

Minutes of pre-proposal meeting
Call for proposal for grant competition “Smart Villages in response to COVID 19 crisis”
Project: Improving Rural Development in Georgia

Date: 5-May-2019, 16:00

Via Zoom Conference

Key Information

The representative of the project, Mr. Giorgi Tsimintia gave a brief presentation of:

- Project background;
- Overall review of announced grant competition.

UNDP Project: Improving Rural Development in Georgia

Giorgi Tsimintia (Coordinator for Economic Diversification)
Liliana Gureshidze (Liaising and Administrative Assistant)

Q and A session:

Q 1: Dear Colleagues, hello, I'm Nelly Revazishvili, I'm interested to learn more about the financial co-partnership, what priorities have the leader/CLLD groups, such as LAGs?

Answer : The real difference is that the organizations, which use Leader Approach e.g. the EU funded LAGs (Local Action Groups) and AMAGs (for Ajara Region) – they are usually non-governmental organizations and they will be prioritized in a way that they won't be asked to be a financial partners of the program. Other types of organizations, except those ineligible (e.g. political organizations), they have to co-sponsored at least 20% of total eligible costs of the project.

Q 2: I have one question. I'm a Sego Baramidze, from Georgian Business Development Center (GBDS), Can we use the funds for the co-sponsorship, which we have received through the EU and LAG programs?

Answer : No, it cannot be counted as a co-sponsoring, whenever the funds are received through EU or UN programs.

Q 3. Hello, I'm Mariam Takashvili, before we talk about co-sponsoring, I'm interested if co-sponsoring should be monetized or we can provide services or a logistic parts and use company's resources and counted it as a 'co-sponsoring'?

Answer: Thank you for your question. The program requires to cash finance, in the description of the project you can find the part where it's indicated that it should be a 'CASH co-finance'.

Q 4. Hello, I have one more question. I'm from the 'Regenerative Agro Culture Center'. I'm interested if the contest is announced for a counter the COVID19 directly, or because of the pandemic we just have to take into account this problem? Can you please introduce the main idea of the grant competition? I want to understand more details of it.

Answer : Unfortunately, we cannot go through all the details during this session. In the description of the project, there is included additional resources of the ENRD, who has the separate portal on their webpage, where you can find all additional information, starting from what they mean by 'SMART VILLAGES', what implemented projects do they have. On this point, we are more focused on the challenges in Rural areas – Finding the solutions through social and digital innovation, it can be various topics; for instance, it take into account the examples of the European projects, there are topics about the taking care of the elderly in rural areas, topics which are connecting to digitalization, Youth Involvement and etc. In the description of the project,

there are all important details, which you should take into consideration. About the question of Covid-19, I can say that we had planned this pilot project before the virus outbreak, but because of this situation we want to take into consideration the challenges of the Covid-19, which clearly demonstrated what issues we have in the Rural areas, including transportation situation during the quarantine, healthcare issues, problems in education sector and etc. During this crisis period this will be prioritized, but after the crisis ends, we will try to maintain the program and may working in different regions as well.

Q 5. Thank you for your reply, everything is clear. I have one more question, our organization works on regeneration of agro products, this is a new approach, which is differ from the traditional one. Are you considering those kinds of approaches or innovations? I'm interested in your subjective opinion, if we have the chances in this competition, where we are planning to work on a balanced ecological system?

Answer Yes, this is really interesting, and it can work under the framework of the project. Unfortunately, I cannot evaluate your idea until we won't receive full description of it. Innovation in rural sector, such as regeneration is really interesting. It is a bit difficult to understand the main concepts of the program, shortly, we can say that it promotes the new initiatives, which is innovative and have different approach than the traditional one, so basically, we are looking innovative approaches rural development.

V. yes, this is a new approach.

Answer: yes, you have to think about it 'out of the box', non-traditional but perspective solutions of the problems for the development of standards of living in rural areas. The description includes that the projects should be validated. It is important to demonstrate how locals can be part of the project and how they can use it.

Q 6. So, this is the based on one village?

Answer: Yes, the fund should be spend on one or more specific villages development. As you know, often the borders of the village does not directly determine of its economic or social functions, so the project can include couple of villages, which can create positive values for them.

Q 7. Hello, I'm the representative of non-governmental organization 'Kakheti'. I have two questions. Who are eligible to apply, so only LAGs are eligible to apply? And another question is if you are planning to expend the geographical area, for example Akhmeta – Telavi.

