

Citizen Outreach Grant (COG) Program Request for Concept Papers (RfCP)

The East-West Management Institute’s (EWMI) Advancing CSO Capacities and Engaging Society for Sustainability (ACCESS) project invites Georgian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), **particularly those from the regions**, to submit **concept papers** to the Citizen Outreach Grants (COGs) program.

Through the COG program, EWMI ACCESS strives **to defend the interest of and empower Georgian citizens** by:

- i. Bringing CSOs and the constituents they serve closer together
- ii. Targeting the most pressing problems faced by local communities, and
- iii. Engaging citizens in addressing these problems.

The program focuses on results in terms of **citizen engagement** with CSOs to highlight and address their priority concerns. As such, it is measured by clear targets related to citizen mobilization and engagement, not necessarily tied to achieving a specific advocacy goal (i.e. fully resolving the targeted problem) within the grant timeframe.

Under this RfCP, EWMI ACCESS invites CSOs to submit brief (i.e. up to 1,000 words) concept papers proposing **proven or innovative** approaches to implementing civic campaigns on **a broad range of priority issues** as identified by their constituents. The interested CSOs can propose **EITHER:**

A. Capitalizing on their most effective initiatives (past or ongoing) in terms of citizen mobilization and engagement and using the grant funds to continue or expand them. Although, in general, EWMI ACCESS encourages and supports innovation and creative thinking, if an organization proposes **a proven strategy** for achieving its objectives, EWMI ACCESS will happily support it to augment or replicate this strategy, as appropriate. The concept paper on the tested strategy must briefly describe the proposed initiative, explain what made it successful, and outline a strategy for building off it to achieve greater/more sustainable results.

OR

B. Testing out out-of-box civic initiatives through partnering with other groups, both formal and informal, individual civic activists, and professionals. As old-school methods of communicating with citizens often fail to effectively attract them, it is important to develop and test out innovative ways to reach out to and engage local communities, including the hard-to-reach ones. This can be achieved through tapping into the creative and professional skills of diverse groups and individuals to generate innovative approaches and evaluate and validate ideas from a variety of perspectives. EWMI ACCESS therefore encourages CSOs to submit the concept papers that propose developing and implementing out-of-box strategies through an **inclusive process**. Such concept papers must briefly describe the problem the organization aims to focus on, propose an innovative approach to address it, and list the groups/individuals that it plans to engage in developing a more concrete action plan.

The concept papers will serve as a platform for further discussion between the applicant organization and EWMI ACCESS. EWMI ACCESS will review the received papers and shortlist the ones that are likely to be funded. It will then will work with the shortlisted applicants to assist them in developing

full proposals, i.e. **detailed action plans and budgets** for their COG projects. To this end, EWMI ACCESS, in close cooperation with the respective applicant, will organize **Social Lab discussions** (i.e. apply the co-creation method¹), engaging diverse groups in promoting exhaustive understanding of the targeted problem(s), ensuring more creativity in coming up with solutions, and securing a closer collaboration of the people required to achieve success.

Grant Awards

ACCESS will award up to 5 grants under this RfA. The maximum grant award for each proposal will be \$15,000 USD and the maximum grant period will be 7 months. ACCESS reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

Eligibility

Applicant organizations must meet the following criteria:

- Be a Georgian, registered non-governmental, non-profit organization that could qualify for a grant under a Georgian Law on Grants
- Operate as an independent, non-politically affiliated organization
- Have at least one year of operational experience. As a rule, ACCESS will not provide “start-up” funding, although ACCESS may make a rare exception if sufficient evidence is presented to show that the organization’s leadership has adequate prior experience and the organization is capable of filling a niche that has been underserved in the past
- Have a governance structure that ensures proper rotation of leadership and delegation of power, including, at least a Board of Directors, a Chairperson, and an Executive Director. The same individual should not hold the position of the Board Chairperson and Executive Director unless the size of the organization precludes this separation. If the above criteria are not met, the applicant must submit a proposed reform process that will work towards meeting these standards
- Have a transparent system of bookkeeping that complies with the Georgian legislation and International Accounting Standards (IAS). If such a system is not in place, the grantee must work closely with the ACCESS office to ensure that accurate financial management and transparent bookkeeping systems are developed
- Must not be a debtor and must have cancelled any debt to the state or arranged for debt collection prior to receiving the first disbursement of ACCESS grant funds

Civil servants, political appointees, members of the current parliament, staff of public broadcasting companies, and/or leaders of political parties cannot participate in a grant project as a director or as grant-remunerated participant.

