



## Request for Concept Papers (RFCP)

**USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program**

**Request for Concept Papers (RFCP) Number 003-C3-001-2022**

### **Increasing Access to Training Opportunities for Rural and Priority Populations**

Announcement Type:

Request for Concept Papers (RFCP)

Funding Opportunity Number:

003-C3-001-2022

Funding Opportunity Title:

Increasing Access to Training Opportunities for  
Rural and Priority Populations

Issuance Date:

January 25, 2022

Concept Paper Submission Due Date:

March 18, 2022

Dear Applicant:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Industry-led Skills Development Program (the Program) is seeking concept papers from eligible organizations to increase access to training opportunities for rural and priority populations that contribute to high-value economic activities. You are invited to submit a concept paper to the Program's Increasing Access to Training Opportunities for Rural and Priority Populations initiative in accordance with the terms of references contained herein. The concept paper is a pre-cursor to the full grant application. Selected applicants will be invited to submit full grant applications.

Details on the Program and concept paper process can be found in this RFCP package. To make information on grants accessible to all interested stakeholders across Georgia, the Program plans to hold pre-submission workshops and information sessions in accordance with the following schedule:

Location	Date
Tbilisi (will cover Tbilisi, Shida Kartli and Kvemo Kartli)	February 7, 2022
Kutaisi (will cover Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti)	February 8, 2022
Zugdidi (will cover Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti)	February 9, 2022
Batumi (will cover Adjara and Guria)	February 10, 2022
Telavi (will cover Kakheti)	February 14, 2022
Borjomi (will cover Samtskhe-Javakheti)	February 16, 2022

This workshop will give eligible and interested applicants the chance to ask questions about the RFCP process and receive guidance on how to submit a concept paper. Interested applicants that meet the eligibility requirements as defined in Section E "Eligibility" below and would like to attend this workshop must confirm their attendance by sending the participant's name and the organization's name via e-mail to [skillsgrants@iesc.org](mailto:skillsgrants@iesc.org) no later than five (5) working days prior to the desired workshop.



Only one person may attend from each organization. Detailed information on the venues of the pre-submission workshops and information sessions will be sent to registrants via e-mail. Please note that if COVID-19 regulations do not permit in-person meetings, the Program will consider online meeting options with streaming services provided. No costs of attendance will be reimbursed.

Applicants can also send questions about the concept paper process to [skillsgrants@iesc.org](mailto:skillsgrants@iesc.org) until **February 25, 2022**. All answers to questions asked at the pre-submission workshop and/or through the e-mail will be posted to the Program's Facebook and web page no later than **March 4, 2022**.

- Program's Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/USAIDSkillsProgram>
- Program's Web Page - <https://iesc.org/program/usaid-industry-led-skills-development/>

Concept papers should be submitted in electronic format to [skillsgrants@iesc.org](mailto:skillsgrants@iesc.org). All concept papers should reference RFCP No. 003-C3-001-2022 and must be submitted in English. Concept papers are due no later than **March 18, 2022**, 18:00 Georgia Standard Time (UTC/GMT +4). Late or unresponsive submissions will not be considered. Key dates are as follow:

Activity	Due Date
Registration for Pre-submission Workshops and Info Sessions	No later than five (5) working days prior to the desired workshop
Pre-submission Workshops and Info Sessions	February 7 – 16, 2022
Questions Due to <a href="mailto:skillsgrants@iesc.org">skillsgrants@iesc.org</a>	February 25, 2022
Program Posts Responses to Questions	March 4, 2022
Submission of Concept Papers	March 18, 2022
Estimated Submission of Full Applications, if selected	May – June 2022
Estimated Start Date of the Grant	August 2022

The grants will be awarded and implemented in accordance with USAID and United States (U.S.) Government regulations governing grants and grants under contract (GUCs) as deemed applicable by USAID, Prime USAID Contractor IESC, and the Program's grant management policies.

The Program and IESC employees may not ask for, and applicants are prohibited from offering, any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, a thing of value, or compensation to obtain or reward improper favorable treatment regarding this solicitation. Any improper request from an IESC or Program employee should be reported to the Program's Chief of Party or [ethics@iesc.org](mailto:ethics@iesc.org).

