**TRequest for Applications**

**USAID Local Governance Program**

## Subject: Enhancing Transparency and Accountability in LSGs

**Opportunity Number:** USAID Local Governance Program-RFA-019

**Phase 1: Concept Papers**

**Issuance Date: August 8, 2024**

**Questions:** Questions should be sent to [GeorgiaLGP.Opportunities@tetratech.com](mailto:GeorgiaLGP.Opportunities@tetratech.com) on **September 25, 2024,** and responses to questions received will be posted.

**Closing Date: October 7, 2024**

**Submit:** via email to [GeorgiaLGP.Opportunities@tetratech.com](mailto:GeorgiaLGP.Opportunities@tetratech.com)

Dear Applicants,

Tetra Tech, the implementing partner for USAID’s Local Governance Program, according to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and following USAID Contract No. 72011422C00001, is authorized to provide grants under contract (GUC) to meet its program objectives. Applicants awarded grant agreements will carry out interventions to achieve the USAID Local Governance Program’s overarching goal to enhance the effectiveness, accountability, and citizen responsiveness of target local governments in Georgia.

The USAID Local Governance Program anticipates awarding six grants in response to this solicitation. Awards are expected to range from **GEL 40,000 to GEL 65,000** for each grant and a period of a minimum of 6 months and no more than 14 months.

This Request for Application (RFA) will be carried out in multiple phases:

**Phase 1: Concept Papers** - USAID Local Governance Program will receive and review Concept Papers on the closing date listed above, following Section 5. The Concept Papers. Applications deemed responsive to the solicitation and demonstrating a link to USAID Local Governance Program objectives will be asked to submit a Full Application. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application will not move to Phase 2.

**Phase 2**: **Full Application** - Those applicants invited to Phase 2 will submit a Full Application (a template will be provided) which will be received and evaluated by the USAID Local Governance Program Review and Evaluation Committee (REC). Further instructions, evaluation criteria and dates will be provided upon notification to proceed to Phase 2. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application will not move to Phase 3.

**Phase 3: Pre-award** - This is the final stage before an award is issued and implementation may begin. During this phase, USAID Local Governance Program will work with the applicant to fine-tune the proposed project and budget and ensure incorporation of USAID Local Governance Program-specific requirements, including but not limited to best practices, gender considerations, linkages to USAID Local Governance Program’s performance indicators, and establishment of key deliverables. In addition, USAID Local Governance Program will carry out a cost analysis of the proposed budget to ensure all costs are allowable in accordance with USAID’s cost principles and a risk assessment to determine the recipient’s capacity to comply with USAID requirements. All grants must be approved by Tetra Tech and USAID prior to issuing an award.

USAID Local Governance Program reserve the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Additionally, any award pursuant to this funding opportunity is contingent upon the availability of funds. For the purposes of this program, this RFA is being issued and consists of this cover letter and the following sections. Please read the RFA in its entirety before submitting your concept paper to ensure your organization is eligible and your submission complies with all requirements.

Section 1: Terms of Reference

Section 2. Award Information

Section 3: Eligibility Information

Section 4. Submission Information

Section 5. Review Information

Section 6. Application Process

Attachment A: Concept Paper Form

Attachment B: Pre-award Terms and Provisions

Thank you in advance for the interest shown.

Sincerely,

**Kevin McLaughlin**

Chief of Party, USAID Local Governance Program

SECTION 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. **Grant Objectives**

The goal of the grants program is to enhance transparency and accountability of local self-governments. Through this initiative, the USAID Local Governance Program aims to empower civil society actors[[1]](#footnote-1) to actively monitor various aspects of local governance processes and provide recommendations for improvement.

The specific objectives of the grants program should prioritize one or more activities outlined below:

* Monitoring the local self-government budgetary process from preparation to the presentation of the budget execution report to citizens. This will involve using the manual for [*"Citizen Engagement in the Budgetary Process"*](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ZUKnrz1i6z5akNgGErep9C8PbRudUCLX?usp=sharing) to provide monitoring results, recommendations and demand improvements.
* Monitoring the implementation of participatory budgeting using the manual for *"Monitoring Participatory Budgeting at the Local Level."* The goal is to assess the effectiveness of participatory budgeting initiatives, provide recommendations for enhancement and demand improvements.
* Monitoring the implementation of the State Rural Support Program in target municipalities using the manual for [*"Participatory Monitoring of the State Rural Support Program."*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1p7DoHZ17EmtIw-zUxmXx83ngGDRcSvZi/view?usp=sharing) This involves assessing the implementation of the program on rural communities and providing feedback and recommendations and demanding improvements.
* Monitoring local budget expenditures and providing updates to citizens on issues identified through the study on [*"Citizens' Attitudes towards Municipal Performance and Services"*](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zMqDVXEc0xmLHpayESb8dDdPiW34q81Y?usp=sharing)*.* This will involve keeping citizens informed about budgetary allocations and expenditures in areas of their interest and demand citizen responsive service delivery.
* Monitoring municipal strategies, entities, services, and programs to ensure alignment with predetermined purpose, goals and objectives. This will help assess the effectiveness of local governance initiatives, provide recommendations and demand improvements.

