

# ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT FOR THE AWARD OF GRANTS

## APS No. 1

**Issuance Date: March 28, 2024**

<b>Grant Amount:</b>	Max. \$50,000
<b>Duration of Activities:</b>	Max. 12 months
<b>Deadline:</b>	March 27, 2025
<b>Who can apply:</b>	For-profit or non-profit entities, legally established in Armenia or Georgia (For more details see section IV)

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Annual Program Statement (APS) is to present the USAID South Caucasus Regional Water Management (SCRWM) Program and solicit concept papers from organizations, either for profit or non-profit, legally established in Armenia or Georgia, to receive grants and implement activities that contribute to the program's objectives. This Annual Program Statement is issued under the authority of the United States Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

### II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The SCRWM Program is a five-year project funded by USAID to support effective transboundary water cooperation and dialogue between the South Caucasus countries and improve water security and water resource management.

The program implements four cross-related objectives:

- Objective 1. Transboundary environmental and water management networks developed at various levels across the South Caucasus.
- Objective 2. South Caucasus stakeholders take a harmonized approach to transboundary water governance.
- Objective 3. Communities incentivized by introducing new technologies, approaches, and economic models to rationally use water in a manner that demonstrates the benefits of improved water resource utilization across boundaries.
- Objective 4. Responding to emerging opportunities for regional environmental cooperation.

### III. GRANTS PROGRAM

The Grants Program under the USAID SCRWM Program aims to foster collaborative efforts and innovative solutions towards improved water security, improved water resource management and effective environmental cooperation within the South Caucasus region. Through targeted funding opportunities, the program seeks to catalyze grassroots and community-led initiatives, support capacity-building efforts, and promote inclusive approaches to address shared water security and water-related climate change challenges. Project concepts should contribute to at least one of the SCRWM Program objectives described above.

Illustrative activities are described below, however applicants are encouraged to develop and propose their own concepts as long as they fall within broader scope of any of the four objectives of the program:

- **Build Organizational Capacity:** Improve the skills of existing or new environmental, climate change and water management stakeholder groups, platform, or network, to discuss, research, or solve shared environmental, climate change or water security issues, at local, national or regional level and establish joint commitments on such issues.
- **Strengthen Transboundary Cooperation:** Facilitate stakeholder dialogue between entities or communities from at least two of the three SC countries to tackle regional water challenges to promote cooperation and stability.
- **Harmonize Water Governance:** Increase consistency and frequency of communication between key stakeholders from civil society, private and public sector, and academia to address key issues of transboundary water governance with tangible actions.
- Develop and deploy initiatives that improve the legal, policy, institutional background for water management to improve awareness and participation of water users, collection of reliable water data/information, transparent communications around water management decisions, focus on and understanding of priority water risks, learning from past experiences, or engagement of private sector actors in water management.
- **Improve Community-Level Water Utilization:** Design and implement locally led solutions that improve water management at community level, by conserving or protecting water resources, and provide concrete benefits for communities, particularly women, youth and minority groups.
- Augment existing efforts to support local communities to prioritize water resource management infrastructure, mobilize public and private funding to the water and sanitation sector, and implement transboundary water-resources projects.
- Design and implement awareness raising activities for communities, local leaders, school students or public at large on water security, the safe usages of water, the benefits of collaborative water management, the “user/polluter pays” principles, etc.
- Establish processes or technologies for monitoring water bodies (quantity and/or quality) or for monitoring drinking water/wastewater/irrigation service quality and reliability or mechanisms for continuous engagement between service providers and water consumers (e.g. hotlines for feedback and customer service).
- Organize gender equity events to promote the participation and inclusion of woman staff in water operators and/or as community representatives to discuss drinking water, wastewater or irrigation issues, or implement outreach activities to engage young girls and/or female university students in water operations through trainings or internships.
- Provide relevant vocational and skill training for women and youths on water related jobs.
- Propose other innovative approaches and community engagement initiatives to improve drinking water, wastewater, or irrigation services delivery for a wide range of people, including downstream communities.
- **Address water security concerns**, such as droughts, floods, or climate change impacts, and contribute to the identification, awareness, understanding, and reduction of related disasters or risks.

**Note:** These examples are for illustrative purposes only. The recipient may develop other concepts or ideas that align with SCRWM objectives outlined in Section II above.

## **GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS**

***Priority will be given to activities that demonstrate clear, tangible, and significant benefits to multi-ethnic communities, communities across borders, or a diverse array of people, including women, youths, and other disadvantaged groups.***

## **SIZE OF GRANT FUNDING**

We anticipate that the grant amounts will be up to \$50,000 (equivalent of that amount in local currency).

## **CO-FUNDING AND LEVERAGED CONTRIBUTIONS**

Co-funding is not required but is strongly encouraged and is an advantage for receiving a grant award. In-kind contributions, as in goods, materials, cost-free use of equipment, or voluntary labor can be counted.

## **IV. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTS UNDER USAID SCRWM Program**

### **Eligible Organizations**

Grantees must be organizations existing under the applicable Armenian or Georgian laws and must be in compliance with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations. Grantees should display sound management in the form of financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures that are in written format and present a system of controls that safeguard assets, protect against fraud, waste, and abuse, and support the achievements of program goals and objectives.

Eligible Recipients include entities, either for-profit or non-profit, legally established in Armenia or Georgia, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), associations, private or public education institutions (including Legal Entities of Public Law - LEPLs), research institutions, non-entrepreneurial non-commercial legal entities (NNLEs), private companies, and other legally recognized entities.

### **Eligible Activities**

SCRWM Program seeks qualified entities to implement activities that fit with the four objectives listed in Section II above and that align with the program year 2024/2025 activities. During this period Applicants are encouraged to submit ideas in concept paper format that will address one or more of the program objectives.