EWMI ACCESS will not review concept papers that include the following activities:

- Support for or lobbying on behalf of a particular political party
- Religious activities. However, EWMI ACCESS may support a religious organization for non-religious aims if its proposal corresponds to COG objectives
- Humanitarian activities
- Theoretical research
- Training on organizational development or fundraising
- Individual and/or group travel grants
- Capital construction projects for commercial purposes

Submission Procedures

EWMI ACCESS will accept concept papers in English **or** Georgian. Concept papers can be e-mailed to the email address indicated below.

¹ An inclusive and dynamic process where diverse groups actively collaborate during the problem identification, project design, implementation, and/or evaluation to cultivate innovation and recognize the needs and views of all stakeholders. For more information co-creation, please see the [USAID Learning Lab Discussion Note](#).

Submitted concept papers must be the original and sole work of the applicant organization. Plagiarism will result in disqualification from the grant competition. EWMI ACCESS will retain all materials and documents submitted by applicants. It will not use this information for purposes other than proposal review and will not share it with other persons or institutions, except when required by Georgian law or requested by USAID. Please note that in line with our donor coordination efforts, we will share the names of the applicants and a short description of their respective projects with other Georgian and international programs that support CSOs in Georgia.

Concept Paper: To download the concept paper, please see the COG announcement on www.jobs.ge. Alternatively, please visit EWMI ACCESS website at www.ewmi-access.org.

Clarifications: Applicants should submit clarification requests by the deadline listed above via email to tgurchiani@ewmi.org and or via the EWMI ACCESS Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/EWMI.ACCESS/?fref=ts>. EWMI ACCESS will issue clarifications to all interested organizations every Friday starting from December 7 through December 21 in the Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document.

Submission: Applicants should submit their concept papers via e-mail to grants@ewmi.org e-mails must have “**COG PROGRAM**” in the subject line.

OPTIONAL SUPPLEMENTARY VIDEOS

To provide applicants with an opportunity to explain ideas that cannot be fully captured in the written concept paper, EWMI ACCESS will accept **optional** supplementary videos along with the written grant documentation. The videos can be used to better demonstrate the issue (e.g., by showing the sights, infrastructure or experiences that showcase the project needs and urgency) or explain how project activities will address the problem. Videos should focus on ideas that cannot be fully explained in written form, and should not be, for example, a summary of the history of the problem or a condensed version of the concept paper. 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
- uploaded to YouTube (with the link included in the application) or provided to ACCESS on a CD, and

These videos are optional, but it is highly encouraged that applicants embrace the available technology as part of their application.

Evaluation Process and Criteria

The selection process will be administered by a Grants Review Committee (GRC) established by ACCESS for the purpose of this COG program. The GRC will be composed of EWMI ACCESS staff and other independent experts.

EWMI ACCESS will assess concept papers based on the following criteria:

- Compliance with COG objectives
- Efficiency of the proposed strategy in achieving the set objective(s)
- Scale of gender mainstreaming and inclusion of women, youth, and disadvantaged groups in the implementation of the proposed activities
- Significant and large-scale engagement with citizens
- Cost effectiveness (including co-funding proposed)
- Adequacy of the project implementation team
- Applicants’ past performance on similar activities, as applicable

Timeline

RfCP launch date	December 5, 2018
Open Door Day at the ACCESS Office and/or online	December 10, 2018
Deadline for submitting clarification requests to ACCESS	December 17, 2018
Date when ACCESS will issue final clarifications	December 21, 2018
DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING CONCEPT PAPERS	16:30, December 28, 2018
Evaluation of concept papers	January 11, 2019
Joint work to develop a detailed activity plan and budget	January 25, 2019
Grant agreement signing	February 8, 2019
<i>Please note that evaluation and award dates are subject to change</i>	

About ACCESS

ACCESS is a five-year 6,897,000 USD project funded by USAID and implemented by EWMI and its local partners, the Center for Training and Consultancy (CTC) and the Civil Development Agency (CiDA).

EWMI ACCESS began in November 2014 and works to enhance effectiveness of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Georgia through: (1) increasing public confidence in CSOs and citizen participation in CSO initiatives, and (2) assisting CSOs to develop into stable and sustainable organizations. By empowering CSOs to become respected citizen representatives capable of leading public debate and collaborating with government, EWMI ACCESS contributes to more transparent and accountable governance in Georgia.