The applicant is encouraged to propose different sets of activities to meet the objectives and maximize impact, such as informative campaigns for the public, including viral efforts, to help people understand the monitoring results and gather public support to tackle the issues. Applicants are also encouraged and expected to utilize existing or innovative citizen engagement mechanisms to disseminate monitoring results and recommendations to citizens, supporting them in advocating for improvements. A variety of innovative and existing mechanisms can be found in the manual titled [*"Guidebook for Civic Society Organizations on Citizen Engagement."*](https://chaertemartvashi.ge/files/Guidbook-CSA.pdf)

**Please, note that the grantee is expected to collaborate and/or coordinate with USAID Local Governance Program’s other implementing partner(s) including the grantee(s), subcontractor(s), and expert(s) with similar interventions as well as relevant USAID Georgia programs such as Civil Society Engagement Program, Media Program,** **Unity Through Diversity Program, Civic Education Program and Resilient Communities Program**[[2]](#footnote-2)**.** The USAID Local Governance Program will facilitate coordination between the implementing partners and respective USAID Georgia programs.

**2.0 Background**

The current system of decentralized governance in Georgia lacks transparency[[3]](#footnote-3) and accountability[[4]](#footnote-4), hindering the effective delivery of services to communities[[5]](#footnote-5). Without active and widespread participation from people representing different groups, making significant improvements to the governance system is difficult to achieve. There is a critical need to strengthen existing mechanisms to empower civil society actors to monitor and evaluate government programs and services, provide recommendations for improvements, and hold local self-governments (LSGs) accountable.

Specific areas requiring attention include:

**Budgetary process monitoring:** There is a lack of oversight and transparency in the local self-government budgetary process, from preparation to the presentation of budget execution reports to citizens. Without proper monitoring, citizens are unable to assess the allocation and utilization of funds, leading to potential misuse or misallocation of resources.

**Participatory budgeting implementation:** While participatory budgeting initiatives have been introduced in several municipalities, there is a need to assess their effectiveness and enhance citizen engagement in the process. Monitoring efforts are essential to ensure that participatory budgeting truly reflects community needs and priorities, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability among citizens and local authorities.

**State Rural Support Program (SRSP) implementation:** The implementation of the State Rural Support Program in target municipalities requires closer scrutiny to assess its impact on rural communities. Monitoring efforts will help identify areas for improvement and ensure that the program effectively addresses the needs of its beneficiaries.

**Local budget expenditure monitoring:** Transparency in local budget expenditures is crucial for building trust between citizens and local authorities. Monitoring expenditures and providing updates to citizens on budgetary allocations and expenditures will help ensure accountability and responsiveness in service delivery.

**Alignment of municipal strategies and programs:** There is a need to assess the alignment of municipal strategies, entities, services, and programs with predetermined goals and objectives. Monitoring efforts will help identify discrepancies and inefficiencies, enabling local governments to realign their initiatives to better serve the needs of their communities.

**Infrastructure development monitoring:** Monitoring the development and maintenance of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, water supply systems, and public buildings is essential to ensure that communities have access to safe and reliable infrastructure. This includes assessing the quality of infrastructure projects, adherence to safety standards, and timely maintenance to prevent deterioration.

The USAID Local Governance Program study on [*"Citizens' Attitudes towards Municipal Performance and Services"*](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zMqDVXEc0xmLHpayESb8dDdPiW34q81Y?usp=sharing) underscores the importance of monitoring municipal strategies, entities, services, and programs. By understanding citizens' perceptions and experiences, local governments can better address issues and improve service delivery, thereby enhancing trust and accountability in the governance process.

The monitoring and evaluation efforts will enable civil society actors and citizens to address emerging challenges and advocate for improvements across various sectors impacting community well-being.

