**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)**

**for the Armenia Integrity Project**

**Issuance Date:** July 29, 2024

**Closing Date:** August 29, 2024

**Closing Time**: 18:00 Armenia time

**Subject:** Request for Applications (RFA) Number 2101-RFA-006 - Empowering CSOs for Enhanced Integrity in Armenia

**Reference:** Issued Under the USAID Armenia Integrity Project (AIP), Contract Number 72011121C00001

**Knowledge and clarification session:**

 Date: August 6, 2024

 Time: 15:00 Armenia time

 Place: AIP Office (28 Zarobyan street, Yerevan, RA) or [online](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3Ameeting_YWRhODg5YWEtNzU5Mi00NmY0LTkxM2UtOWY0NzIzNGI5Nzli%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22bd140e05-55ee-4876-9cba-f40f6f70c082%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2298c2345d-199f-475a-9eea-fb0ef81c6f85%22%7d).

This Request for Application (RFA) outlines the information required to apply for the subject grant. The applicant is expected to review, understand, and conform to specifications contained in this RFA. Failure to do so will be at the applicant’s own risk.

Any questions concerning this RFA should be submitted in writing to armenia@dexisonline.com no later than August 2, 2024. Armenia Integrity Project (AIP or Project) plans to award one grant to the successful applicant under this RFA.

All reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the grant program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (2 CFR 200 Subpart E Cost Principles or the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for-profit organizations), may be charged under the grant.

This call is for non-US organizations, and the Standard Provisions for Non-US Nongovernmental Recipients will apply and Standard Provisions for Fixed Amounts Award for Nongovernmental organizations, please see [Standard Provisions for Fixed Amounts Award for Nongovernmental Organizations](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/agency-policy/303mat.pdf). This RFA is being issued and consists of this cover letter, Schedule A, and the following attachments: 1. Grant Application Form, 2. Grant Budget Form (in the required excel format), and 3. Grantee Self-Assessment for Fixed Amount Awards.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the AIP nor does it commit the Armenia Integrity Project to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. **AIP may decide to not make any award under this RFA.** Applications in response to this RFA are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in the Armenia Integrity Project activities.

Sincerely,

Tatshat Stepanyan

Chief of Party

# Armenia Integrity Project

# 2101-RFA-006

**EMPOWERING CSOs FOR ENHANCED INTEGRITY IN ARMENIA**

# SCHEDULE A

# SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

**Background:**

The Armenia Integrity Project (AIP) is a five-year program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Dexis Consulting Group. The aim of the project is to reduce opportunities for corruption and reinforce public demand for improved governance and accountability in Armenia. Specifically, AIP provides technical assistance to the Corruption Prevention Commission (CPC) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in line with their goal to advance the Government’s corruption prevention agenda.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in combating corruption through various means - acting as watchdogs, advocating for strong anti-corruption policies, raising public awareness, and engaging communities. If they are well capacitated and equipped with relevant tools, they can monitor government activities, conduct investigations, and promote transparency to hold public officials accountable. By educating and empowering citizens, CSOs can mobilize grassroots efforts and provide legal support to victims of corruption and whistleblowers. They can also conduct research, form partnerships, and develop accountability mechanisms to strengthen anti-corruption efforts.

CSOs can play a pivotal role not only in keeping the government accountable but also in supporting state agencies responsible for the implementation of anticorruption reforms to strengthen integrity systems in the country. CSOs equipped with capacity, expertise, and resources will become more effective in monitoring and advocating for enforcement of the current Anti-corruption (AC) strategy adopted by the Government.

**Goal of the Request for Applications (RFA):**

The Armenia Integrity Project (AIP) is working to strengthen corruption prevention institutions and integrity systems in Armenia. For this objective, AIP is building and strengthening the capacity of the CPC to lead the country’s corruption prevention efforts. In this endeavor, strong and capacitated CSOs can play a key role in supporting the CPC in defining, analyzing, and acting based on relevant collected information to reduce opportunities for corruption, strengthen internal controls and external oversight, and promote integrity throughout the public sector. Recognizing the important power and potential of CSOs and guided by the Armenian Anti-Corruption Strategy action plan for 2023-2026, AIP, together with the CPC, is endorsing efforts to build the capacity of larger CSO community (non-governmental organization), members and affiliates on integrity systems. This long-term approach aims to strengthen public oversight and monitor the implementation of integrity reforms in the country, as well as to sustain corruption prevention mechanisms.

