



INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

announces

Request for Applications

for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in partnership with media outlets to promote success stories on their achievements throughout Serbia

Submission Deadline: 3 p.m. (CET), April 16, 2010

I. Introduction

The Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) is an independent, non-profit organization that is actively engaged in helping citizens define their future through its groundbreaking approach to advocacy, which helps citizens work together to chart their shared future. ISC is implementing an \$18.5 million five-year Civil Society Advocacy Initiative (CSAI) program that seeks to support civil society in Serbia in its ability to help citizens take responsibility for determining the kind of society they live in by increasing citizen participation in all aspects of public life. Through grants, training, and networking opportunities, CSAI helps citizen initiatives and civil society organizations (CSOs) more effectively communicate their priorities and coordinate with government and the private sector to tangibly improve people's lives. This program is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to solicit project proposals from CSOs in Serbia for using mass media to promote successful results and project impact in order to increase visibility of CSO activities. Grants will be awarded to creative proposals capturing important and empowering success stories—true examples of Serbian citizens and CSOs showing exceptional initiative and working together to effect meaningful change. Success stories should promote a positive image of civil society, and encourage people to actively participate in all aspects of public life. For instance, projects may provide concrete examples of successful advocacy campaigns that can be replicated, or of an ongoing initiative that has a potential of engaging citizens to take part in it. Publications, broadcasts, and dissemination of winning strategies and approaches will be an integral part of successful proposals. We strongly encourage CSOs to develop innovative and creative approaches to interact with wider audiences, as well as to use Internet and social media, such as YouTube, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, blogs etc. The proposal should be implemented in partnership with a media outlet (TV, radio, print, news agency, and/or Internet portal) in order to establish long lasting relationships between the two sectors and to ensure higher visibility of CSOs' activities.

Program Priorities

Organizations can apply for funding to cover the publications and/or production costs of recording and disseminating to a wider audience success stories pertinent to strengthening civil society, CSOs, and citizen action in Serbia.

Proposals should include a statement of partnership with a local, regional, or national media outlet, such as TV, radio, print, news agency, and/or Internet portal. The statement of partnership with a media outlet should clearly show responsibilities of each partner in project implementation.

The grants will help CSOs promote the results of their most recent or ongoing projects, thus representing a supplemental investment in the organizations' public image, visibility of their projects and their outreach to broader audiences. Promoting coalition building and partnerships with other CSOs, or with other sectors, are strongly encouraged.

These may include designing and producing creative outreach products and activities, such as:

- Production and broadcasting of video and audio documentaries, stories, spots, or talk shows on relevant topics, providing empowering examples of the efficacy of citizen activism in Serbia, reinforcing the message that civic action can be done here and that each individual does make a difference;
- Production, design and disseminating of campaign materials and publications of compelling stories that provide empowering examples of advocacy activities as models for replication;
- Implementing interactive and viral campaign using new technologies and social media (such as blogs, YouTube, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc.) in order to reach relevant audiences, motivate them to directly contribute to the topic with their own input, and to replicate the campaign message(s);
- Outreach efforts for improving constituency/beneficiary relations through direct grass-roots activities;
- Other interventions or activities to showcase the impact of a CSO's work, including online products or alternative ways for presenting results to a wider audience.

When submitting their project proposal, CSOs are encouraged to include a short YouTube video clip as an additional means of explaining project's purpose, course of implementation, and expected impact on targeted audience. Submitting a video clip is optional, and not having one would not count against a project proposal. If submitted, the short video clip should be used to demonstrate applicant's sense of creativity and innovation.

Program Duration

ISC/CSAI expects to award grants as of June 2010. Maximum length of proposal should not exceed 5 months.

Project Funding

Grants awarded will range from \$15,000 to \$25,000, depending on the project needs. Project proposals should make every effort to be cost efficient, and CSOs should prepare project budgets that are within the capabilities of the organizations.