**3.0 Information on the Program**

The USAID Local Governance Program is a five-year initiative that aims to support Georgia’s decentralization and public administration reform and enhance the effectiveness, accountability, and citizen responsiveness of target local governments in Georgia. The Program has been designed specifically to strengthen accountability across the local governance ecosystem and enhance the delivery of inclusive and user-centered public services at the subnational level and support central-level institutions to manage the implementation of Decentralization and Public Administration Reform.

The Program has the following four objectives:

1. Improve subnational public administration and accountability systems.
2. Enhance subnational capacity to deliver inclusive, accessible, and citizen-responsive public services, in alignment with national standards.
3. Engage and empower communities, including civil society organizations, businesses, youth, and other individuals, to hold subnational governments accountable.
4. Strengthen national commitment, legislative frameworks, institutional capacities, and partnerships for decentralization.

The USAID Local Governance Program will provide support to at least 22 municipalities and include others in learning, exchange, and outreach activities. The program will encourage dialogue and partnerships between local governments, citizens, and the private sector to secure private sector support for improved public services and increased local revenues including through Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and inter-municipal cooperation. The USAID Local Governance Program will also apply a differentiated approach to deal with the needs of underrepresented groups in Georgia to ensure that their concerns, priorities, and experiences are an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the program. Integration of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion principles will be undertaken at all stages of the program cycle.

The anticipated grant activity under these Terms of Reference will support USAID Local Governance Program Objective 3 and aims at monitoring existing local government programs/service delivery and/or advocating for citizen-demanded new services (3.2.2.).

**4.0 Expected Results**

This grant program is expected to deliver some of the following results; however, applicants can propose additional ones as appropriate:

**Monitoring the local self-government budgetary process:**

* Increased transparency and accountability in the budgetary process.
* Identification of areas for improvement in budget preparation and execution.
* Recommendations provided to local self-governments for enhancing citizen engagement in budgetary decisions.
* Demand for improvements in budgetary processes based on monitoring results and recommendations.

**Monitoring the implementation of participatory budgeting:**

* Evaluation of the effectiveness of participatory budgeting initiatives.
* Recommendations for enhancing participatory budgeting processes.
* Increased citizen awareness and engagement in participatory budgeting.
* Demand for improvements in participatory budgeting practices based on monitoring findings and recommendations.

**Monitoring the implementation of the State Rural Support Program (SRSP):**

* Assessment of the impact of the program on rural communities.
* Feedback provided to program implementers on program effectiveness and community needs.
* Recommendations for enhancing program implementation and addressing community concerns.
* Demand for improvements in the State Rural Support Program based on monitoring results and feedback from rural communities.

**Monitoring local budget expenditures:**

* Regular updates provided to citizens on budget allocations and expenditures.
* Increased citizen awareness of local budgetary decisions and spending priorities.
* Identification of areas where budget expenditures may not align with citizen preferences.
* Demand for transparent and citizen-responsive service delivery based on monitoring updates and citizen feedback.

**Monitoring municipal strategies, entities, services, and programs:**

* Evaluation of the effectiveness of municipal strategies and programs.
* Identification of areas where municipal services may not be meeting community needs.
* Recommendations for improving the alignment of municipal initiatives with community goals and objectives.
* Demand for improvements in municipal services and programs based on monitoring findings and recommendations.

**5.0. Cross-Cutting Themes**

Applicants must consider and address the following cross-cutting themes in the development of their application.

**5.1. Gender Youth and Social Inclusion Considerations**

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is a concept that recognizes unequal power relations and inequalities experienced by individuals because of their social identities, including gender, location, (dis)ability, wealth, education, age, caste/ethnicity, religion, and sexuality. While presented separately, gender equality and social inclusion are interrelated. While gender equality uses gender as an entry point to understand how women and girls are marginalized, social inclusion recognizes that there are groups regardless of gender that experience marginalization and vulnerability as a result of their intersecting identities.

GESI is a process that ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the recognition, opportunities, and resources they need to participate fully in economic, social, and cultural life, enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they participate to a greater extent in decision-making that matters or affects them, and that they gain equal access to the resources, opportunities, and services they need to enjoy their fundamental rights.

For the USAID Local Governance Program, vulnerable/underrepresented groups include the following categories:

* Women and girls.
* Youth, especially, neither in employment nor in education or training (formal or non-formal).
* Ethnic/national/religious minorities.
* Internally displaced persons (IDPs).
* Persons with disabilities.
* Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+).
* Elderly.

