

U.S. Embassy Bratislava

Program Office: Public Affairs Section

Funding Opportunity Title: TechCamp on Increasing Digital Literacy

Announcement Type: Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: SLO10016GR0XX

Catalog of Federal Financial Assistance (CFDA): 19.040

Starting date of the project: May 2016 , and the TechCamp should take place in early Autumn - September/October 2016

Award Period: 7 months

Award Amount: \$30,000 is available for this grant program. A single award will be granted.

Application Submission Process: Applicants must submit proposals by email to the Public Affairs Section at Bratislava_GrantsSlo@state.gov

Deadline for Applications: May 1, 2016

***Embassy Bratislava will provide assistance throughout the entire process of project. Embassy will help to identify potential foreign experts with technical skills that could attend the event, potential partner doesn't need to have technical background.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Embassy Bratislava seeks a partner organization to host a **TechCamp on Increasing Digital Literacy and Critical Thinking Skills**. This project will involve organizing a **two-day workshop** focused on providing journalists, civil society activists, and tech experts from Visegrad 4 (V4) countries with resources and ideas to use digital media combat the spread of disinformation and conspiracy theories filtering into the region. Through TechCamp, the Embassy will encourage participants to work together to develop creative ideas to identify, monitor and counter disinformation, to promote objective media reporting on current events, and to encourage critical thinking among citizens.

Background

TechCamp is a two-day, interactive training event (usually held in collaboration with a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad) which, by virtue of its flexibility, can be adapted to a broad variety of themes. TechCamp aims to raise the digital literacy of a particular segment of society (for example: activists, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), journalists, women entrepreneurs, representatives of the business community and IT sector, ordinary citizens etc.) by connecting participants with technologists from around the world who help address unique challenges using innovative technology solutions. The objective of TechCamp is to encourage participants to reflect upon the most pressing challenges they face in their everyday work, brainstorm ideas with technologists and co-create solutions on the spot.

TechCamp aims to improve the resilience of societies by connecting them to local, regional and international technology communities. By empowering civil society in this way, TechCamp aims to increase transparency, promote human rights, and spread democratic values. Ideally, TechCamp kick-starts an ecosystem of positive change and networking, in which previously unconnected groups (like NGOs and technologists) with shared interests and values start working together to create stronger, more stable societies.

TechCamp is not a hackathon, a conference, an unconference, or a training session. It is a hands-on, interactive, high-energy, participant-led event that is adaptable to the issues and needs of the host community. A majority of the event is spent in small groups, allowing the participants to drill down into their unique challenges and spend quality time with technology experts who can slowly and thoroughly help them develop and apply tech-solutions to these challenges, designing solutions on the spot.

In designing this project, Embassy Bratislava will facilitate contact between the grantee and the Department of State's Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP). IIP will assist with identifying and recruiting professional speakers in the U.S. and Europe who can introduce concepts to program participants and lead discussion groups

For more information, visit: <http://techcampglobal.org/techcamp-in-a-box.php>

II. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

Embassy Bratislava seeks a partner organization to host a TechCamp on Increasing Digital Literacy and Critical Thinking Skills. This project will involve organizing a two-day workshop focused on providing participants – such as journalists, civil society activists, business and IT sector representatives, government officials, and tech experts – from Visegrad 4 (V4) countries with resources and ideas to combat the spread of disinformation and conspiracy theories filtering into the region through the use of digital media. Through TechCamp, the Embassy will encourage participants to work together to develop creative ideas to identify, monitor and counter disinformation, to promote

objective media reporting on current events, and to encourage critical thinking among citizens.

Target participants for TechCamp may include journalists from the V4; civil society activists; tech experts from universities, private companies, start-ups, and incubators; and government officials. Our intended outcome is to support networking among participants, the creation of innovative solutions to this challenge, and the future development of new tools and strategies to counteract the influence of disinformation in the V4.

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) intends to issue an award for a period of 7 months (base period) with potential follow-on awards to support promising ideas that emerge from TechCamp.

