

USAID Cooperation for Growth (CFG) Project

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

Issuance Date: July 29, 2019

Closing Date/Time for Submission of Expressions of Interest: EOIs may be submitted to the Project at any time on a rolling basis, by the quarterly closing dates and times as specified in Section 4 of this document. The first quarterly deadline under this request for EOIs is November 1, 2019, 16:00 Hours Local Serbia Time. The final quarterly deadline is August 1, 2020, 16:00 Hours Local Serbia Time.

SUBJECT: Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) Number: EOI - 2019-001

1. Purpose

The purpose of this announcement is to solicit Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for the engagement of qualified, legally registered Serbian non-profit, for-profit, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for the provision of professional services to further advance the objectives of the USAID Cooperation for Growth Project (“the Project” or “USAID CFG”).

The USAID Cooperation for Growth Project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (“USAID”) and is being implemented by Cardno Emerging Markets USA, Ltd. (“Cardno”). The Project is a four-year initiative designed to expand conditions for broad-based economic growth through improvements in Serbia’s business enabling environment and access to diversified financial instruments in response to demand from the private sector, particularly SMEs throughout Serbia.

The central focus of USAID CFG is to stimulate change by identifying the cause of problematic behaviors that are contributing to business environment and finance obstacles and introducing a variety of change management tools to drive change within institutions and individual mindsets. The Project’s Objective 1 is to facilitate improvements that have the greatest potential impact on increasing overall predictability and stability of the business environment, focusing first on simplifying and streamlining the regulatory framework in tax administration and business inspections, then ensuring that they are implemented broadly by public servants and monitored through private sector engagement and public-private dialogue. The Project’s Objective 2 is developing approaches to expand the volume and diversity of financial services available to SMEs and improving the internal management systems and governance structures of SMEs to make them more attractive targets for finance.

The reform initiatives that support pursuit of Objectives 1 and 2 will serve as the platform for seeking a broader change in attitudes and behaviors among public and private stakeholders through dialogue and cooperation by building a range of business association, financial institution and government capacities and supporting their mutual engagement on important issues. ***Through this Request for EOIs, USAID CFG is seeking ideas and methodologies that will improve the capacity of SMEs to articulate their specific needs and advocate for solutions by strengthening their ability to engage with government and financial institutions through advocacy, public***

private dialogue (PPD), evidence-driven analysis, the power of coalitions and outreach, capacity building, facilitating consensus around solutions and monitoring and evaluation.

Subject to the availability of funds, the Project intends to work with EOI respondents to structure and award subcontracts to fund eligible proposals that advance the Project's objectives and generate results in support of those objectives. Any awards resulting from this request for EOIs are expected to have a maximum implementation period of one year.

2. Background, Project Objectives and Expected Results

The prior policy reform project, the USAID Business Enabling Project (BEP), focused on promoting national reforms, with the weight of input coming from larger businesses and foreign investors. It worked with many national NGOs and Government of Serbia counterparts on central government challenges. But that wasn't enough to unburden SMEs and enable growth throughout the country. So, USAID CFG will reach around the country to engage businesses, government counterparts, civil society and media who work *where businesses are operating* in order to facilitate reforms that matter to them. It will focus less on legislative reforms and more on the impact of processes and behaviors that create costs, contribute to mistrust, and dampen entrepreneurial spirit. This is not a subtle difference in focus. It will define where USAID CFG works, who it works with, the type of reforms it supports, and how it facilitates change.

USAID CFG will help provide SMEs the space to grow by streamlining regulatory procedures, increasing administrative efficiency and improving access to finance, while working with local partners to improve the SME reform-making process and give SMEs a louder voice. USAID CFG will get reforms done in the near term, while helping to build the foundations of trust, communication, and collaboration that will guide private sector-led reform well after the Project ends.

To do so, USAID CFG will build a reform support network with and among formal and informal coalitions of SMEs throughout Serbia, designated as Small Business Representatives (SBRs). These SBRs could be a business association, civil society organization (CSO), business advisory firm, private business, think-tank, or NGO, who will propose and manage pilot programs to identify root causes of constraints and reform priorities in the business environment and access to finance and work with USAID CFG to implement solutions. They will design and implement roadmaps that outline strategies and activities to achieve reform and drive dialogue with the GoS to provide SME feedback on the progress of selected reforms. SBRs may also support implementation of reforms that involve red tape in local or regional offices of state administration.