Given the strong focus on GESI, including youth engagement embedded into the USAID Local Governance Program design and planned interventions, the grantee is expected to consider the following in their Full Application design:

* Increase the overall participation of women and other vulnerable groups in local governance and citizen participation measures.
* Ensure increased participation of women and other vulnerable groups in project implementation.
* Measure the impact of program activities targeting women and other vulnerable groups.
* Actively encourage women civil servants, business sector representatives and female community leaders to participate in the capacity-building interventions/public hearings and consultations.
* Integrate vulnerable groups across all its proposed activities, throughout the project cycle and in reporting.
* Analyze all activities through a GESI lens to consider how they affect women, youth, and other groups who are the most vulnerable or excluded, and how existing GESI-related norms, attitudes and behavior affect the outcomes envisioned by the project.
* Disaggregate all data, targets, and indicators by gender, ethnicity, age, and disability status to ensure adequate targeting of women and marginalized groups.

**5.2. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The USAID Local Governance Program will work with the grantee to develop a Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) plan that will contribute to the Program indicators. The grant is expected to address ***some the following*** Program indicators:

* Number of participants in capacity building events supported by Local Governance Program.
* Number of mechanisms for external oversight of public resource use supported by USG assistance.
* Number of policy and/or initiatives including budgeting developed, promoted, or implemented using gender-sensitive approaches by local governments with substantial technical support from the Local Governance Program.
* Number of LSG policy and implementation changes initiated by or implemented with contribution of local gender equality councils (GECs).
* Percent of local governments supported by USG actively engaging minority communities.
* Number of public services introduced or improved by at each target local government providing equitable access to all citizens with support of the Local Governance Program.
* Number of implemented local community initiatives aimed at improving accountability and public service delivery by target LSGs.
* Number of civil society actors capacitated by the Local Governance Program.
* Number of policy or implementation changes (i.e., participatory budgeting, integrity strategies, corruption risk assessments, etc.) developed, promoted, or implemented by target local governments that aim to increase accountability and citizen engagement with substantial technical support from the Local Governance Program.
* Number of LSG staff participating in capacity building events supported by USAID Local Governance Program.

The detailed description of the indicators is provided in the **Attachment G: Contribution to USAID Local Governance Program Indicators.**

**5.3. Visibility of the project**

The grantee will execute visibility and communications activities aligning with the overarching [communications strategy on Decentralization and Good Governance.](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Y6zmBKfpUMuYCoukK3PQfEoIYoF5h_IA?usp=sharing) This strategic approach enhances the visibility of grant activities and aligns with the broader communications strategy's implementation.

**6.0. Beneficiaries and Geographic Focus**

Primary beneficiaries of the USAID Local Governance Program intervention will be CSAs from Rustavi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Shuakhevi, Lagodekhi, Sighnaghi, Khashuri, Dusheti, Poti, Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha, Adigeni, Aspindza municipalities.

## SECTION 2. AWARD INFORMATION

### 1. Number and Estimated Value of Awards

The USAID Local Governance Program anticipates awarding a maximum of **six** grants in response to this RFA with each grant anticipated to range from GEL 40,000 to GEL 65,000. The final amount will be based on the negotiations with the selected applicant. Allowable costs must be consistent with USAID policies and procedures and be reasonable, allocable, well documented, and justified for the proposed grant activities and budget.

### 2. Period of Performance

It is anticipated that the grant implementation will begin on or around November 2024 and implementation period of no more than 14 months.

### 3. Grant Type

Fixed Amount Award (FAA): The grant recipient and The USAID Local Governance Program will establish a set of pre-identified milestones with a fixed payment tied to the successful completion of the milestone. Activities and outcomes must be priced with a reasonable degree of certainty for this type of grant (e.g., conferences, studies, surveys, workshops, etc.).

Grants will be administered following applicable regulations as follows:

For FAAs to US or non-US organizations: [2 CFR 200](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=6214841a79953f26c5c230d72d6b70a1&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl), [2 CFR 700](https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2023-title2-vol1/CFR-2023-title2-vol1-part700/summary), and [ADS 303mat, Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards to Nongovernmental Organizations](https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/references-chapter/303mat) are applicable.

### 4. Cost Share Requirements

Cost Share is not required under this RFA.