Answer: Thank you for your question. Yes, of course any non-governmental organization can apply to the project, but they will have different types of conditions. About the Geographical area, right now we are focusing on certain areas as indicated in CoP. We don't know yet how Geographical areas will be expended. It might be possible in future. In Kakheti, two municipalities are included – Dedoplistskaro and Lagodekhi.

Q 8. Hello, I'm Nana Sokhadze, Member of Racha-Lechkhumi Self-Government Center. Sorry, I could not catch the main municipalities, which can be include for this program. Is there any from Racha-Lechkhumi Region?

Answer: 8 municipalities targeted: Keda, Khulo, Borjomi, Akhalkalaki, Kazbegi, Tetrtskaro, Lagodekhi and Dedoplistskaro.

Q 9. I have one more question. As I know all the forms should be filled out in English. Will be any changes and possibility to fill out and submit in Georgian? Or if you can take it into consideration for the future activities?

Answer: Many people are asking for it as well. Usually, NGO have resources to work in English, but we will take it into consideration for the future programs.

Q 10. Sorry, I have one question, there is one village Setureli, which is on the boarder of Kazbegi and Dusheti Municipality, how can we manage to implement project in this village, as long as part of this village in located in one municipality and other part in another municipality.

Answer: It is understandable that it on the border, but as an administrative region in which region is it located?

Q 11. This is the case, that one part of this village is the part of the Dusheti Municipality and another is part of Kazbegi Municipality.

Answer:. Can you please email this question to me and our team will discuss and get back to you. We may count it as a part of Kazbegi Municipality. But we have to make it sure it is eligible.

Q 12. Hello, I'm interested if there is any limitation on the partners, who they can be? And Is there any possibility to have an international partner in this case?

Answer: There is no limitation. It is even better to have various partners. It will be good to collaborate with local government, but they won't be able to apply, they can be a partner.

Q 13. I'm interested how many years of experience organization should have. Is there any limitation?

Answer: There is no such requirement. The organization has to have experience and capacities to implement proposed project.

Q 14. Technically, we do have implemented different projects in Kazbegi Municipality and can we send it as a separate document?

Answer: Yes, it is possible. You can add additional documents to the application.

Q 15. Hello, It's Aleksandre Lortkifanidze, the representative of Institute of Democracy. I have the following question: Some grant contests have ineligible and eligible costs; do you have such list?

Answer: We don't have a list of eligible costs, but a list of ineligible costs. There are around 19 points in the document, e.g purchase a land, salaries for people employed in governmental sectors, etc.

Q 16. So in this point I'm interested if the costs of the invited expert can be included in the budget or not.

Answer:. yes, it is possible. Administrative and salary costs should not be exceeded 20% of total budget of the project.

Q 17. I have one question. I'm Diana Janashia – representative of MAK GEORGIA, we are working with people with limited opportunities and I have couple of questions regarding the project. The project which we want to implement, does not necessary requires to spend time in Lagodekhi and does not need office on place. Is it possible to implement the project within these conditions?

Answer: It is possible.

Q 18. Another question is about letter of references. It is really difficult to prepare the letters of reference during this period of time; for example, we have implemented project with local municipalities, and due to the reason that they are more focusing on the COVID cases, they are refusing to write the letter as long as it is not their priority right now. How important it is to include 2 letters of reference? And third question is about the project specifications, you mentioned that approach should fall under social and digital innovation. Should we focus on both of them or we can focus on one of them as well?

Answer: For the first question, you can have the office wherever you want so it's possible not to have an office in Lagodekhi and implement the activities without it. About the letters of references, we cannot remove this

requirement, my advice will be to ask to other partners to give you letter of reference as long as it's difficult to connect with local municipalities. And lastly, it is not necessary to focus on both approaches, you can choose one of them as well.

Q 19. I have the question. If there will be possible to have consulting sessions with you during the working period. Like, if we have 2 projects and ask you about which can be prioritized.

Answer: We cannot directly tell you which may be prioritized, but the consulting sessions can be held as long as you can better understand what our requirements are. And the consultation sessions can be online, and you can send us the mail. We will upload every answer in public forum. And please include the questions which you don't want to be the public.