The following annex is included with this RFCP:

- Annex I – Concept Paper Template

## **SECTION I. INDUSTRY-LED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GRANT ACTIVITIES**

### **A. INDUSTRY-LED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM BACKGROUND**

The Program is headquartered in Tbilisi with Program activities operating throughout Georgia. To ensure national coverage, the Program engages with networks of employers, business associations, education and training providers (both public and private), local and national government representatives, and development partners. Through this collaboration, the Program effectively engages



the private sector, undertakes outreach and marketing, delivers tailored and demand-driven grants, hosts community engagement events, and creates a network of employer-led skills development initiatives and partnerships across Georgia.

The purpose of the Program is to develop industry-relevant human capital that will contribute to high-value employment opportunities and increased economic competitiveness in Georgia. The Program will achieve this by systematically engaging employers to equip Georgians with skills demanded in sectors with high growth potential and create direct linkages between training programs and high-value employment opportunities. The Program gives a leading role to the private sector to catalyze demand-driven skills development throughout Georgia.

The Program has three components. Under **Component 1**, the Program pilots initiatives that incentivize employers, sectoral associations/councils, industry groups, and other private sector bodies to participate in innovative practices/models independently or in cooperation with skills training providers, strengthening linkages between skills training and high value employment opportunities. Innovative practices/models may also include already-existing practices/models that are new to the grantee, economic sector, or geographical location. Under **Component 2**, the Program scales and establishes private sector-demanded training programs demonstrated independently or through partnership and support of skills training providers. Under **Component 3**, the Program aims to increase the employability and incomes of un- and under-employed populations in the regions and increase employers' productivity by expanding access to existing, high-quality skills training programs to rural and priority populations in ways that contribute to high-value employment opportunities.

This RFCP is for grant activities under **Component 3**. The Georgian private sector's skills needs are dynamic and diverse, especially considering a continuously evolving post-COVID-19 economic recovery. The Program does not prescribe sectors or regions for grants or activities beyond excluding those that are prohibited by U.S. law and regulations. By keeping the regions and sectors flexible, the Program is able to respond rapidly to emerging opportunities for growth.

## B. COMPONENT 3 GRANTS DESCRIPTION

### B.I. Objective

The objective of this RFCP is to solicit concept papers for grant activities to expand access to high quality industry-led skills training programs for rural and priority populations in ways that contribute to high-value employment opportunities and ensure equitable inclusion in skills development initiatives. The proposed activities should be designed to create a highly skilled labor force for the private sector and contribute to increased productivity, competitiveness, and local economic growth. Skills training programs proposed to be replicated and delivered should ensure access for rural communities, ethnic minorities, youth, women, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and persons living in communities in close proximity to the administrative boundary lines (ABLs).

Proposed grant activities should engage the private sector in replication, adaptation, and delivery of skills training programs, either independently or in partnership with a training provider. To meet this objective, applicants should propose measurable results and demonstrate that skills development programs selected for replication are aligned with private sector requirements for a qualified workforce. In addition, the applicant should ensure that the interests of the trainees are protected, and that each skills training program supported by the Program provides value to rural participants in their long-term career trajectories.



## B.2. Scope Of Component 3 Grant Activities

Under Component 3, applicants should replicate existing high-quality skills training programs that have strong potential to increase employment and incomes in rural areas and for the Program priority populations, including women, youth, ethnic minorities, PWDs, and persons living in close proximity to the ABLs. Replication under Component 3 means delivering existing short-term or long-term skills training program(s) that have not previously been delivered or benefited the indicated rural area. Replication may require and include improvement and/or upscaling of existing skills training programs to meet employers' needs for a qualified workforce. The proposed interventions can be developed by the private sector independently, through government support, cooperation with training providers, public-private partnerships, or via donor-funded initiatives. All applications must present existing or potential partnership models for sustainable private sector engagement in the workforce development system.

Skills development initiatives to be replicated in rural areas can be educational, or short-term training and/or re-training programs delivered in Georgia or internationally. Initiatives should result in either a formal diploma, or in a certificate recognizing achievement in qualifications compatible with the National Qualification Framework (NQF) levels II, III, IV, V, and/or an internationally recognized certification that is recognized in **at least two** different countries. Alternatively, these initiatives can be delivered through non-formal education mechanisms. Non-formal training does not have to meet NQF requirements. Scope limitations under this RFCP are only related to geographic coverage. Applicants under Component 3 should propose replication of already proven skills development programs to any location within the territory of Georgia except for the five major cities: **Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Poti, Batumi, and Rustavi.**

Concept papers and cost information should include outreach activities to communicate the results of these programs to sector representatives. Additionally, applicants should include activities related to the promotion of Technical and Vocational Education and Training as a valid career choice for attracting students, along with training replication initiatives. Respective activity costs should be included in the concept paper budget.