### 5. Funding Restrictions

The following restrictions apply to awards issued under this RFA:

* The award will not allow the reimbursement of pre-award costs. That is, only allowable obligations incurred during the period defined within the grant agreement will be reimbursed.
* VAT is not considered allowable under this RFA.
* ‘Construction’ as defined in ADS 303maw is not allowable: <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/references-chapter/303maw>
* Profit or fee is not allowed[[6]](#footnote-6).
* Sub-awards or consortium partner relationships in which a contractual mechanism is established to transfer funds from the prime grantee to another organization to carry out a portion of the grant activities, are not allowable.
* Consultant agreements with individuals, and service contracts with vendors or service providers, are allowed.

The award will not allow the reimbursement of any goods and/or services that utilize telecommunications and video surveillance products from the following companies: Huawei Technologies Company, ZTE Corporation, Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, or Dahua Technology Company, or any subsidiary or affiliate thereof, in compliance with 2 CFR 200.216.

### 6. Safeguarding Project Participant

USAID is committed to ensuring that its workforce and partners uphold the principle of “do no harm,” and integrate comprehensive and effective safeguarding regimes in all of its programming and operations. USAID defines safeguarding as the implementation of preventative, protection, and compliance measures for populations that may be at increased risk of harm. This harm includes but is not limited to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), child abuse, exploitation, and neglect, and trafficking in persons (TIP). All successful grant recipients, regardless of financial amount, are responsible for closely checking and complying with existing safeguarding requirements, and integrating safeguarding frameworks into programming and operations and should cultivate respectful, inclusive, and safe environments in their programs and workplaces.

Additional information on USAID’s policy can be found at [Responsibility, Safeguarding, and Compliance | U.S. Agency for International Development (usaid.gov).](https://www.usaid.gov/safeguarding-and-compliance)

### 7. Branding Strategy and Marking Plan

Applicants are required to comply with the Marking and Public Communications under USAID-Funded Assistance provision which requires all programs, activities, public communications and commodities that USAID partially or fully funds under an award or sub-award to be appropriately marked with the USAID identity.

A Branding Strategy and Marking Plan (BSMP) is required of successful applicants; it is ***not*** required upon submission of a concept paper or full application. However, applicants who proceed to the second Phase of submitting a full application are encouraged to submit their BSMP. An applicant who chooses not to include their BSMP with the full application will not be penalized during the evaluation process but should be aware that if the applicant is successful, submission of an acceptable BSMP will be a prerequisite for any resulting award. Because USAID’s branding and marking requirements have cost implications, such costs should be included in the application budget even if the applicant does not submit a BSMP.

Applicants can find additional information as contained in [ADS 303mab, Standard Provisions for Non-US Nongovernmental Organizations](http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab), and [ADS 320, Branding and Marking](http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/320).

### 8. Gender Integration

All successful grants must integrate gender issues into the program design. Applicants are encouraged to review [USAID’s 2023 Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy](https://www.usaid.gov/gender-policy) in the development of Applications. If selected to proceed to an award, USAID Local Governance Program, may request changes be made to the program design to ensure that USAID’s priorities on gender equality and women’s empowerment are adhered to in grant implementation.

### 9. Reporting Requirements

As a condition of award, all grant recipients will be required to submit regular programmatic and financial reports as outlined in the grant agreement. The frequency and type of reports will vary depending on multiple factors but will be discussed with the organization before award.

## SECTION 3: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

**1. Eligible Entities**

The USAID Local Governance Program invites concept papers from the following types of eligible civil society actors (CSAs):

* Civil society organizations (CSOs)
* Community-based organizations (CBOs)
* Private sector entities
* Associations (including business associations)
* Informal initiative groups[[7]](#footnote-7) such as civic activists, parents’ groups, youth groups, etc. willing to affect positive change in at least one target municipality.

Applicants must be legally operating in the target regions under the laws of Georgia. The applicant is required to engage **at least one** civil society actor (CSA) operating in each target municipality and must be indicated in the Concept Paper.