The primary objective of this RFA is to identify an organization capable of providing capacity strengthening opportunities to CSOs. These initiatives should aim at enhancing the knowledge and capabilities of CSOs to monitor and report on anti-corruption issues. This RFA aims to empower CSO members and affiliates to meaningfully contribute to integrity reforms, thereby supporting joint efforts to prevent corruption and strengthen integrity systems.

**Target groups**

Applicants should target at least 1,000 people affiliated with non-governmental organizations (CSOs and foundations, activists, members of formal and non-formal civil society groups, etc.), with the objective of building their capacity on corruption prevention, including integrity systems, through trainings, workshops, discussions, etc. (both online and in person).

**Specific objectives**

A proposal under this RFA should include comprehensive trainings for the CSOs, focusing on skills and knowledge transfer intended to prevent corruption, including reducing corruption risks in public administration (i.e. public expenditure tracking or integrity training) and financing political parties. This training should pay special attention to the issue of public integrity.

The trainings should focus on the following:

* Mechanisms for detecting violations of conflict of interest rules, incompatibility requirements and other restrictions (including restriction to receive gifts).
* Legal regulations on conflict of interest.
* Code of conduct (both for public officials and other public servants) as an initial part of the integrity system.
* Integrity verification as a mechanism for corruption prevention.
* Declaration systems as a corruption prevention mechanism.
* Verification of political party annual reports and political party financing as a mechanism to prevent corruption.
* Public expenditure monitoring and tracking.
* Mechanisms for the disclosure of donations, including in-kind donations received by the political parties, their transparency and accountability.
* Strengthening the capacities of CSOs and CSO networks on data mining and analysis techniques for oversight, monitoring, investigative/fact finding actions.
* Strengthening the capacities of CSOs and CSO networks to raise funds for non-formal anti-corruption, education, and public awareness programs for insuring sustainability of efforts.

The training must follow a documented agenda with expected competencies for the trainees and clear learning objectives, including pre- and post-training testing to ensure that competency is achieved.

The CSO members and affiliated activists should learn how effectively to detect violations of incompatibility requirements, other restrictions (including the restriction to receive gifts), conflicts of interest, code of conduct, monitor integrity checking (more specifically what is included in the framework of the integrity check and how to monitor information, in order to provide alternative data to the CPC ), and analyze asset declarations, as well as annual reports of political parties for red flagging possible corruption risks. CSOs, among others, should be equipped to conduct their own investigations including the verification of political party annual reports as a mechanism to prevent political corruption.

For this purpose, the organization selected for the award must utilize not only traditional training methods and techniques, but also promote innovative methods for larger outreach and greater impact.

This might include but is not limited to:

* Interactive e-learning modules that cover topics such as incompatibility requirements, other restrictions (including restriction to receive gifts), conflicts of interest, code of conduct, monitoring of integrity checks (with the specific focus on the framework of integrity checks and how to monitor information, in order to provide alternative data to the CPC ), and analyzing asset declarations, as well as annual reports of political parties for red flagging possible corruption risks (hereinafter referred as focus areas). These modules should be interactive, incorporating quizzes, case studies, and scenario-based learning to ensure engagement and practical understanding. Interactive e-learning modules based on focus areas (p.3) shall contain information on toolkits and tracking techniques, information analysis within different databases (including accessing and analyzing foreign databases) and media publications.
* Peer learning and networking platforms where activists can share experiences, best practices, and resources. These platforms can facilitate peer learning and foster a supportive community.
* Hosting/organizing regular webinars and live workshops featuring experts in anti-corruption, legal frameworks, and investigative journalism. These sessions can provide up-to-date information, practical tips, and opportunities for Q&A.
* Chatbots that can answer frequently asked questions (FAQs) about focus areas identified above. These bots can provide instant answers and direct users to relevant resources or training modules.

It is encouraged to incorporate both capacity-building technical expertise and sector-related expertise to ensure the involvement of highly qualified experts from the anti-corruption sector. Along with theoretical knowledge, there should be opportunities for trainees to apply the knowledge they gained within the framework of anti-corruption initiatives, in line with the principle of learning by doing.

Additionally, there is a need to provide CSO members and affiliated activists with opportunities to build connections with responsible public institutions like the CPC and the MoJ. This will enable them to contribute cooperatively and meaningfully to the work of these critical institutions.