Applicants should propose effective approaches to ensure affordability and equitable access to opportunities for the Program's priority populations, including women, youth, ethnic minorities, and PWDs living in rural areas. Applicants should consider all the potential costs related to adoption of gender and inclusion practices in the concept paper budget.

Potential topics for concept papers under Component 3 include, but are not limited to:

- Replicating proven skills training programs demanded by the industry to increase private sector productivity and generate employment in rural areas and for priority populations;
- Fostering private sector and employer engagement in skills development systems in rural areas, including opening in-house training facilities or forging partnerships with educational institutions;
- Improving quality of Technical and Vocational Education Training facilities in rural locations to support the delivery of existing high-quality skills training programs that are driven by industry demands and labor market needs;
- Developing training and learning materials, in both printed and web form, for skills training programs to be replicated and delivered in the rural areas of Georgia;
- Promoting innovative student participation methods to ensure access and inclusion to quality training that leads to high-value employment for rural and priority populations;



- Establishing partnerships between training providers and employers to create access to industry-demanded skills training programs in rural areas;
- Implementing effective approaches to increasing the affordability and equitable inclusion of priority population in skills development and employment initiatives;
- Replicating on-the-job learning modalities, including apprenticeships and internships in rural areas that reinforce Technical and Vocational Education Training as a valid career choice for students;
- Adopting international certification or international vocational education standards for increased quality and inclusion;
- Increasing employers' participation in marketing, career guidance and other support services to promote vocational education and enhance the attractiveness to trainees; and,
- Developing student recruitment mechanisms and communications campaigns.

### B.3. Funding

The maximum award ceiling amount is **US \$500,000** per recipient and the maximum grant duration is **24 months**. The grant funding amounts in the grant agreements will be fixed in U.S. Dollars (USD). Disbursements will be made in the local currency, Georgian Lari (GEL), according to the disbursement schedule established in the grant agreement and utilizing the official exchange rate established by the National Bank of Georgia on the day of payment. Payments will either be made on a reimbursement basis in tranches corresponding to the achievement of agreed upon milestones or, in exceptional cases, on a periodic advance and liquidation basis. The payment method will be determined by the Program as part of an analysis of the applicant's organizational capability to manage grant funds.

All costs funded by the grant must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Further details about cost allowability are included below in Section E.4 "Ineligible Activities and Unallowable Costs". Resources a grant recipient contributes to the total cost of a grant activity may be financial or in-kind. The total value of the applicant's contribution to this activity must be minimum **50%** of the total life-of-project budget for the concept, which extends beyond the grants program. Of the Program's contribution, which will not exceed **US \$500,000**, the applicant's cash contribution must equal or exceed **20%** of the amount funded by the Program. Therefore, the Program requires budgetary data for both life-of-project budget estimates, AND estimates on the required Program contribution. Further information on what applicant contributions are allowable is included below in Section E.3 "Matching Contribution Eligibility".

In-kind contributions may include goods, services, works, studies, equipment, materials, land, and leased property provided by the applicant. The value of in-kind contributions should be estimated during the selection process based on the expected value of the goods, works or services provided, assessed for reasonableness, and related explicitly to the Program. The recorded value for any in-kind contribution will be the fair market value. Concept papers must be supported by a budget as described in Section C "Instructions to Applicant" below.

### B.4. Gender and Social Inclusion

The limited opportunities for women to participate in economic activities are a major development challenge for Georgia. Applicants must consider how their proposed grant activity addresses constraints to women's participation in high-value economic activities, especially regarding gender stereotyping for certain occupations, and ensures equitable participation of women. Applicants must also consider how their proposed grant activity ensures inclusiveness for ethnic minorities and students with disabilities and propose methods to ensure these groups are informed about the possibilities and advantages of skills



development programs and provide equitable access supporting them to overcome language, financial, social, or other types of constraints. Applicants should consider all the potential costs related to gender and social inclusion in the grant budget.

#### **B.5. Environmental, Health, and Safety Compliance**

The applicant must consider the impact of their proposed grant activity on the environment and include environmental sustainability as a central consideration when designing and implementing the grant activity. In accordance with U.S. Government Federal Regulations (Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 216) and USAID's Automated Directives System (Parts 201.5.10g and 204), the applicant must identify the potential environmental impacts of the proposed grant activity. The Program will review these prior to a final decision to proceed and the applicant will adopt appropriate environmental safeguards as necessary. In addition, if funded, the applicant must conduct the grant activity in a manner which safeguards the rights, health, and welfare of all individuals who take part in the grant activity.