This request for EOIs is to identify partners interested in becoming SBRs to build local SME pilots that bring issues to the attention of the appropriate policymakers, problem-solve, and support reform implementation. USAID CFG will work with each SBR to help articulate local business concerns and solicit feedback through SME focus groups, surveys and workshops. Depending on need, USAID CFG may provide capacity-building support, such as business consultation, problem analysis, stakeholder identification, consensus-building, and other techniques during the pilot phase of the project. Following successful implementation of pilots, USAID CFG will work to replicate these successes by creating additional SBRs in other venues or with other groups. Examples of SBR pilot activities may be the following:

- A business association or community organization seeking to improve the ability of local SMEs to better advocate for changes in legislation or regulation at the national level that will expand the availability of finance for small businesses;
- A civil society organization or professional association representing public servants or business professionals seeking to expand communication channels between government and small businesses to promote greater self-regulation and cooperation in promoting public or business benefits of their functions or activities;
- An organization seeking to mobilize SMEs based on industry sectors or common growth objectives or business structures to address limitations in access to finance or resolve constraints to growth within the business environment;
- A private business seeking to better manage constraints within its local supply chain to improve its ability to meet European standards in consumer health or safety.

USAID CFG is not simply promoting reform but trying to facilitate changes in behavior and attitudes that currently work against business and the reform process. Public servants need to reorient their approach to business from *gatekeeper* to *enabler*—a very difficult change, but one that has seen some success. SMEs need to better understand how playing by the rules and adopting formal business practices can open new markets, support greater growth opportunities, and increase productivity leading to stronger returns and a more productive labor market. USAID CFG will look most favorably toward EOI respondents who are able to articulate how their approach can result in improving regulatory effectiveness (preventing emergence of bureaucratic behavior) or changing hearts and minds about doing business and improving relationships among businesses, government and financial institutions.

3. Eligibility

This request for EOIs is open to legally registered Serbian non-profit, for-profit, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Eligible organizations must have the capacity to achieve the proposed activity and produce the desired results and have a satisfactory performance record and record of integrity and business ethics.

Ineligible organizations include:

- Entities that have misused USAID funds in the past;
- Organizations that advocate, promote or espouse anti-democratic policies or illegal activities;
- Political parties or institutions;
- Organizations that intend to use the funding for religious objectives;
- Organizations that are on the list of parties excluded from federal procurement and non-procurement programs or the United Nations Security Sanctions Committee.

Prior to the award of a subcontract under this request for EOIs, successful organizations will be required to sign a Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing certifying that the organization does not provide and has never provided assistance to terrorists for terrorist activities. Successful offerors may also be required to sign other Certifications as applicable to the award. The Certifications are attached as Appendix A of this announcement. Organizations are **not** required to complete the Certifications with their initial EOI submission.

4. Expressions of Interest

Expressions of Interest (EOIs) of interested organizations should clearly and concisely explain the proposed activity, overall goal and objectives, specific implementation activities, and expected results to be achieved in support of the objectives of the Project as set forth in Sections 1 and 2 of this solicitation. All EOIs must be submitted in the Expression of Interest Format included in Appendix B of this solicitation and must not exceed five pages. Organizations are also required to submit a Proposed Work Plan and a Preliminary Budget in the format provided in Appendices C and D.

Organizations are encouraged to contribute to the total cost of performing activities under the contract.

NOTE: This will not be part of the evaluation criteria.

Interested organizations should submit written EOIs to the USAID CFG Subcontracts Specialist electronically, via email at cfgkonkursi@saradnja.rs. EOIs may be submitted to the Project at any time on a rolling basis, but they will be reviewed by the CFG team on quarterly basis, with each review encompassing all proposals submitted in the preceding quarter as of the quarterly deadlines listed below. USAID CFG will respond to submissions within two weeks of each quarterly deadline, although the Project reserves the right to review EOIs and make subsequent award or rejection decisions at any time. **Unless interested organizations are notified by the Project, the Project will not respond to any EOI submission prior to the period determined for quarterly review – within two weeks following each quarterly deadline.**

The Quarterly Closing Date for Submission of EOIs is listed below, and the Closing Time for Submission of EOIs is 16:00 Hours Local Serbia Time. EOIs submitted after this date and time may not be considered until the following quarterly deadline:

- November 1, 2019
- February 1, 2020
- May 1, 2020
- August 1, 2020

5. Evaluation and Selection

The Project will convene a Selection Committee (SC) that will review EOIs submitted in response to this request for EOIs according to the timeline identified above. The SC will score the EOI based on the following evaluation criteria:

1. Technical Approach (70 points) incorporating the following elements:
 - a) Understanding of the Key Issues: Does the EOI demonstrate a clear understanding of the problems/key issues that the proposed activity will address?
 - b) Activity Goals and Objectives: Is the overall goal of the proposed activity clearly stated and achievable? Does the EOI list specific objectives that will contribute to achieving the activity's goal?

- c) Outcomes / Expected Results: Do the expected results of the proposed activities relate to the key issues and overall project objective? Are anticipated results directly linked to a specific objective? Are the results verifiable?
 - d) Proposed Tasks and Activities: Does the EOI propose specific activities that are logical, realistic, and relevant to the activity's goal? Will the proposed activities have a significant adverse effect on the environment?
2. Staffing/Management Plan (15 points): Does the proposed staffing/management plan reflect the personnel/management needs of the activity? Does the EOI propose personnel with experience and skills necessary to successfully implement the proposed activities?
 3. Past Experience (15 points): Does the organization have relevant past experience successfully engaging with SMEs?

The Project will convene a Selection Committee (SC) that will evaluate submitted EOIs. EOIs will be evaluated based on the criteria included in Section 5 above. Selected EOIs will meet a minimum score of 70. Should an organization's EOI be accepted by the SC, the organization will be invited to subsequent negotiations with the relevant Project staff during which the concept will be fully defined into a firm fixed price contract with specific project deliverables, deadlines, results requirements and budget.

The Project reserves the right to fund any or none of the EOIs submitted. Issuance of this request for EOIs does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Project, nor does it commit the Project to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an EOI. Further, the Project reserves the right to reject any or all EOIs received if such action is considered to be in the best interest of the US Government. EOIs are submitted at the risk of the interested organization; should circumstances prevent making an award, all preparation and submission costs are at the organization's expense. Awards are subject to availability of funds.

6. Award Administration

Any resultant award will be subject to the applicable terms and conditions of the Prime Contract for the USAID Cooperation for Growth.

7. Appendices

- A. Certifications, Assurances and Other Statements of Offerors
- B. Expression of Interest Format
- C. Proposed Project Work Plan
- D. Preliminary Budget

Appendix A: Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements of Offerors

Section 1: Certification Regarding Lobbying

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

- (1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal Cooperative Agreement, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment or modification of any Federal contract, subcontract, loan, or cooperative agreement.
- (2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, subcontract, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.
- (3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, sub-subcontracts, and contracts under subcontracts, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subawardees shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, United States Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

"The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that: If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure."

Certification of Offeror

By signing below the Offeror provides certifications and assurances for the Certification Regarding Lobbying above.

EOI No. _____
Proposal/Quote No. _____
Date of Proposal _____
Name of Offeror _____
Typed Name and Title _____
Signature _____
Date _____

Section 2: Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing, Implementing Executive Order 13224

By signing and submitting this application, the Offeror provides the certification set out below:

1. The Offeror, to the best of its current knowledge, did not provide, within the previous ten years, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it does not and will not knowingly provide, material support or resources to any individual or entity that commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated, or participated in terrorist acts, as that term is defined in paragraph 3.

2. The following steps may enable the Offeror to comply with its obligations under paragraph 1:
 - a. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Offeror will verify that the individual or entity does not (i) appear on the master list of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons, which list is maintained by the U.S. Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and is available online at OFAC’s website: <http://sdnsearch.ofac.treas.gov/>, or (ii) is not included in any supplementary information concerning prohibited individuals or entities that may be provided by USAID to the Offeror.
 - b. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Offeror also will verify that the individual or entity has not been designated by the United Nations Security (UNSC) sanctions committee established under UNSC Resolution 1267 (1999) (the “1267 Committee”) [individuals and entities linked to the Taliban, Usama bin Laden, or the Al Qaida Organization]. To determine whether there has been a published designation of an individual or entity by the 1267 Committee, the Offeror should refer to the consolidated list available online at the Committee’s website: <https://scsanctions.un.org/consolidated/>.
 - c. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Offeror will consider all information about that individual or entity of which it is aware and all public information that is reasonably available to it or of which it should be aware.
 - d. The Offeror also will implement reasonable monitoring and oversight procedures to safeguard against assistance being diverted to support terrorist activity.

