

U.S. Embassy Small Grants Program Concept Paper Guidelines

The first step in applying for funding through the U.S. Embassy Program is to submit a **two-page** Concept Paper that briefly describes the proposed project. Organizations whose Concept Paper is approved will continue to stage two, and be invited to submit a complete, detailed Grant Application.

Please read these instructions thoroughly as incomplete Concept Papers will not be reviewed.

Concept Papers must address one or more of the following themes:

- Promotion of civil society and association building;
- Free flow of information;
- Rule of law and legal reform;
- Public education and advocacy (including civic education);
- Protection of human rights;
- Environment; and
- Promotion of diversity and tolerance.

Priority will be given to concept papers that:

- Address vital problems of the Kazakhstani civil society;
- Propose innovative approaches for solving societal problems;
- Promote development of the Third Sector;
- Foster cooperation between Kazakhstani NGOs;
- Leverage international experience of civil society projects' implementation; and
- Encourage Kazakhstani citizens to participate in socially valuable projects.

Successful concept papers will:

- Provide a clear, concise, and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed;
- Include specific, measurable, attainable and time-framed project goals and objectives;
- Present a clear implementation plan to address the issue;
- Provide a compelling argument that the planned activities are realistic and achievable within suggested activity timelines;
- Describe the prospective organization's capacity to perform the proposed project;
- Define the target audience; and
- Provide a workable budget estimate.

The Small Grants Program **will not** consider Concept Papers that include the following activities:

- Support for or lobbying on behalf of a particular political party;
- Religious activities;
- Strictly charitable or humanitarian activities;
- Theoretical research;
- Individual or group travel grants; or
- Capital construction projects.

Concept Paper Submission Procedure:

- Concept Papers must be submitted by email to SGP-Kazakhstan@state.gov **by February 28, 2015** (Subject Line: SGP Concept Paper – [Name of Organization]) Concept Papers can be submitted in either English, Kazakh, or Russian.
- Faxed, mailed, or hand delivered Concept Papers will not be accepted.

- **Concept Papers must follow the outline** described below. Incomplete submissions will not be reviewed.
- **Only organizations whose Concept Paper is approved will proceed to the second stage of the application process, and be invited to submit a complete, detailed Grant Application.**

Required Concept Paper Outline and Contents

Concept papers must follow the outline described below. Incomplete or differently formatted submissions will not be reviewed.

Concept Papers must be no more than two pages. It is required to use a 12-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced. Margins should be 1” on left, right, top, and bottom of the document.

- 1. Date of application.**
- 2. Contact information** - name of the organization and the person responsible for submitting the concept paper and his or her title/position, contact information for both, including address, phone, email address.
- 3. Information about organization** (Introduce the NGO. What is the NGO’s experience implementing similar project? How sustainable is the NGO?)
- 4. Project Title.**
- 5. Problem statement** (What is the problem the proposed project will address? What is the desired result, in other words, the strategic vision?)
- 6. Goals and objectives** (What specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-framed goals or objectives will result in realization of the strategic vision?)
- 7. Implementation plan** (What steps will you take to achieve your goals and objectives? What stakeholders in the public, private, and civil society sectors will you engage? Will there be any public outreach or interaction with the media?)
- 8. Estimated project time lines** (When will the project begin and end? What are the major milestones? For complicated projects, a timeline illustrating actions to be taken by weeks or months may be helpful.)
- 9. Evaluation and Impact** (How will you know if you achieved your goal? How will you objectively measure success?)
- 10. Sustainability** (How will the proposed solution be sustained once this grant’s funding expires?)
- 11. Target audience** (Who will benefit from the proposed project?)
- 12. Estimated budget** (What is the estimated total amount required to implement the project?) If a Concept Paper is approved, a full budget will be requested as part of the stage two of the application process.
- 13. Number of staff involved**

Applicants with questions or clarification requests regarding the Concept Paper may email SGP-Kazakhstan@state.gov or call +7-7172-702217.

Concept Papers will be evaluated on following elements:

- **Introduction - 5 points**
- **Problem Statement, Goals and Objectives, and Implementation Plan - 40 points**
- **Evaluation and Impact -15 points**
- **Target Audience - 10 points**
- **Sustainability - 5 points**

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **Who can participate?**
 - Non-governmental and non-profit organizations registered in Kazakhstan.
- **Who cannot participate?**
 - Organizations registered outside of Kazakhstan, commercial organizations, political groups carrying out partisan activities, and charity organizations are not eligible for this program.
- **Available funding:** The maximum funding for a project is \$30,000.
- **What expenses can be covered by Grant?** Grant funding can be used to pay for:
 - Organization of workshops, seminars, conferences, and round-table discussions;
 - Campaigns to engage the public in socially valuable activities;
 - Advocacy for solving societal issues;
 - Monitoring of current legislation implementation;
 - Development of proposals for legislative changes;
 - Project-related salaries and honoraria;
 - Research, surveys, and related analytical work;
 - Printing and publishing materials;
 - Supplies or equipment necessary for project implementation; and
 - Administrative and in-country travel expenses directly related to the project.

Grant funding cannot be used for salaries, rent, or other general support of an organization, unless these expenses are directly tied to the project.

Funds are limited and not all proposals will be funded. To be competitive, a proposal must clearly explain the project's goals and target audience, and offer a clearly formulated plan and realistic budget to achieve those goals. Embassy staff can provide advice on how to ensure project proposals follow these guidelines.