## **V. GRANT CONCEPT PAPER / GRANT APPLICATION FORMAT**

The grant process includes two successive steps:

1. Preparation and submittal to SCRWM of a concept paper, using the provided template, and
2. After successful review and instruction from the SCRWM program, preparation and submittal of a full application, using again the compulsory templates.

English is the preferred language for both concept papers and applications, but Applicants can also submit in their local/state language.

### **FIRST STAGE | GRANT CONCEPT PAPER**

The first step is for applicants to submit a short document, called a "Grant Concept Paper". The Grant Concept Paper form should be completed online through the Grants Portal: <https://dgrants.fluxx.io/>. Submission through the portal will be available from May, 2024.

First time Applicants will be required to register for an account and upon approval will receive an email notification with the necessary log-in credentials to access the portal. The portal details submission instructions for completing a web-based application form and contains all required document and budget attachments to be included with the application.

**If an Applicant is unable to access or use the portal, an electronic copy of the Grant Concept Paper form can also be requested by contacting [grants@scrwm.org](mailto:grants@scrwm.org).** Concept papers can then be submitted to the same email address providing both completed **Attachment 1. Concept Paper Form** and **Attachment 2. Budget Form** as well as **registration documents from the Public Registry**. Please indicate **APS No. 1** in the submission email subject line.

The Grant Manager will inform the Applicant of SCRWM Program findings, and the application process will either end here (for unsuccessful concept papers) or the Applicant will be directed to develop the concept paper into a full grant application (for successful concept papers).

## **SECOND STAGE | FULL GRANT APPLICATION**

The second step is for successful organizations to submit a longer document called a full grant application package. The Full application should be completed online through the same Grants Portal (<https://usaid-xxxx.fluxx.io>). The accepted Concept Paper form will be automatically converted into the Grant Application Form with additional questions and attachment requirements. The Applicant is expected to submit a full application which includes:

1. Grant Application Form
2. Budget Form including Financial Plan Summary
3. Documents to verify eligibility (Producer Organization's registration documents and by-laws)
4. Applicants Financial and Accounting System Information
5. Mandatory Certifications and Assurances:
  - Certification regarding terrorist financing
  - Certification regarding lobbying
  - Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Applicants
  - The Anti-Terrorist Certification (ATC)
  - Key Individual Certification - Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking
  - Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion – Lower Tier Covered Transactions Recipients will be required to sign and comply with the content of the above certifications as a part of the grant agreement once funding is approved.
  - Non-U.S. Recipient Certificate of Compliance
  - Anti-Corruption Certification

***Applicants must submit all forms for the application to be considered complete.***

## **VI. REVIEW AND SELECTION CRITERIA**

### **REVIEW OF CONCEPT PAPERS/APPLICATIONS**

Concept papers will be accepted until March 2025 on a rolling basis. The review process includes three steps:

1. Eligibility
2. Review/selection of concept papers
3. Review/evaluation of full applications

The Grants Selection Committee will meet on a regular basis to review the submitted concept papers.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

The first screening step to ascertain whether the Applicant and proposed activity meet the minimum eligibility criteria listed below:

- **Documentation:** Incomplete concept papers or concept papers submitted on a different template will not be technically reviewed. Such applicants will be notified and can resubmit appropriately.
- **Legal Status:** The applicant must be a legally recognized entity, such as a registered nonprofit organization, or for-profit business.

### **CONCEPT SELECTION**

Concept papers that meet the eligibility criteria will be passed to the Grants Selection Committee (GSC) for further evaluation and possible selection.

The key review criteria for concept papers are:

1. Is the proposed activity consistent with the objectives of the APS as outlined in Section II, and does it contribute to SCRWM's expected results?
2. Does the applicant organization demonstrate adequate capability to implement the proposed activity, and does it have previous relevant experience?
3. Does the proposed activity benefit multi-ethnic communities or communities across borders or a wide array of people including women, youths, and other disadvantaged groups?

If the Concept Paper is not selected, the Applicant will be formally notified. If it is selected, the Applicant will be notified and the Grants Manager will request the full application.

### **FULL APPLICATION EVALUATION**

Applications that comply with the required template and full documentation will be passed to the Grants Evaluation Committee (GEC) for further evaluation. Consistent criteria will be used to evaluate full applications and is weighted to reflect project priorities.

The key review criteria for full applications are:

- Technical approach, timeline, local capacity-building, gender equality and social inclusion considerations
- Implementation capacity: CVs and past performance
- Results/impacts, potential for replicability or scale-up, monitoring approach
- Cost reasonableness and grantee/third party contributions

## **VII. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Any questions regarding the APS or its contents should be sent to [grants@scrwm.org](mailto:grants@scrwm.org).

Online information sessions will also be organized for interested entities. Such entities should sign up using the link provided: <https://forms.office.com/e/gQ0dyMf0fV> so as to be notified in advance of the date and time on the online information sessions. Phone calls will not be accepted.

Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award commitment on the part of SCRWM, nor does it commit SCRWM to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, SCRWM reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. All application preparation and submission costs are at the Applicant's expense and risk.

The actual number of awards under this APS is subject to the availability of funds and the viability of the applications received. Recipients of grant awards, foreign or domestic, are required to obtain SAM (reference 2 CFR 25), and a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number for awards higher than \$25,000.

In the event that an offeror wishes to dispute any decision of Deloitte during the APS process, including award, the offeror must submit a written appeal to Deloitte including all relevant and material evidence to support its position. Deloitte shall then review the written appeal and issue a final decision within fifteen (15) days or provide notice of the need for additional time. The final decision of Deloitte shall be binding upon offeror.