Prior to an initiating a grant activity that has the potential to result in significant adverse environmental, health, and/or safety impacts, the Program will work with the applicant to prepare an Environmental Review Checklist (ERC) and an Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) and submit these to USAID for approval prior to implementation of this grant activity. After the grant activity is completed, the applicant and the Program must sign a Record of Compliance with the ERC/EMMP certifying that the applicant met all applicable ERC/EMMP conditions and submit it to USAID for approval. While the environmental analysis will only be required in subsequent stages of the process, applicants should consider all the potential costs related to environmental, health, and safety impact mitigation in the estimated activity cost.

### **C. INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS**

#### **C.1. Annex I - Concept Paper Template**

Applicants must present their proposals using the Concept Paper Template (Annex I). The template includes instructions for how to complete the document. Concept papers that are selected via the merit review process described below in Section D “Merit Review Evaluation” will be invited to complete a full grant application. Instructions on completion of the full application will be sent to selected applicants.

#### **C.2. Additional Concept Paper Instructions**

The submission must be signed by an authorized agent of the applicant. Concept papers must be submitted in English. Answers to questions six through thirteen of Annex I - Concept Paper Template must not exceed **three** pages. The remaining questions are not counted towards the page limit.

Concept papers should be submitted in electronic format to [skillsgrants@iesc.org](mailto:skillsgrants@iesc.org). Concept papers must be submitted no later than **March 18, 2022**, 18:00 Georgia Standard Time (UTC/GMT +4).

Submissions received after the closing date and time will not be considered.

### **D. MERIT REVIEW EVALUATION**

Concept papers will be reviewed and evaluated by a Grant Evaluation Committee for completeness in the following two-step evaluation process:



- **Step I:** Initial review of the submitted concept papers by the Program Grant Evaluation Committee to evaluate the eligibility and conduct the merit review criteria in correspondence with the criteria set out below.
- **Step II:** If the concept paper meets the Program's minimum requirements, applicants will be invited to submit a more detailed grant application at the second stage.

All concept papers will be reviewed by a Grant Evaluation Committee based on the merit review criteria outlined in this section below. While some concept papers will be rejected outright due to lack of eligibility, some applicants presenting innovative ideas, but lacking sufficient information on their methodology or concept may be asked to provide additional information. In some cases, the applicant might be invited to make a presentation to the Program team to answer potential questions and clarify goals.

	<b>Merit Review Criteria</b>	<b>Deficient</b>	<b>Marginal</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
1.	Feasibility and scale of the proposed approach					
2.	Impact on target groups and Program priority population					
3.	Correspondence of the results to be achieved, linkage to grant objectives					
4.	Past performance and organizational capacity					

These merit review criteria elements are described more fully below.

1. *Feasibility and scale of the proposed approach.* The quality and feasibility of the concept paper in terms of the appropriateness of the proposed methodology, innovativeness of the concept, clarity of justification of the labor market need, and ability to meet the need for a skilled workforce through the proposed approach. Additionally, the Program will consider relevance of proposed practices/models to skills development and job placement, and the potential of employers' long-term engagement.
2. *Impact on target groups and Program priority population.* The extent to which the proposed activity corresponds to demonstrated current and future skills needs of employers, and responds to the skills needs of students/trainees and will directly benefit Program target groups. Considers how the proposed methodology of program delivery ensures increased access and inclusion of the Program priority population.
3. *Correspondence of the results to be achieved, linkage to grant objectives.* Proposed activities and methods are adequate to meet the grants program objectives and results of the grants program contribute to the overall Program objectives of improved competitiveness and high-value employment.
4. *Past performance and organizational capacity.* Previous or ongoing experience implementing similar scale and/or related experience and positioning in the sector. Evidence of the capability to undertake and accomplish the proposed activities.



The merit review criteria above will be used by the Program to review and evaluate concepts that meet the minimum requirements. The Program will assign each criterion a rating using the following scale:

- Outstanding
- Very Good
- Good
- Marginal
- Deficient

Only applicants who receive an overall rating of ‘Good’ or higher will be invited to submit the full application. While merit review criteria are paramount, cost considerations may also be a factor for award. The Program is not obligated to make an award on the basis of lowest proposed cost or to the applicant with the highest merit review criteria rating.