In addition, USAID Local Governance Program will assess potential grant recipients using a pre-award survey to ensure the applicant maintains the necessary capabilities to execute the grant activity. Organizations that have not previously received USAID funding are encouraged to apply. Eligible applicants must demonstrate the following:

* Be able to operate in Georgia.
* Be in good standing with all civil and fiscal authorities in Georgia.
* Sign applicable assurances and certifications; and
* Have or be willing to register for a Unique Entity Identification (UEI)

**2. Ineligible Entities**

The following entities are **not** eligible for USAID Local Governance Program grant funding:

* Political parties, their subsidiaries, or affiliates.
* Any governmental organization as defined in ADS 220;[[8]](#footnote-8)
* Organizations that appear with active restrictions on the System for Award Management (SAM)[[9]](#footnote-9), the Specifically Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (SDNBP) list maintained by the U.S. Treasury for the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC)[[10]](#footnote-10), or the United Nations (UN) 1267 lists[[11]](#footnote-11);
* Organizations that promote or engage in illegal or anti-democratic activities.
* Faith-based organizations[[12]](#footnote-12) that are not in compliance with [Executive Order 13279, Equal Protection for the Laws of Faith-based Community Organizations (December 2002)](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https:/www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2002-12-16/pdf/02-31831.pdf) and [22 CFR 205, Participation by Religious Organizations in USAID Programs](https://ecfr.io/Title-22/Section-205.1)
* Organizations that are debarred or suspended from the eligibility to receive funding from the United States Government (USG).
* Public International Organizations; and
* Any organization not approved by USAID; and
* Organizations that are not legally registered in [Country of Implementation].

**3. Ineligible Activities**

Project Acronym will NOT fund the following types of activities:

* Construction[[13]](#footnote-13) and improvements, renovation, alteration and refurbishments[[14]](#footnote-14) as defined in [ADS 303maw](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303maw.pdf);
* Activities that duplicate the activities of other United States government (USG)--supported programs or programs conducted by other organizations in Project Acronym target regions.
* Activities that are inconsistent with international standards of human rights or with democratic goals of racial and ethnic tolerance and harmony.
* Ceremonies, parties, celebrations, or “representation” expenses except for those that are specified in the grant (for example, opening ceremonies) to promote the visibility of USAID in the eyes of the communities USAID is trying to serve.
* Involuntary sterilization programs;
* Abortion-related activities and biomedical research relating to abortion; and
* Activities outside the contract scope and/or not approved by USAID.

## SECTION 4. SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### 1. Instructions

The following instructions should be read thoroughly to understand the submission requirements.

1. Applications must be submitted electronically to the USAID Local Governance Program Grants Manager by email at [GeorgiaLGP.Opportunities@tetratech.com](mailto:GeorgiaLGP.Opportunities@tetratech.com). Complete applications will consist of one Microsoft Word or PDF file of the narrative application. Applicants may only submit one Concept Paper per organization.

Eligible Applicants should submit a Concept Paper following the format provided in Attachment A. Concept Papers should not exceed (5) five single-spaced pages (not including the cover page) and must contain the information requested in Attachment A. Concept papers should be submitted using the following format, and Concept Papers that do not follow the format provided may not be evaluated.:

* 1. Language must be **English or Georgian**.
  2. The font must be **Times New Roman/Sylfaen**.
  3. Font size must be **11**.
  4. Paper size must be **A4** (8.27’ X 11.69’).
  5. Margins must be **1”** on all 4 sides of the page.

### 2. Submission Dates and Times:

Concept papers will be reviewed as follows: From the issuance date of RFA-019 on August 8 to September 15. Concept Papers will not be accepted after the concept paper deadline.

### 3. Submission Point of Contact

Questions and Concept Papers must be submitted electronically in English or Georgian. They should be directed to:

Attention: The USAID Local Governance Program Grants Manager; Email Address: [GeorgiaLGP.Opportunities@tetratech.com](mailto:GeorgiaLGP.Opportunities@tetratech.com)

**Please insert the following text into the subject line of the submission email: “RFA-019-Name of your Organization” (for example: *USAID Local Governance Program-RFA-019-Tetra Tech).***

**\*\*\*\*\* ETHICAL AND BUSINESS CONDUCT REQUIREMENTS \*\*\*\*\***

USAID Local Governance Program and Tetra Tech ARD do not condone any action that could be considered to promote or give the appearance of conflict of interest (COI) or corruption. Employees and agents of USAID Local Governance Program and Tetra Tech ARD are strictly prohibited from asking for or accepting any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, object of value or compensation from current or potential grant recipients in exchange for or as a reward for business or grant funding.

Please note that in submitting a response to this RFA, the applicant is acknowledging that USAID is not a party to this solicitation and the applicant agrees that any concerns hereunder must be presented – in writing with full explanation – to Tetra Tech ARD for consideration, as USAID will not consider protests regarding grant opportunities carried out by implementing partners. Tetra Tech ARD will investigate any such allegations and take appropriate action to remedy, correct, mitigate, report, or otherwise resolve any unethical conduct or prohibited acts in accordance with USAID requirements.

