/content he provided, he listed three main components of the concept paper: (a) cover page, (b) technical description and (c) attachments. In terms of the budget RR talked about the three parts of the budget that must accompany the concept paper: (a) budget summary, (b) detailed budget, and (c) budget notes.

Additionally, RR mentioned that the concept papers will be evaluated in USAID/Macedonia Mission and that, at later stage, once it is decided to go with a concept paper, discussion with the applicant can be initiated in order to clarify or make clearer some elements of the concept papers.

Concept papers that are selected by USAID/Macedonia will be then invited to prepare a Full Application, which are due September 3.

Second part of the workshop consisted of questions and answers (discussion):

Question 1: From Macedonian Enterprise Development Foundation – there are USD two million for each project, how many winning application do you expect to sign?

Response: It was explained that USAID does not do such plans, it depends on the quality of the concept papers received all over the world. Total budget is USD 30 million worldwide. JL explained that it is all relevant, and it is important to go with what an organization is capable of achieving. USAID does not plan the number of awards that will be nominated per sector; it depends on the quality of submitted concept paper. LJ explained that at the end it could end up that only one sector has viable chances at an award. IV mentioned how last year GDP USAID Macedonia mission submitted six proposals and two were winning recipients, from all the proposals submitted worldwide.

Question 2: Cost share may not come from USAID Funding?

Response: If you have two projects, another one from the other government project, it cannot be cost shared, they are separate.

Question 3: A question regarding the statement within the concept paper, how long should the statement be?

Response: Statements can be couple of sentences, not very long; the statement must focus on how the applicant satisfies the criteria defined by USAID for a local NGO (LNGO).

Question 4: Can Universities, non-government, or US based organization be partners?

Response: Eligibility rules are the same for the primes and for the subs. JL explained international NGOs can be eligible for this program; however they cannot be eligible for profit. LJ explained how they cannot be state universities because its state/government funded.

Question 5: Are international organizations that are not based in Macedonian eligible?

Response: It was explained that the foreign organizations who are not registered in the country cannot be partners; the organization has to have its principle business in the recipient country.

Question 6: Konekt applied with their concept paper on the last year's DGP and it was not awarded. They wanted to know if they are allowed to apply with the same project/concept paper and would that be considered suitable practice.

Response: JL explained that it is up to them if they want to submit the same concept paper and that it is their decision, as an organizational; however they have to take into account that the concept paper needs to be improved and updated.

Question 7: ZG Aronija (organic product producer) thanked USAID/Macedonia for the invitation to attend the workshop. He asked if the deadline for submitting the concept paper can be prolonged because it is very short for them (the deadline is July 2, 2012,). They also work with Netherland and Chinese organizations and institutions; hence their question is if there is a list that they can refer to if they want to find US based NGOs.

Response: RR explained that the deadline cannot be changed. July 2 is a date given from Washington, and it is not possible to be prolonged, or changed to another date. He explained that if it's too important for them that they get an extension on the deadline, it is perhaps best to write an email to USAID/Washington expressing the concern of the given date for the deadline. Nonetheless, they can follow the grants website recurrently for any updates and also look for any lists on the grants website, as all the information is posted there.

Question 8: What is specifically considered as US NGO, will it be considered as government funding? NGO based in US but it is not funded by the US?

Response: US NGO is an organization based in the USA but not funded by the USG.

Question 9: What is the suggested format for the budget portion of the concept paper. Should that be submitted as one page?

Response: RR: the budget is included within the six page limit, and the budget should be in one page, or less than one. The budget summary should be included under the component (b) of the concept paper. The detailed budget and the budget notes should be provided as attachments. Q9 continued: For the audit companies do you have a list of local audits?

Response: There are a few local organizations that do audits for USAID here in Macedonia.

Cost Share

RR provided additional information on cost share: it can be provided in cash or in kind - for an example: it's when a general manager decides to work but on pro bono, or she/he is paid less than what his current salary is. If you have IT equipment and you say this lap top will be used specifically only for this project. But it needs to be auditable, documents are necessary. If you already have a vehicle, it can be used toward the new DGP project as part of the cost share.

Slide #12:

Cost share requirements

- At least 10% of total project value
- Cash and/or in-kind
- May come from lead applicant and/or partner organizations, other donors, community members, businesses
- May **not** come from other USG funding or in-kind support
- Provide written commitment as attachment of concept paper / application
- Must be documented
- Auditable and deductible if not met
- In-kind: volunteered staff time, office space and equipment, transportation, donation of goods

Question 10: Association Center of Civic Initiative Prilep asked, for those who are planning on submitting the concept paper, will there be general questions or issues submitted to them, or anything they will receive as feedback? And regarding the budget, can they use their forms, or do they have to use the specific forms that were presented today?

Response: It was explained by SF all the necessary documents and information regarding Concept Paper and Budget will be listed on the USAID Macedonia website. It is not one template (the budget), however it suggested, and it is good to example to follow.

Question 11: Any ideas or projects regarding administration or HR, are those accepted or preferred?

Response: It was explained that the idea is to have projects that bring more investment in program rather than have administrative projects.

Question 12: Shpresa from Tetovo mentioned that they would like to concentrate on the Democracy and Governance part; hence their question is if they can include political parties on monitoring?

Response: IV: Yes you can.

Question 13: Chamber of Crafts of the Republic of Macedonia asked if there are any limitations on funding number of employees of smaller organizations, and what kind of criteria the small organizations have to fulfill in order to register or to apply?

Response: There is no specific rule at this stage. JL: USAID/Macedonia is trying to encourage new organizations and innovative ideas. The concept paper will be the first step to articulate an innovative approach to solving a development problem.

Question 14: One more question from Association Center of Civic Initiative Prilep, they conveyed to the group that they have already applied for the FOSIM proposals through CAPA, and inquiries as to whether any conflicts exist?

Response: Not at the moment, but if they win any of them they will have to disclose it. They will have to let USAID/Macedonia know that they are pursuing another proposal with USAID/Macedonia if applicable.

Question 15: The deadline for the concept paper is July 2, 2012. What would be the next step after that?

Response: RR showed the two slides again in which the complete application process is explained and informed them that they will post them in USAID Macedonia website.

Slide #7 and #8

Application process – part 1

- Step 1: Address for submission of the concept papers
- **Via Email to:** Mr. Ristev Risto at: mrcliev@usaid.gov
with a copy to: Ms. Fleischer Siena at sfleischer@usaid.gov, and DGP@usaid.gov
- with **subject line:** Concept paper for DGP-4, submitted to USAID/Macedonia by [name of Applicant organization]
- USAID/Macedonia accepts only electronic submissions.
 - **Deadline: July 2, 2012, at 17:00 Local Macedonia Time**

Application Process – part 2

- Step 2: Full Applications
- Selected Applicants asked to submit full applications by: August 1, 2012
- Full Applications due: September 3, 2012
- Technical / Cost Evaluation of Full Applications and Discussions/Clarifications thru: October 15, 2012
- Applicants notified of decisions: October 15, 2012
- Pre-award surveys (determination of recipient's responsibility)
- Negotiations
- Anticipated Award: in early 2013

Question 16: Craft Chamber in the Republic of Macedonia is not governmental, and they work in a separate law, can they apply?

Response: If they do not receive government funding, then yes they can apply.