## E. ELIGIBILITY

### E.I. Recipients

Applicants must be registered in Georgia, formally constituted, recognized by and in good standing with appropriate Georgian authorities, and compliant with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations. Eligible grant recipients include private companies, business associations, public or private Technical and Vocational Education Training colleges and universities, professional associations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) registered in Georgia and their partnerships. The Program will not provide grants to partner government entities, except to public colleges and public universities. The following eligibility criteria also apply to all applicants:

- Applicant organizations must be founded no less than one (1) year prior to the day of the concept paper submission.
- Applicants may only submit one concept paper under this RFCP, where the applicant is the leading organization; however, the applicant may be represented on other concept papers as a partnered service provider.
- All applicants must have established linkages to the beneficiary group(s) identified in the scope of work, which is reflected by the incorporation of local views in the proposal.
- Faith-based and community groups will receive equal opportunity for funding in accordance with the mandated guidelines laid out in this RFCP, except for faith-based organizations whose objectives are for discriminatory and religious purposes, and whose main objective of the grant is of a religious nature.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate strong capacity and interest for sustainable engagement or successful past performance in implementation of integrated development programs related to the Program’s goals and objectives as described in this RFCP.
- Applicants must display sound management in the form of financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures and present a system of internal controls that safeguard assets, protect against fraud, waste, and abuse, and support the achievement of the Program’s goals and objectives. The Program will assess this capability prior to awarding a grant.
- Applicants must sign the following required certifications prior to receiving a grant. The Program will provide the certifications once a full application is selected for a grant and review them with applicants.
  - Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals
  - Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing
  - Recipient Certification of Compliance



- Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants (Completion of survey is voluntary)
- For any grant(s) resulting from this solicitation that is other than in-kind and equivalent to US \$25,000 or more, grantees will be required to obtain a Dun and Bradstreet DUNS number. If the applicant already has a DUNS number it should be included in their concept paper. Otherwise, applicants will be expected to get a DUNS number before an award is made. DUNS numbers can be obtained online at <https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do>
- Eligible organizations must not appear on the following exclusionary and security lists:
  - The Excluded Parties List at <https://sam.gov/content/home>
  - The U.S. Treasury “Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons” at <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/SDN-List/Pages/default.aspx>
  - The United Nations Security Designation List at <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/un-sc-consolidated-list>
- Successful applicants will follow the Branding Strategy & Marking Plan of the Program, which will be annexed to the grant agreement.
- All concept papers must ensure environmental soundness and compliance in design and implementation as required by 22 CFR 216.

## E.2. Eligible Activities

Grant activities funded by stage two of the Component 3 process will meet the following general criteria:

- Grants supported by the Program must promote its objectives. The proposed activities may be the sole or primary work of an organization, or a special dimension or function of an organization largely dedicated to other projects.
- Applicants should demonstrate sustainable engagement of the private sector in replicating and delivering high-quality skills training programs to rural areas, propose effective approaches to ensure affordability and equitable access to the industry-demanded skills training and employment opportunities, incorporate outreach activities to share the results for upscale and replication and include activities for promoting vocational education in general.
- Eligible grant expenditures include, but are not limited to:
  - Improving teaching infrastructure – tools and equipment required to deliver the particular training(s) to the relevant number of students.
  - Technical assistance and other costs related to the skills training program development, improvement, or replication (short-term formal/non-formal) and authorization process (if considered) – local and foreign Short-Term Technical Assistance (STTA) costs, written translation costs; authorization fee (initial), registration of patents and/or intellectual property rights (initial registration fees), or purchase of rights for use of others' intellectual property (initial fees).
  - Cost related to acquiring and maintaining international certifications – initial franchise and/or license fees; franchise and/or license maintaining fees for a certain period of time (subject to discussion and agreement with the Program), local and foreign STTA costs for the implementation period, translation, editing and adaptation of the training materials, registration/authorization fees, or initial legal costs.
  - Training of instructors – any costs related to training-of-trainers/instructors at the start-up phase and during implementation (including cost related to international expert fees and international travel for the purpose of increasing the qualifications of the trainers), except of those costs qualified as non-eligible. Costs related to the salaries of the trainers/instructors during the delivery of the training programs are not eligible.



