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REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL ISSUES



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USAID ARMENIA, SOCIAL PROTECTION
SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING PROJECT

Accessible Communities for Individuals With Disabilities

Competition

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

March 16, 2009

Table of Contents

Organizational Overview

- I. Background
- II. Goal and Objectives
- III. Supported Activities
- IV. Qualified Applicants
- V. Proposal Selection Criteria
- VI. Use of Grant Funds
- VII. Decision Making Process and Competition Schedule
- VIII. Proposal Submission Procedure
- IX. Address, Contact Information and Delivery of Proposals

Organizational overview

The USAID Social Protection Systems Strengthening (SPSS) Project, implemented by the Services Group Inc. (TSG) from October 2006 through September 2011, aims to strengthen Armenia's social protection systems, to improve the Government of Armenia's (GOAM) institutional and human capacity, and to enhance the capacity of social service NGOs. The project offers international and Armenian technical assistance in social protection areas and aims to facilitate transition to self-reliance and sustainability, while reducing citizens' dependence on public support to meet their basic needs.

The Republic of Armenia (RA) Ministry of Labor and Social Issues (MLSI) is the Executive Authority that designs and implements RA Government policies in employment and social protection spheres.

I. Background

In the Republic of Armenia as of 1 January 2008, there are officially 158,758 people with disabilities, comprising around 4% of the population. This number includes 8,690 children with disabilities under 18, and around 2,500 children with spinal damage and amputees.

As prescribed by current legislation, all employers operating in the territory of the Republic of Armenia must ensure accessibility of all social infrastructures (residential, public, and industrial buildings). Employers must create favorable conditions for the unobstructed use of public transport and transport communication, communication and information means, leisure, and entertainment places to assist people with disabilities.

Despite the abovementioned legislation, most residential as well as public buildings, streets, industrial, educational, cultural and sports facilities in all cities of the Republic have been built without taking into consideration the needs of people with disabilities and therefore are not accessible. The number of disability-friendly public facilities, social facilities, and medical establishments are limited. This is explained partially by the fact that since Soviet times people with disabilities have been isolated from the society, placed in closed establishments and for this reason society was unaware of their problems.

Civil construction has long neglected people with disabilities, as most residential and public buildings, streets, industrial, educational, cultural and sports facilities in all the cities of the Republic have been built neglecting the needs of people with disabilities.

Lack of proper civil construction solutions for people with disabilities has led to their artificial isolation from public life, denying their physical and creative potential. This is one of the main reasons why hundreds of children with disabilities don't attend preschools and schools, and why the unemployment rate of people with disabilities able to work is very high. Currently the number of disability accessible facilities is rather small (RA Government 3 Building, RA MLSI Rehabilitation Center, Post-traumatic Rehabilitation Center, UN Armenian Office) irrespective of the scope and success of and have included efforts to reconstruct pavements and crosswalks of central streets in Yerevan and adjust some educational and services establishments to the needs of people in wheelchairs.

Based on the abovementioned and given the current Government policy of integration of people with disabilities into the society to ensure an accessible environment, an Accessible Community project is important to fostering recognition and dissemination of advanced practices of full inclusion of people with disabilities in the community life. In order to facilitate this integration of people with disabilities into the society and address their social protection issues the social partnership principle will be applied including the active cooperation of communities and NGOs.

II. Goal and Objectives

The RA Ministry of Labor and Social Issues (MLSI) and the USAID Social Protection Systems Strengthening (SPSS) Project request town and district communities in the city of Yerevan in partnership with NGOs to submit proposals for this “Accessible Community” project. The **goal** of this initiative is to create a user-friendly environment for people with disabilities, and help to make the chosen communities in the Republic of Armenia accessible for people with disabilities.

Objectives of this tender are:

- a. Furnish street traffic and pedestrian zones, underground and overground crosswalks, building and construction premises, public recreation places, sports and children’s playgrounds with appropriate ramps, as well as light, sound, and other alarms;
- b. Adjust buildings and structures to the maximum extent possible, in order to provide open access for people with disabilities.

MLSI and SPSS Project, within the scope of this tender, will finance the project proposals meeting the above-stated goals and objectives. The project winners will be the community or communities which will implement the goals and objectives described above.

III. Supported Activities

To accomplish above mentioned goals and objectives the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Issues and USAID Social Protection Systems Strengthening (SPSS) project will support activities favoring creation of an unobstructive environment for people with disabilities to ensure creation of such an environment.

- a. Building ramps
- b. Adjusting physical conditions inside building
- c. Training workes to implement the construction projects

IV. Qualified Applicants

Communities in partnership with officially registered non-governmental organizations are eligible to submit proposals for this competition.

V. Project Selection Criteria

The MLSI and SPSS will consider the following criteria to ensure fair selection of proposals:

- I. *Works implemented by the community (30%):*
 - Accessibility of buildings;
 - Accessibility of street traffic and pedestrian zones;
 - Accessibility of public recreation places, sports and children’s playgrounds;
- II. *Compliance of community works (30%):*
 - The compliance of implemented works with required standard and RA Legislations;

- Emphasis on regions and local communities outside of Yerevan.

III. Social partnership principals (20%):

Active and creative partnership with the community on implementing activities and raising awareness regarding people with disabilities.

IV. Budget (20%):

- Relevance of proposal activities and budget;
- Cost-efficiency.

VI. Use of Grant Funds

Grant funds may be used only for activities directly connected with the implementation of the project.

VII. Decision Making Process and Competition Schedule

Limited support will be provided to interested organizations on the Preparation of Applications in a pre-bid consulting seminar to be held at SPSS Project office on March 24, 2009 at 15:00. Individual consultation will not be provided.

Competition schedule:

Competition Announcement:	March 16, 2009
Pre-bid seminar:	March 24, 2009
Application Submission Deadline:	April 6, 2009
Announcement of Competition Awards:	May 6, 2009

The review and proposal selection process will be done in one phase:

Screening of proposals and selection of the best proposals by the MLSI, USAID, SPSS Project Expert Committee, in accordance with the proposal selection criteria.

Award procedures will be conducted in compliance with USAID policies. A detailed grant agreement with all necessary attachments will be signed, and a grant management seminar provided to the project's key personnel.

VIII. Proposal Submission Procedure

1. The proposal should be submitted in Armenian and in accordance with the requirements set forth in this request. The proposals should be approved and signed original signatures of the Community leader and Implementing NGO Executive Director identifying the document as a “**Proposal for Accessible communities for individuals with disabilities.**”
2. Unsigned proposals cannot be accepted.
3. All the materials and documents submitted as part of this competition will not be returned to the applicant.
4. According to Application Guidelines, the project proposal should consist of the following sections:
 - Basic information on the applicant community;
 - Project Description, including activities to be implemented in the community
 - Implementation timeline,

- The budget of expenses for the implementation of activities. The confidentiality of the information submitted by applicants will be provided, except in cases where it is required by the legislation of Armenia.

IX. Address, contact information and delivery of proposals

Applications are to be submitted by 17:00 April 6, 2009 in person to:
18 Baghramyan Str., (entrance on Zurabyan Str.),
Yerevan, 0019, Armenia,
USAID SPSS Project Office

For more information, please contact: Kristine Grigoryan, kgrig@spss.am; (+374 10) 54 26 11.