**General Approach**

Proposed grant activities should be implemented in close cooperation with the CPC and AIP’s project team. The awardee will be encouraged to establish cooperative relationships with other relevant stakeholders, especially with the Ministry of Justice, as well as other state and local government institutions. The awardee will also be expected to coordinate activities with AIP-supported CSO initiatives targeting integrity and corruption prevention, and actively contribute to the non-formal network of AIP CSO partners for integrity reforms.

# SECTION II: AWARD INFORMATION

# Subject to the availability of funds, Dexis expects to award one Fixed Amount Award grant under this RFA. The estimated total amount available and period of performance for this grant award is: 45,000,000.00 AMD with a period of performance of up to 14 months.

**IMPORTANT NOTE**

**The Armenia Integrity Project reserves the right**

**not to make any award or fund any grant under this RFA.**

# SECTION III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

* Types of organizations eligible to apply for the grant:
	+ Non-for-profit organizations (public organizations and foundations)
* Organizations applying for this grant must:
	+ be officially registered and working in compliance with all applicable Armenian civil and fiscal regulations, including but not limited to pertinent local laws and status;
	+ have five or more years of experience in the area of anti-corruption, corruption prevention and good governance;
	+ have five years of experience in implementing educational, training and awareness programs; and
	+ have a proven track record in the development, organization, and delivery of capacity building initiatives.
* Applications from “debarred organizations” will not be processed. “Debarred organizations” are excluded from receiving federal grants. Debarment is also referred to as “exclusion” and “suspension”.
* Applicants must include a signed statement that their organization is not affiliated with any political party or parties.
* Organizations applying for this grant should present information on the accountability and financial transparency of their organization, in particular, public reports on funding from state funds, grants provided by international organizations, programs, and their costs (to be reflected in the Attachment 3. Grantee self-assessment form).
* Organizations applying for this grant should present detailed and complete information about their staff (to be reflected in Attachment 1. Grant application form).
* Organizations applying for this grant should provide evidence of any professional expertise in the integrity and anti-corruption section.
* The organization selected for the award should also demonstrate previous capacity in the corruption prevention and integrity sector, with a focus on capacity-building elements, either within the organization or experts they intend to include. The organizations may receive a request to submit CVs during the review process.

Note: Cost share is not allowed.

# SECTION IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Anticipated timeline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Issuance date  | July 29, 2024 |
| Question submission deadline  | August 2, 2024 |
| Knowledge and clarification session | August 6, 2024 |
| Deadline for submission of proposals | August 29, 2024, 18:00 (Armenian time) |
| Award of grant (estimated) | November 1, 2024\*\* |
| Completion of Award (at minimum) | December 30, 2025\*\* |

\*\* Dates are tentative

Any questions concerning this RFA should be submitted by emailing armenia@dexisonline.com no later than August 2, 2024. All the questions and answers will be posted on the Dexis website.

An in-person, informational “Knowledge and Clarification Session” will be held on **August 6, 2024, at 15:00 Armenian Time** at **AIP’s office** (28 Zarobyan street, Yerevan, RA) and [**online**](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3Ameeting_YWRhODg5YWEtNzU5Mi00NmY0LTkxM2UtOWY0NzIzNGI5Nzli%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22bd140e05-55ee-4876-9cba-f40f6f70c082%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2298c2345d-199f-475a-9eea-fb0ef81c6f85%22%7d)**.**

All applications and modifications thereof must be submitted electronically. Please email the completed applications to armenia@dexisonline.com no later than the closing date/time stated on the front page of the RFA cover letter.

The complete application package must be submitted in the required format with the required attachments. This includes:

1. Grant Application Form
2. Grant Budget Form (in the required Excel format)
3. Grantee Self-Assessment for Fixed Amount Awards
4. Proof of legal registration
5. Proof of the organization’s active registration at [sam.gov](https://sam.gov/content/home) (this link includes instructions on registering on sam.gov)
6. Profile and portfolio of the applicant organization with information about previous experience with projects of similar scale and methodology (at least three references required)
7. Structure of the team - qualifications and experience of team members – CVs of team members and consultant-experts