Q 20. I'm Aleksandre Giorgiadze, I'm a social designer. My team planning to create high-tech village and use bio-technologies. We are taking the land and state is asking about the donors. So they are giving the land, is there any conflict between the ideas, is it possible such thing? Will EU be interested in? Can your organization be a donor?

Answer: There is no conflict, but we cannot give the guarantee that we will finance this project for sure. You can send any questions before the end of the deadline.

Q 21. which municipalities are included?

Answer: As I mentioned, these are: Kheda, Khulo, Borjomi, Akhaltsikhe, Lagodekhi, Tetrtskaro, Kazbegi, Dedoplistskaro.

Q 22: Hello, due to the technical reasons I entered the call late. Unfortunately, I could not hear the main part of your presentation. I have introduced the guidelines of the project, but I cannot understand who is eligible to apply to the grant.

Answer: So basically, it can be a non-governmental organization or initiative group, which is registered as non-profit, non-commercial entity. There are different types of the grant conditions (please refer to CoP).

Q 23. So, as I understand the Initiative Groups cannot apply.

Answer: Yes, the initiative group, which is not registered cannot apply.

Q 24. I'm interested if there are any limitations with the sub-grants?

Answer: No there is no limitation. But you have to take into consideration that e.g. if out of \$15 000, \$14 000 will be sub-grants, it will be disadvantage. Also, you have to include the reasons of the sub-grants and how you can manage them.

Q 25. Sorry, I have one question about the grants. We have to co-finance 20%, should it be included for one dimension or should be separated to different points. And also, is there possible to use other grants as a co-sponsoring? And how 20% is counted.

Answer: Co-finance should be 20% of your total project budget costs.

Q 26. So if we are creating electronic system for the specific community and need around 10 000 in total, should we include that 8 000 is grant and 2 000 co-sponsored from our organization?

Answer: That's right. Plus, as long as it is a grant you will be asked to strictly follow grant agreement and provide all the document of the expenditures.

Q 27. One more question, as I saw the project will be implement during the 7 months, I want to know more about the 'Visibility', can you please let me know where I can find it? And another question, if I implement the project in Tetrtskaro should I take into consideration the villages that is affected by the COVID-19, or I can include all the Tetrtskaro Municipality?

Answer: I will start from the last question; you may focus on all part of Tetrtskaro Municipality. About the visibility parts, you can send me the mail and will send you all relevant guidelines and the materials.

Q 28. I have one more question. If you receive 10 projects from Lagodekhi and you liked all of them..is there any limitation of the funding?

Answer: Financial resources is not unlimited. We have our expectations how many projects may be financed. If there will be more than 10 quality projects from each municipality, it will be very good, and we may finance more projects that we originally thought.

Q 29. I have one question. Who can be identified as a vulnerable group? Can it be a village resident, which are remote area and don't have any access?

Answer: Yes, it is possible, but you have the demonstrate all the facts and the problems.

Q 30. I have question about the competition, if you receive similar applications, will there be an extra time for additional editing? What about evaluation criteria?

Answer: You can check the evaluation criteria in the CoP document. If two or more the applications will be similar, it does not mean that they will be identical. If we will receive really similar to each other we will take a look at it.

Q 31. My main question was about if we will have chance to work on our projects after you will take a look to the applications. So, as I understand no, after the deadline ends, we won't be able to change anything.

Answer: We can ask the question to the applicant during the evaluation process, but they cannot change anything after the CoP deadline.

Q 32. Is it a first time of this kind of competition or you have already had it?

Answer: As I mentioned, this is the first time when we announced such grant competition about the 'Smart Villages' and especially, it is the first time when we are focusing on the COVID-19 problems. This is a pilot of the concept.

Q 33. Do you think that you will announce another grant competition in the future?

Answer: We do have a huge desire to maintain it and it depends on the applicant organizations and the projects.

Q 34. I have one more question. When the projects will be financed and will start. I need the information to fill out the GANT chart.

Answer: Sorry, in which GANT Chart are you talking about?

Q 35. About the Activity Chart;

Answer: You can start planning your activities from 15th of June. Signing the agreement can take a time for different reasons but not only from our side.

Q 36. About the recommendation letter, from whom can we take it?

Answer: As you prefer. Just one more point, we can receive the questions before 18th of May, after it we won't be able to reply to your questions.

Q 37. How many application can be send from one organization?

Answer: As many as you want;

Q 38. Is there possibility to have the letter of recommendation from the international partner?

Answer: yes!