3. For purposes of this Certification-

a. "Material support and resources" means currency or monetary instruments or financial securities, financial services, lodging, training, expert advice or assistance, safehouses, false documentation or identification, communications equipment, facilities, weapons, lethal substances, explosives, personnel, transportation, and other physical assets, except medicine or religious materials." b. "Terrorist act" means-

(i) an act prohibited pursuant to one of the 12 United Nations Conventions and Protocols related to terrorism (see UN terrorism conventions Internet site: <http://untreaty.un.org/English/Terrorism.asp>); or

(ii) an act of premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents; or

(iii) any other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.

c. "Entity" means a partnership, association, corporation, or other organization, group or subgroup.

d. References in this Certification to the provision of material support and resources shall not be deemed to include the furnishing of USAID funds or USAID-financed commodities to the ultimate beneficiaries of USAID assistance, such as recipients of food, medical care, micro-enterprise loans, shelter, etc., unless the Offeror has reason to believe that one or more of these beneficiaries commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated or participated in terrorist acts.

e. The Offeror's obligations under paragraph 1 are not applicable to the procurement of goods and/or services by the Offeror that are acquired in the ordinary course of business through contract or purchase, e.g., utilities, rents, office supplies, gasoline, etc., unless the Offeror has reason to believe that a vendor or supplier of such goods and services commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated or participated in terrorist acts.

This Certification is an express term and condition of any agreement issued as a result of this application, and any violation of it shall be grounds for unilateral termination of the agreement by USAID prior to the end of its term.

Certification of Offeror

By signing below the subcontractor provides certifications and assurances for the Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing Implementing Executive Order 13224 above.

EOI No. _____

Proposal/Quote No. _____

Date of Proposal _____
Name of Offeror _____
Typed Name and Title _____
Signature _____
Date _____

Section 3: Other Statements of Offeror

1. Authorized Individuals

The Offeror acknowledges that the following persons are authorized to negotiate on its behalf with the USAID Cooperation for Growth Project and to bind the Offeror in connection with this Award or Contract:

Name Title Telephone No. Facsimile No.

2. Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)

If the Offeror is a U.S. organization, or a foreign organization which has income effectively connected with the conduct of activities in the U.S. or has an office or a place of business or a fiscal paying agent in the U.S., please indicate the Offeror's TIN:

TIN: _____

3. Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number

(a) In the space provided at the end of this provision, the Offeror should supply the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number applicable to that name and address. Offerors should take care to report the number that identifies the Offeror's name and address exactly as stated in the proposal.

(b) The DUNS is a 9-digit number assigned by Dun and Bradstreet Information Services. If the Offeror does not have a DUNS number, the Offeror should call Dun and Bradstreet directly at 1800-333-0505. A DUNS number will be provided immediately by telephone at no charge to the Offeror. The Offeror should be prepared to provide the following information:

- (1) Offeror's name.
- (2) Offeror's address.
- (3) Offeror's telephone number.
- (4) Line of business.
- (5) Chief executive officer/key manager.
- (6) Date the organization was started.
- (7) Number of people employed by the Offeror.
- (8) Company affiliation.

(c) Offerors located outside the United States may obtain the location and phone number of the local Dun and Bradstreet Information Services office from the Internet Home Page at

<http://www.dbisna.com/dbis/customer/custlist.htm>. If an offeror is unable to locate a local service center, it may send an e-mail to Dun and Bradstreet at globalinfo@dbisma.com. The DUNS system is distinct from the Federal Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) system. DUNS: _____

4. Type of Organization

The Offeror, by checking the applicable box, represents that –

(a) If the Offeror is a U.S. entity, it operates as a corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of, an individual, a partnership, a nongovernmental nonprofit organization, a state or local governmental organization, a private college or university, a public college or university, an international organization, or a joint venture; or

(b) If the Offeror is a non-U.S. entity, it operates as a corporation organized under the laws of _____ (country), an individual, a partnership, a nongovernmental nonprofit organization, a nongovernmental educational institution, a governmental organization, an international organization, or a joint venture.

Certification of Offeror

By signing below the subcontractor provides certifications and assurances for the statements above.