Applicants responding to this RFA must certify as part of their submission, that they have materially participated in its preparation, that all information provided is current, complete, and accurate and based on the need to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of the target population, and they must disclose any real or potential conflict of interest with a USAID or USAID Local Governance Program official involved in this RFA.

Please contact GeorgiaLGP.Opportunities@tetratech.com with any questions or concerns regarding the above information or to report any potential violations.

## SECTION 5. REVIEW INFORMATION

### 1. Initial Screening

Following the closing date and time, the USAID Local Governance Program Grants Manager will open all application submissions and conduct an initial pre-screening to determine which applications will move forward. A “NO” to any of the screening questions may result in a disqualification.

* Applicant has submitted a Concept Paper using the template provided and following the page length and formatting requirements.
* Applicant is a legally registered entity that meets the eligibility criteria listed above
* Applicants are not found with a negative determination in the SAM, OFAC, or UN 1267 lists.

### 2. Evaluation Criteria

All Concept Papers which pass the initial screening will be evaluated by the USAID Local Governance Program in writing based on the following evaluation criteria:

**Problem Analysis: 20 Points**

*Demonstrates an understanding of the problem and the impacts on different groups of people and provides a rationale for the project.*

* The key constraints/obstacles and the severity of the identified problems, as assessed by community members or sector specialists in the field are identified.
* How the different vulnerable groups are affected by the problems are discussed.
* The adverse consequences of the issues on community members' daily lives are identified.
* Stated problems are backed up with evidence supported by a credible source of information including the study on *“Citizens’ Attitudes towards Municipal Performance and Services[[15]](#footnote-15)“.*

**Geographic focus: 5 Points**

* The project covers two or more target municipalities

**Goal and Objectives: 8 Points**

*The stated goal and objectives of the project contribute toward solving the problem in a realistic and feasible way, and ultimately contribute toward the objectives of the USAID Local Governance Program.*

* The goal and objectives focus on addressing the identified problems.
* The goal and objectives are achievable and feasible given the available resources and timeframe.

**Project Activities:** **30 Points**

*The listed activities are logical, coherent, cohesive and will lead to the achievement of project objectives.*

* Activities are grounded in innovation and/or best practice in the field.
* Activities contribute to achieving the stated goal and objectives.
* Activities address the identified problems as well as the needs of the vulnerable groups.
* Activities are sequenced in a logical and coherent manner that maximizes their effectiveness.
* Activities for effective engagement in local decision-making are highlighted.

**Inclusion of the vulnerable groups:**  **9 Points**

*Provides a comprehensive and inclusive strategy to engage beneficiaries of various backgrounds*.

* Vulnerable groups that the project intends to benefit are identified.
* Vulnerable groups that the project intends to benefit are estimated adequately.
* Feedback loops from vulnerable groups are in place ensuring that their needs and perspectives are considered in the local decision-making processes.

**Description of the citizen engagement mechanism(s)[[16]](#footnote-16): 10 Points**

*Proposes mechanisms that maximizes citizen participation, feedback, and decision-making.*

* The existing and innovative citizen engagement mechanisms that maximize citizen participation and feedback are utilized during the project’s implementation process.
* The rationale for choosing the specific citizen engagement mechanisms is justified.

**Communications/visibility strategy: 8 points**

*Proposes effective communication strategies and mechanisms for tracking successful* *communication corresponding with the* [*communications strategy on Decentralization and Good Governance.*](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Y6zmBKfpUMuYCoukK3PQfEoIYoF5h_IA?usp=sharing)

* The communication/visibility activities are identified and the key messages that need to be communicated to the target audience are highlighted.
* The channels and tactics to reach the target audience with the key messages are complete and appropriate.

**Capacity of the project team: 10 points**

*A brief description of the project team. What role do the personnel play in the project and what capacities/experience do they have to be effective.*

* Applicant has the proven capacity to implement the project.
* The role of the key personnel in the project is adequate.

# ATTACHMENT B: Pre-Award Terms and Provisions

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST PRE-AWARD TERM (August 2018)**

a. Personal Conflict of Interest

1. An actual or appearance of a conflict of interest exists when an applicant organization or an employee of the organization has a relationship with a Project Acronym official involved in the competitive award decision-making process that could affect that Project Acronym official’s impartiality. The term “conflict of interest” includes situations in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, the obligations and duties of a USAID/Project Acronym employee or recipient employee.