Applicants should provide a minimum cost share in the amount of 10% out of total project budget, either in the form of cash or in-kind contribution from a source other than the U.S. Government. Any funding from another U.S. Government source (such as other USAID-funded programs, U.S. Embassy's Democracy Commission Small Grants Program etc.) will NOT be considered as cost-share. ISC looks favorably at proposals with cost share higher than the minimum 10%. Cost share is a contribution which could come from your own organization's funds, facilities use, time volunteered, or donations of resources or items from other sources/donors that will assist in implementing your project, such as air time donated by a partner media outlet.

Please note that ISC/CSAI will not pay for air time.

II. Evaluation of Applications

Project selection will be based on the evaluation of project proposals that are supportive of the applicant's success stories and results. Projects should be designed to maximize public understanding and awareness of CSO results through the production of creative outreach products, such as on-line initiatives, video clips, short stories, documentaries, talk shows, grass-roots campaigns or other forms of promotional products. The project proposal should include a description of the content of the product, how it will be made available to the audience, its expected results, and nature of their partnership with media outlets. Projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Project Content – quality and creativity

Extent to which:

- a) The result achieved is unique and stands out as a special story;
- b) The idea for promotion of the result is clearly articulated, technically sound and reflects an appreciation for the likely risks to be encountered;
- c) The project demonstrates:
 - a clear picture of the size and scope of the result to be promoted, and its benefits for the target groups of the applicant,
 - a creative and innovative approach to promoting the result, and
 - a logical explanation of how the results of this project will be measured;
- d) The project will advance the purposes and the public image of the CSO.

2. Plan of Work and Audience

Extent to which:

- a) The schedule is realistic;
- b) The applicant has a clear sense of the audience for the project;
- c) The topic and format of the project is appropriate for the intended audience.

3. Budget

Extent to which:

- a) The proposed budget is cost-effective, reasonable and justified;
- b) Administrative costs do not exceed 40% (budget categories 1 to 8) compared to program costs (budget category 9);
- c) The level of commitment is demonstrated to provide additional funds and in-kind contributions.

4. Organizational Capacity and Past Performance

Extent to which:

- a) The organization has demonstrated ability to carry out the proposed project as planned, including adequate personnel and managerial systems;
- b) The organization has demonstrated ability to establish effective partnerships with media outlets and/or other CSO's.

III. Project Proposal Submission

Application Forms

Application material, containing project proposal form and budget form, can be downloaded from: <http://www.iscserbia.org/news/>

If a YouTube video clip is a part of the proposal, the only standard it should meet is one of innovation and creativity.

ISC/CSAI will provide limited assistance to grant seekers in developing their proposals. Should you have any questions regarding the RFA, please send an e-mail to isc@iscserbia.org. **No phone calls please.**

Project Proposal Submission Check List

Prior to proposal submission please make sure you satisfy the following technical criteria:

- Applicant is registered as an association of citizens or a foundation in the Republic of Serbia;
- Project proposal is submitted using attached ISC forms in English and is complete;
- Project proposal is submitted in 2 hard copies and on CD;
- Budget proposal is submitted in US Dollars;
- Minimum 10% of total budget is from cost share (cash and/or in-kind contribution) from a source other than the U.S. Government;
- Statement of partnership with a media outlet is signed and enclosed;
- Valid link to a YouTube video clip presentation enclosed, if applicable.

Final Submission

Project proposals should be submitted to ISC/CSAI office by **3 p.m. (CET), April 16, 2010**. **Please note that proposals received after this time will not be considered.**

Proposals should be sent by post or hand delivered to the address listed below, including **two hard copies and a CD with electronic version** of the proposal. CD should also contain the proposal's video clip presentation, if applicable.

Proposals must be submitted in one envelope. The envelope must contain the title of the RFA as shown below and the applicant's name must be displayed on the back.

Reference: CSAI SG RFA March 2009

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