*The application language is English.*

**Restrictions:**

* Grant funds provided under the terms of this RFA shall not be used to finance any of the following commodities as per ADS 312 Eligibility of Commodities:
	+ **Ineligible Commodities:** Military equipment, surveillance equipment, commodities, and services for support of police and other law enforcement activities, abortion equipment and services, luxury goods, gambling equipment, and weather modification equipment.
	+ **Restricted Commodities**: Agricultural commodities, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, contraceptives and condoms, pesticides, used equipment, U.S. Government-owned excess property, and fertilizer.
	+ **Other:** Purchases of goods or services restricted or prohibited under the prevailing USAID source and nationality and other regulations found under ADS 310 or from countries and suppliers as may be identified by USAID’s consolidated list of debarred, suspended, or ineligible subcontractors at SAM.gov.
* In addition, grant funds provided under the terms of this RFA shall not be used to finance any of the following costs:
	+ Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to successfully complete the activity, including any grantee headquarters expenses that are not directly linked to the implementation of the proposed project.
	+ Previous obligations and/or bad debts.
	+ Fines and/or penalties.
	+ Other costs unallowable under USAID and/or federal regulations such as referenced 2 CFR 200 Subpart E Cost Principles and FAR 31.2 Cost Principles for Commercial Organizations. See [eCFR: 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E – Cost Principles](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E) and [Subpart 31.2 - Contracts with Commercial Organizations | Acquisition.GOV](https://www.acquisition.gov/far/subpart-31.2).

**Late Application**

Late applications are marked as “late” and are ineligible for review or award; however, Dexis reserves the right to accept and include late applications in the review and award process when it is considered within the best interest of Dexis to do so and if applications that were received on time have not been opened and reviewed. Applications that are submitted late or incomplete run the risk of not being considered for review.

# SECTION V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The Armenia Integrity Project will review applications through an appointed “Technical Review Committee” (Committee).

Throughout the evaluation process, the Armenia Integrity Project will take steps to ensure that members of the Committee do not have any conflicts of interest or the appearance of such regarding applicant organizations. This includes any Committee member or the member’s spouse, partner, child, close friend, or relative workings for, negotiating to work for, or having any financial interest (including being an unpaid member of a Board of Directors) in any organization that applied under the Committee’s review. Members of the Committee shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from parties to the awards.

All applications from eligible organizations that are received by the deadline (as indicated on the cover letter of the RFA) will be reviewed for responsiveness to the specifications outlined in this RFA and compliance with the application format.

Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this RFA. Failure to do so may result in your application being determined as “non-responsive” and may forego further review.

The application must be signed by the organization’s representative who will also serve as the primary point of contact for their submission, with the authority to negotiate and enter an award with Dexis.

Verification of the application submission requirements will be conducted by the AIP Grants Manager.

The application will be evaluated according to the evaluation criteria set forth below. To the extent necessary (if an award is not made based on initial applications), negotiations may be conducted with each applicant whose application, after discussion and negotiation, has a reasonable chance of being selected for an award.

Evaluation Criteria:

The evaluation criteria are as follows:

1. **Technical Merit - 45 points**
	1. Relevance to program goals
	2. Coherent, cohesive, and structured programming approach and methodology proposed
	3. Sustainability of project results
	4. Innovation
	5. Anticipated impact on beneficiaries
2. **Experience Organizational Capacity - 40 points**
	1. Past performance in similar projects
	2. Expertise and knowledge of proposed staff of the project
	3. Relevant expert pool proposed for the project
3. **Feasibility and Cost Effectiveness - 15 points**
	1. Costs are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

# SECTION VI: AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

The recommendation or selection of an application in accordance with established procedures does not guarantee an award. All applicants must demonstrate that they possess or have the ability to obtain the necessary management competence to practice mutually agreed-upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided.

Please note: USAID approval is required before the grant is awarded.

A successful applicant can expect to receive an Award Letter. The Award Letter will be addressed to the organization’s point of contact as stated in the application. Applicants that were not successful can expect a rejection letter.

Following the Award Letter, final negotiations will take place prior to signing the grant agreement.

**Reporting Procedures**

A description of reporting requirements will be included in the grant agreement. Reporting forms will be provided to grant recipients. Types of reporting will include the following:

* Progress report to be submitted during project implementation according to a schedule described in the grant agreement. This report will include a description of progress made during the period, problems in project implementation; actions taken to overcome them; and activities planned for the next period.
* Bi-weekly updates reporting main activities, challenges, and future plans.
* The final program report will describe how the project objectives and goals were reached, results of the project, and problems and solutions during implementation.
* Financial reports may be required to be submitted according to a schedule described in the grant agreements. Types of financial reports, as well as the schedule of reporting, will depend on the type of grant, length of project, and amount of funding.

Issuance of the final installment of grant funds is contingent upon the Armenia Integrity Project receipt and acceptance of Final Program Reports.

# SECTION VII: OTHER INFORMATION

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of Dexis, nor does it commit the Armenia Integrity Project to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

**Dexis reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Further, Dexis reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this RFA.**