Request for Applications (RfA)
Innovation and Challenge Grants (ICG) Program

Apply Now

Amount of ICGs:	**Min. $10,000 – Max. $30,000**
Number of ICGs to be issued:	**Up to 8**
Duration of projects:	**Max. 12 months**
Deadline:	**October 25, 2023**
Who can apply:	**Registered and unregistered civic groups**

The USAID Civil Society Engagement Program announces the open-door Innovation and Challenge Grants (ICGs) program to support citizen engagement and community-strengthening initiatives by Georgian civil society organizations (CSOs), civic movements, professional associations, and unregistered citizen groups. The ICGs will be awarded through a competitive application process.

Under this call, the USAID Civil Society Engagement Program will award up to eight grants ranging from **$10,000 to $30,000**. The range of funding for registered organizations varies **from $10,000 to $30,000**, and for the unregistered citizen groups – from **$1,000 to $10,000**. Grants will be issued for a period of up to **12 months** for registered organizations, and up to **6 months** for the unregistered organizations.

EWMI reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

GRANT PURPOSE

The purpose of this grant program is to build the capacity of formal and informal civic organizations and community groups to address issues that are regarded as top priorities by local communities. It can also be used to address the most pressing issues for Georgia. The grants program supports the fundamental goal of the USAID Civil Society Engagement Program to increase citizen engagement, awareness, and participation in civic action and democratic processes in Georgia.

Examples of projects that align with the goals of the ICG program and the USAID Civil Society Engagement Program include:

- Citizen mobilization campaigns to bring more citizens into decision-making processes and civic initiatives to meet community-identified needs, particularly in communities facing higher barriers to civic participation.
- Public outreach and information campaigns, including viral campaigns, to enhance public understanding of the targeted problem and mobilize public support to address it.
- Policy change campaigns to support or incentivize policy change at the local or national level through citizen participation.

Special consideration will be given to grant applications that:

- Target a specific problem and explain why this problem is of high priority for Georgia and/or the targeted community/region.
- Demonstrate strong knowledge of the environment in which the project will be implemented.
- Propose realistic, creative, and innovative approaches, including e-solutions, to address the problem.
- Ensure wide and meaningful participation of disadvantaged and marginalized communities, including women, persons with disabilities (PwDs), and minorities.

If grantees secure additional funds from local sources (i.e., citizens, the private sector, or the government) for the project or its continuation, the USAID Civil Society Engagement Program will give bonus/match funding (i.e., increase the grant amount) under the condition that funds are used to expand, scale, and/or extend the grant activity. This can include:

- Raising in-kind or monetary contributions from citizens that can be matched by EWMI.
- Reaching an agreement with either the local or national government that if the project is successful, the government will commit systemic support to continue its implementation. For example, this may occur if the government chooses to include the program in its portfolio of public services and products.
- Securing support from a private sector organization to scale up the ICG activities and achieve systemic and sustainable changes.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

The USAID Civil Society Engagement Program will accept completed applications in English, Georgian, Armenian, or Azerbaijani. EWMI will accept grant applications in written or video format (as an alternative to written applications). There are no restrictions on how the video should be composed; however, it should address the questions listed on the Application Form (i.e., explain the targeted problem and the solutions applicant plans to use to overcome it). The USAID Civil Society Engagement Program encourages applicants to include multiple voices from different members of the affected/engaged community. Applicants can use camcorders, cameras, or phones to record the videos – they need not be professionally edited or filmed. Videos must be no more than five minutes long and uploaded to YouTube (with the link included in the application).

Completed Application Forms or video applications must be submitted via email at csep@ewmi.org. Please write "ICG Program" in the subject line. Requests for clarification should be sent to Ani Nikabadze at anikabadze@ewmi.org.

EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

The selection process will be administered by a Grants Review Committee (GRC) established by the USAID Civil Society Engagement Program for the purpose of this grant program. The GRC will be composed of the USAID Civil Society Engagement Program staff and other independent experts. If an application is short-listed for potential funding, the respective applicant may be requested to provide additional information.

The GRC will assess applications based on the following criteria:

- Compliance with ICG objectives.
- Effectiveness of and innovation in proposed strategies.
- Level of citizen engagement.
- Focus on regions and marginalized communities.

- Cost-effectiveness.
- Project team's qualifications and capacity.

If shortlisted for funding, grant applicants will be invited to take part in a participatory (co-creation) planning meeting to develop a detailed activity plan for the project.

TIMELINE

RfA launch date	September 25, 2023
Open Door Day at the USAID Civil Society Engagement Program's Office and/or online	October 10, 2023,
DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS	**October 25, 2023**
Evaluation of applications	November 6, 2023
Communication with the shortlisted applicants	November 7, 2023
Holding social lab discussions for shortlisted projects	November-December, 2023
Start of the projects	15 January, 2024
Please note that evaluation and award dates may change	

FUNDING SCHEMES

There will be two different funding arrangements for registered CSOs and unregistered citizen groups. Registered CSOs will be asked to submit standard grant budgets detailing their expenses. Unregistered citizen groups will be asked to submit a list of goods/services needed to implement their initiatives, costs of the goods/services, and a list of vendors who can provide those goods/services. The USAID Civil Society Engagement Program will manage the procurement processes for unregistered citizen groups.

As a rule, the USAID Civil Society Engagement Program signs fixed amount award (FAA) agreements with registered organizations. This means that these organizations are reimbursed for expenses after they are incurred, and their project narrative reports are submitted. A standard grant agreement may be used only in exceptional cases when project activities do not allow for the use of a FAA.

Registered civil society organizations should also present a Unique Entity ID (UEI) obtained from an official website of the U.S. Government (SAM.gov). In case of the absence of the mentioned ID, please, follow the video instruction below: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C87wSCYKTcE, It will assist you in obtaining the Unique Entity ID. The absence of UEI at the application stage will not be the criteria for deeming the application ineligible (or for the rejection). However, successful organizations will be obligated to provide UEI in order to secure funds.

The ICG program will not fund:
- Support for or lobbying on behalf of a particular political party.
- Religious activities.
- Theoretical/academic research.
- Training as the core activity of the project.
- Individual and/or group travel as a primary project activity.
- Humanitarian activities.
- Construction costs.
- Debt servicing/recovery.
- Retrospective expenses (i.e., costs that were incurred before the start of the project).

Public officials and/or politicians are not permitted to lead grant projects and/or receive reimbursement through these grants.

AWARD NOTIFICATION

The USAID Civil Society Engagement Program will notify all applicants about the results of the selection process, including the grant applicants who are not successful. Considering the number of received grant applications, the USAID Civil Society Engagement Program may not be able to provide detailed explanations for rejection to all applicants. The USAID Civil Society Engagement Program will send notifications to successful grant applications by the indicated deadline and specify the necessary next steps. The Program will be transparent about whom it funds, ensuring its data is publicly available to ensure public scrutiny and participation.

GRANT ADMINISTRATION AND REPORTING

ICG grantees will be required to submit periodic progress reports and a final report on the grant project progress and outcomes. For some grant projects, the program may revisit reporting formats and replace written narrative reports with periodic phone calls and/or site visits as a way of making reporting a two-way conversation and encouraging open reflection.

The USAID Civil Society Engagement Program representatives will be available to provide technical assistance throughout the grant cycle. The program will also support regular experience-sharing and networking among its grantees.

The USAID Civil Society Engagement Program is keen to learn and improve. If you have any comments or suggestions regarding EWMI's grant programs and procedures, please share them with us via email or Facebook.