2. The applicant must provide conflict of interest disclosures when it submits a concept paper or application. Should the applicant discover a previously undisclosed conflict of interest after applying the applicant must disclose the conflict of interest to the Project Acronym Grants Manager no later than ten (10) calendar days following discovery.

b. Organizational Conflict of Interest

The applicant must notify USAID/Project Acronym of any actual or potential conflict of interest that they are aware of that may provide the applicant with an unfair competitive advantage in competing for this financial assistance award. Examples of an unfair competitive advantage include but are not limited to situations in which an applicant or the applicant’s employee gained access to non-public information regarding a federal assistance funding opportunity, or an applicant or applicant’s employee was substantially involved in the preparation of a federal assistance funding opportunity. USAID/Project Acronym will promptly take appropriate action upon receiving any such notification from the applicant.

**(END OF PROVISION)**

**(END OF RFA Phase 1)**

1. The USAID Local Governance Program defines CSAs to include CSOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), associations (including business associations), and local initiative groups such as parents' groups, civic activists, youth groups, etc. willing to affect positive changes in their communities. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. You can find detailed information on these Programs on the following link: <https://www.usaid.gov/georgia/our-programs> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. IDFI. 2023. “Sharp Decline in Access to Public Information”: <https://idfi.ge/en/sharp_decline_in_access_to_public_information> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. IDFI. 2023. “Expenditures and Bureaucracy of Legal Entities Established by Municipalities”:<https://idfi.ge/en/financing_and_bureaucracy_of_legal_entities_established_by_municipalities> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. State Audit Office. 2021. [“Report on human resource management in NNLEs”](https://sao.ge/ka/%E1%83%9B%E1%83%A3%E1%83%9C%E1%83%98%E1%83%AA%E1%83%98%E1%83%9E%E1%83%90%E1%83%9A%E1%83%98%E1%83%A2%E1%83%94%E1%83%A2%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1-%E1%83%9B%E1%83%98%E1%83%94%E1%83%A0-%E1%83%93%E1%83%90%E1%83%A4%E1%83%A3%E1%83%AB%E1%83%9C%E1%83%942021123110226148ka.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Profit is any amount over and above allowable direct and indirect costs. Commercial organizations must confirm, as a condition of the award, that the proposed grant budget does not include any amount above the allowable direct and indirect costs needed to successfully implement the grant activity, and the Project will analyze all costs to ensure they are allowable, reasonable, and necessary for the grant activity. This prohibition does not apply to profit generated by the grant recipient outside of the grant activity or after the grant end date, or to revenue earned as a result of activities. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. If the informal initiative groups are successful in the second phase of the grants competition they will be required to be registered as one of the above-mentioned legal entities. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. “An office, organization or body at any level of a public administration system (ministry, department, agency, service, district or municipality) of a bilateral foreign assistance recipient country that implements activities financed by or jointly programmed as a result of funds disbursed by USAID directly to the partner government public financial management system” (ADS 220). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. https://sam.gov/search/?page=1&pageSize=25&sort=-modifiedDate&sfm%5BsimpleSearch%5D%5BkeywordRadio%5D=ALL&sfm%5Bstatus%5D%5Bis\_active%5D=true [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This list can be located at https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov/. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. This list can be located at https://scsanctions.un.org/search/. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Faith-based organizations are eligible on the same basis as any other organization and subject to the protections and requirements of federal law. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Construction, alteration, or repair (including dredging and excavation) of buildings, structures, or other real property and includes, without limitation, improvements, renovation, alteration and refurbishment. The term includes, without limitation, roads, power plants, buildings, bridges, water treatment facilities, and vertical structures. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Any betterment or change to an existing property to allow its continued or more efficient use within its designed purpose (renovation), or for the use of a different purpose or function (alteration). Improvements also include improvements to or upgrading of primary mechanical, electrical, or other building systems. Does not include non-structural, cosmetic work, replacement of plumbing or conduits that does not affect structural elements, and non-load bearing walls or fixtures (e.g., shelves, signs, lighting, etc.) [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. ACT. 2023[*.“Citizens’ Attitudes towards Municipal Performance and Services“.*](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zMqDVXEc0xmLHpayESb8dDdPiW34q81Y?usp=sharing) USAID Local Governance Program. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. A variety of innovative and existing mechanisms can be found in the manual titled [*"Guidebook for Civic Society Organizations on Citizen Engagement."*](https://chaertemartvashi.ge/files/Guidbook-CSA.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)