- Implementing student participation through innovative forms and methods, including digitalization of education delivery – any costs qualified as eligible under this RFCP.
- Monitoring student outcomes – local and foreign STTA costs and other eligible costs required for the development and initial implementation of monitoring models and systems.
- Access and inclusion approaches – any eligible costs related to the adoption and implementation of access and inclusion approaches, including local STTA costs.
- Activities related to attracting students – any eligible costs relate to drawing students to the proposed training program(s).
- Expenditures related to publicity – communication to the public and press of developments or achievements of the concept.
- Grants will cover only necessary and allowable costs linked to the execution of the activity such as staff salaries, consultant fees, training, meetings and seminars, publications, purchase and/or rental of equipment, translation and adaptation of materials, office and travel expenses, and other direct costs. The specific costs to be funded under the Program must conform to the USAID guidelines for funding activities.
- Should it be deemed necessary by the ERC, grants will also cover costs associated with mitigating the environmental impact of activities. These mitigation measures should clearly outline associated resource needs.
- Activities can only begin upon signature of the agreement between the applicant and IESC. Costs incurred before execution of the agreement (including signed certifications and assurances) will not be reimbursed unless agreed upon in writing.

### E.3. Matching Contribution Eligibility

To be eligible for a grant award, the applicants must contribute through matching contributions. The total value of the matching contributions to this activity by the applicant must be a **minimum 50% of the total requested investment, which must include a cash contribution of at least 20% of the funding amount requested from the Program.**

All contributions by the applicant (both financial and in-kind) must meet all the following criteria:

- Be verifiable in the applicant records.
- Be necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of grant activity objectives.
- Be allowable under the applicable USAID regulations.
- Must not be included as matching contributions for any other U.S. Government-assisted program.
- Must not be paid by the U.S. Government under another grant or agreement.
- Are provided for in the estimated activity cost and in the approved budget, if selected.

### E.4. Ineligible Activities and Unallowable Costs

All grant costs must be reasonable, allowable, and directly related to the grant award. Grant funds cannot be used for the following:

- Construction activities (without prior approval by the Program).
- Any operational costs related to the training programs delivery, including salaries of the trainers/instructors. Applicant can count these costs toward their cost matching contribution. Training-of-trainers costs or those related to program development are allowable.
- Any Lease/Rental fee. Applicant can count these costs toward their cost matching contribution.
- Private ceremonies, parties, celebrations, or "representation" expenses.



- Purchases of restricted goods, such as certain agricultural commodities, motor vehicles (including motorcycles), pharmaceuticals and contraceptive items, pesticides, used equipment, U.S. Government excess property and fertilizers without the prior approval by the USAID Contracting Officer (CO).
- Prohibited goods under USAID regulations, including but not limited to military and surveillance equipment, police or law enforcement equipment, abortion equipment and services, weather modification equipment, luxury goods, and gambling equipment.
- Purchases of goods or services restricted or prohibited under the prevailing USAID source/nationality regulations and relevant Standard Provisions; or from countries or suppliers as may be identified by USAID's consolidated list of debarred, suspended, or ineligible subcontractors at <https://sam.gov/content/home>.
- Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by IESC.
- Previous obligations, interest owed, and/or bad debts.
- Fines and/or penalties.
- Creation of endowments.
- Taxes and VAT on the purchase of supplies/services.
- Currency exchange losses.
- Purchase of land or buildings.
- Costs of project preparatory studies or other preparatory activities.
- Miscellaneous and/or contingency costs.
- Activities unlawful under the Georgian law.
- Other costs unallowable under USAID and/or federal regulations, such as alcoholic beverages.
- An organization may opt for a flat 10% de minimis indirect rate on Modified Total Direct Costs. Indirect costs are never allowed under simplified grants.

## F. AUTHORITY/GOVERNING REGULATIONS

The Program grants to non-U.S. organizations adhere to federal guidance provided under 2 CFR 200 “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards” as detailed in the USAID Mandatory and Standard Provisions.

Full text of this regulation can be found at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2 subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200>. The Program is required to ensure that all organizations receiving USAID grant funds comply with the guidance found in these circulars, as applicable to the respective terms and conditions of their grant awards.

Issuance of this RFCP and assistance with concept paper development do not constitute an award or commitment on the part of the Program, nor does it commit the Program to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a concept paper. Further, the Program reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submissions received.

During the concept paper review and implementation process of grants, the Program reserves the right to investigate a submission or ongoing grant due to any real or perceived conflict of interest. In the event that the Program determines that a conflict of interest exists, the Program may disqualify a submission or terminate a grant.

## ANNEXES

- Annex I – Concept Paper Template