This workshop should:

- Include professional speakers from the U.S. and Europe recruited in cooperation with IIP
- Bring together approximately 30 participants from the media, civil society, tech sector, academia, and the government. While the largest segment of participants may come from Slovakia, some participants should come from other V4 member countries. Relevant participants from Eastern Partnership countries and other countries in the broader region could be considered as well.
- Include segments on identifying, monitoring and countering disinformation:
 - on social media networks
 - on internet websites, including questionable “news” websites
 - in traditional media (television, newspaper, magazines, radio)

PAS also intends to fund via separate grants post-Tech Camp follow-on activities that are aimed at assisting participants in realizing the most promising ideas that come out of tech-camp. Follow-on activities may include, but are not limited to, a mentorship program and/or limited small grants competition for participants.

U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section’s role:

1. Monitor overall program implementation
2. Facilitate communication between the grantee and IIP
3. Approve participants for the program in coordination with the grantee
4. Approve the schedule of planned activities
5. Clear/approve all publicity language

Cost Sharing or Matching

This program does not require cost sharing, but proposals that include cost sharing will be more competitive.

III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Both non-profit and for-profit institutions may apply for this grant, however for-profit institutions may not derive any financial gain from this project. The Embassy encourages organizations that have not previously received international program funding from the USG to apply under this announcement. Applicants are not required to include funding from other donors. However, applications that include additional in-kind and/or cash contributions from non-U.S. Government sources will be more competitive, since cost-sharing demonstrates a strong commitment to the planned activities and will be considered to show great cost effectiveness.

IMPORTANT: Organizations applying for assistance awards must obtain a Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) **DUNS number** prior to being eligible to receive an award: For details go to: <http://www.bisnode.cz/produkt/duns-number/?lang=en>

Obtaining a DUNS number in support of submitting a grant proposal to the USG is to be at **no cost** to the applicant.

NATO Commercial and Governmental Entity (NCAGE) Code must be assigned to applicant organization. Applicants need to go to the following web address and request an NCAGE code: <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>.

All applicants must also be **registered in SAM (System for Award Management)** prior to receiving an award from the State Department: <http://www.sam.gov>.

Note: Awards to individuals are exempt from DUNS, NCAGE and registration in SAM requirements. All grantee organizations must also have non-profit status.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Award Period: 7 months

Starting date of the project: May 2016

Award Amount: \$30,000 is available for this grant program. A single award will be granted.

Application Submission Process: Applicants must submit proposals by email to the Public Affairs Section at Bratislava_GrantsSlo@state.gov.

Application Deadline: All applications must be submitted on or before May 1, 2016, 11:59 p.m. Bratislava time. Applications submitted after 11:59 p.m. will be ineligible for consideration. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline.

Application Content: Applicants must follow the NOFO instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all information required. **Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will result in disqualification from**

the competition. Applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this NOFO.

The proposal must consist of the following:

Section 1 – Application: This form can be found on-line at:
http://www.usembassy.sk/cms/files/20131108_grants_application_form.doc

All applicants also need to complete Form SF-424 available at
https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/sf424_0.pdf.

Section 2 - Problem Statement: The problem statement must describe the need for the project and include any supporting statistics or evidence, as well as identify any existing resources.

Section 3 – Project Goals/Implementation Plan: The applicant must specify the goals and objectives of the project, relative to the problem statement. The proposed activities should be described in sufficient detail to show how objectives and goals will be met. This section should also describe how success will be measured via performance indicators. Finally, this section must include a time-task plan that clearly identifies the objectives and major activities.

Section 4 - Organizational Capability: Applications must include a clear description of the applicant’s management structure, previous experience with similar projects, and organizational experience and background as these relate to the proposed activities. Besides information about the organization as a whole, this section must also identify the staffing plan for the proposed project.

Section 5 - Appendices:

The concept paper submission must include two appendices:

- (a) **Budget** – the budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories: personnel; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs.
- (b) **Resume** – a resume must be included for the proposed key staff person, such as the Project Director.

Budgets must be calculated in U.S. dollars. Please note that the Fly America Act requires that anyone whose air travel is financed by U.S. Government funds to utilize the economy class services of a U.S. flag carrier.

V. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Award Notices: The grant shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the Government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer

grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the Recipient through either mail or facsimile transmission. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

Anticipated Time to Award: Applicants should expect to be notified of the funding decisions within 15 days after the submission deadline and expect to receive grant funds within 1 month after notification.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the Government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

- **Reporting Requirements:** Grantees are required to submit program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period. Progress reports at a minimum should be submitted via electronic mail to an address to be provided in the award.

VI. DISCLAIMER

If a proposal is selected for funding, the U.S. Embassy has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the U.S. Embassy.