EOI No. _____
Proposal/Quote No. _____
Date of Proposal _____
Name of Offeror _____
Typed Name and Title _____
Signature _____
Date _____

Appendix B: Expression of Interest Format

Section 1: The Organization

EOI Number: EOI-2019-01	
Full Legal Name of Organization (As per registration certificate, in Serbian)	
Full Name of Organization (in English)	
Address	
Office Telephone Number(s)	
Fax Number	
E-mail Address	
Web Address	
Contact Person, Title	
Contact Person, E-mail address	
Contact Person, Phone number	
Year organization was registered	
Legal status of the organization	
Registration Number	
TAX ID Number	
Organization's mission statement/purpose and primary sectors of the organization's operation	

We/I hereby certify that the information contained herein and attached hereto is complete and accurate to the best of our/my knowledge.

 Head of Organization/Institution Signature Date
Section 2: Expression of Interest (EOI) Format

1. Proposed Activity Details

Activity Title:

Proposed Activity Duration (up to 12 months):

Estimated funds requested from the USAID Cooperation for Growth Project (in USD):

2. Activity Description and Problem Statement

Please describe the proposed activity and the main problems/issues that it will address.

3. Relevance of the Proposed Activity to the Objectives of the USAID CFG Project

Please explain how your proposed activity is in line with the objectives of the USAID Cooperation for Growth Project as set forth in the request for EOIs.

4. Activity Goal and Objectives

Please state the overall goal of the proposed activity. List the specific objectives of the grant activity that must be met in order to achieve the overall goal. It should be made clear how achieving the activity’s goal and objectives will contribute to addressing the issues/problems listed in Section 2 above.

5. Proposed Tasks and Activities

Please list and describe the activities that your organization proposes to undertake to meet the objectives of the proposed activity. (Please be as specific as possible.)

6. Expected Results

Please describe the expected results of the proposed activities and how they relate to the proposed activity goal and objectives. Please list anticipated and achievable results as measurable outcomes of the proposed activities. Each result should be directly linked to a specific objective.

7. Past Experience

Please list your organization’s past experience engaging with SMEs.

8. Annexes

Please attach a copy of your organization's Articles of Incorporation or other documentation which substantiates the legal character/registration of the organization.

Appendix C: Proposed Project Work Plan

Objective(s)/ Solution(s)	Actions/Activities	Results	Year 1												
			Directions: Indicate the duration of the activity (for example, 2 months, 3 months, etc.)												
			Mo 1	Mo 2	Mo 3	Mo 4	Mo 5	Mo 6	Mo 7	Mo 8	Mo 9	Mo 10	Mo 11	Mo 12	
Objective 1: <i>Directions: State clearly the solution(s) you propose to implement to address the problem as identified in your situation assessment.</i>	<i>Directions: Name the key actions to be implemented to achieve your proposed solution.</i>	<i>Directions: List the results you expect to achieve which directly contribute to the solution to the problem identified.</i>													
Objective 2:															

Instructions:

- 1) Input your objectives, associated activities and results.
- 2) Indicate when your activities will occur by placing an X in the relevant months.
- 3) List the results of your activities in the Results column and use **BOLD** font to indicate the most important results your project will produce.

Appendix D: Preliminary Budget

All cost price proposals must be presented in USD. All prices should be net of VAT.

Cost Element			Total	Notes
<u>1. Personnel</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>(Rate x Days)</u>	
Person 1				
Person 2				
Person 3				
Person 4				
<i>Subtotal</i>				
<u>2. Travel</u>			<u>Lumpsum</u>	
Travel Costs				
<i>Subtotal</i>				
<u>3. Supplies</u>			<u>Lumpsum</u>	
Supply Costs				
<i>Subtotal</i>				
<u>4. Equipment</u>			<u>Lumpsum</u>	
Equipment Costs				
<i>Subtotal</i>				
<u>5. Communications</u>			<u>Lumpsum</u>	
Communication Costs				
<i>Subtotal</i>				
<u>6. Other Direct Costs</u>			<u>Lumpsum</u>	
Other Direct Costs				
<i>Subtotal</i>				
<u>7. Program Activity Costs</u>			<u>Lumpsum</u>	
Activity 1				
Activity 2				

Activity 3				
<i>Subtotal</i>				
Total Estimated Cost				