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Request for Applications

Support to Armenia-Turkey Rapprochement

Open-door Grants Pool

January 2011

The Request for Application (RFA) is part of the ‘Support to Armenia-Turkey Rapprochement’ project (hereinafter, Project) supported by USAID. The Project is jointly implemented by a consortium of four organizations: Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF), Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia (UMBA), International Center for Human Development (ICHD), and Yerevan Press Club (YPC). Hereafter, these four organizations will be referred to as Consortium Members.

USAID and the Consortium Members support Armenia-Turkey rapprochement by facilitating engagement between civil society groups, establishment and development of business partnerships and regional professional networks, and enhanced understanding between the people, for peace and economic integration in the region.

Background and Strategy

Armenia and Turkey are burdened by a long history of a painful disagreement. The two states have made a series of attempts over the last twenty years to set aside their differences and establish ties, but to date, these efforts have not resulted in the establishment of diplomatic relations. In 2009, Armenia and Turkey announced that they had signed two protocols that would establish diplomatic relations and open the border. But by spring 2010, progress toward ratification of the protocols came to a halt, and the rapprochement process at the governmental level remains frozen.

However, there is a noticeable increase in people-to-people interaction, with similar progress based on the shared interests of the two nations to share their historical experiences and to discuss ways to address the past. In Turkey, references to the past and at least a partial recognition of shared historical events are increasing. Public pressure within Turkey is mounting to recognize the past. In Armenia, despite the problematic course of government level relations, more and more organizations are now engaged in civil society projects with their Turkish counterparts. Existing business projects, which flourish despite the closed borders between the two countries, represent only mere fraction of the opportunities which lie ahead and are being increasingly discussed by the business communities on both sides. Media organizations are also building ties and Armenian and Turkish youth are each seeking greater dialogue and more knowledge about each other. In these circumstances, there is a new, strategic and overarching goal for civil society in each country: to engage in deeper discussions and to foster qualitatively higher levels of exchanges and contacts in order to prepare the ground for their governments to finalize the establishment of diplomatic relations. In the light of that overarching goal, the aim of the current cycle of the Open-door Grants Pool is as follows:

To support Armenia-Turkey rapprochement through qualitatively expanding the scale of cross-border dialogue and interaction through the expansion of opportunities for significant groups of individuals, businesses, media and civil society actors to more directly engage in the process.

The Open-door Grants Pool will support innovative and/or pilot ideas in support of Armenia-Turkey dialogue; expand the number of organizations participating in this dialogue; and address the issues which may have been omitted from the Project scope until now.

The Open-door Grants Pool serves as the Project's mechanism to a) flexibly adapt to changes in the operating environment between the two countries; b) foster innovation and promote new faces or groups; and c) to test new ideas and approaches. The Open-door Grants pool will create the conditions favorable for a variety of innovative and/or pilot ideas to flourish and succeed. Through the open-door grant mechanism, new and younger NGOs, media organizations, and businesses will acquire opportunities to engage in cross-border dialogue and interaction. The Open-door concept specifically refers to a process whereby any issue and innovative approach in the area of improving and contributing to Armenia-Turkey interaction will be considered.

Eligibility

Any organization registered in Armenia is eligible to apply with a grant proposal. Each submitted proposal should identify a specific project partner in Turkey, which may be represented by an organization(s) or individual(s). In case the proposal is initiated by a Turkish organization or individual, they should find an interested Armenian partner organization, which will become the main applicant within the framework of this RFA.

Areas of Interest and Selection Criteria

The projects may address several thematic issues within one or more of the following areas: the business sector; state-to-state relations; civil society; experts and opinion-makers; the media; culture; youth; human rights; European values; and academic or policy research. Additionally, projects related to cooperation from any other area will also be considered, including the areas of technology, publishing, science, international organizations, and education, etc.

Given the limited size of the grants pool, however, priority will be given to those projects that encompass innovation. Within this context, innovation is defined as novelty in project content or design, or in terms of the project issue addressed, such as a topic or theme which, according to the selection committee's best knowledge, has been absent from Turkey-Armenia joint projects to date, and that promises the highest impact. Other criteria for selection include sustainability, i.e. the project's implementers should be able to make a lasting and identifiable impact at the end of the funding period; leveraging funding and support, i.e. either through co-funding for an ongoing funded project, or that demonstrates via other means the interest of significant organizations in support of the project through financial or in kind assistance. Finally, the projects should not duplicate the efforts of other organizations currently underway.

Grant duration, budget and timetable:

The duration of the grant varies according to the specific needs of the project. However, grant activities and expenditures should be concluded prior to August 31, 2012. Grant awards will range from between \$3,000 to \$20,000 and only in exceptional cases, may projects with larger budgets be accepted.

Submission procedures:

The Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF) strongly encourages potential applicants to start their application process by completing an **inquiry form** describing the specific objectives and strategy of the project. The applicant organization should fill out EPF's **inquiry form** in English. The hard copy of the inquiry form must be signed and stamped by the head of the applicant organization. Completed inquiry forms can be submitted in a hard copy to EPF office:

Eurasia Partnership Foundation

56 Zarobyan Street
Yerevan, 0009, Armenia
Tel: (+37410) 58 60 95

Alternatively, the applicant may choose to submit a scanned version of the inquiry electronically at info-epf@epfound.am

The inquiry review process

Selection Committee comprising Consortium members will review each submission to determine whether the proposed inquiry reflects a sound strategy for addressing a well-defined need; has a reasonable likelihood of achieving measurable progress toward its goal; and conforms to the program priorities. After reviewing each inquiry, EPF staff, on behalf of the Consortium, will advise applicants on how best to proceed. Based on the results of the review, EPF may either reject the application or request the submission of a full proposal by the applicant.

The full proposal review process

The Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF), on behalf of the Consortium, will manage the Project’s Open-door Grants Pool and will ensure the award and grant management processes following established EPF procedures. For the review of the open-door proposals, EPF will convene a six-member Advisory Committee, four of which will be representatives of the Consortium Members: EPF, UMBA, YPC, and ICHD. Depending on the programmatic focus of each considered proposal, the Advisory Committee will include at least one Turkish partner, or an individual whom they recommend. The Advisory Committee will also include one member with particular expertise on the issue featured in the applicant’s proposal, who may or may not be a Turkish or Armenian citizen. Thus, the Advisory Committee will comprise six members for each voting round, of which, one or two members from Turkey.

NOTE: EPF will accept and review open-door inquiries and proposals on a rolling basis from now on. The deadline for submission of inquiries and proposals under the Open-door Grants Pool is **March 31, 2012**.



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