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**ADVANCING KOSOVO TOGETHER – LOCAL SOLUTION PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS RFA-12-AKT-LS**

Issuance Date: **February 09, 2016**

Submission Closing Date & Time: **March 10, 2016 at 16:00 PM**

Dear Applicants,

Community Development Fund, the implementing partner of USAID for “Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution (AKT – LS)” Program in Kosovo, pursuant to the authority contained in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and in accordance with USAID Cooperative Agreement No. AID-167-A-14-00008, is seeking applications from qualified Kosovar Start-up, Micro and Small enterprises to implement “Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution Grants Program in Support of USAID/Kosovo’s Democracy and Governance” (Detailed project description is in Section I. Funding Opportunity Description). Assistance will be in the form of Simplified, Fixed Obligation or In-Kind Grant Agreements in accordance with Chapter 303 of USAID’s Automated Directives System (ADS303).

The selected Grantees will implement their projects which will contribute towards the achievement of Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution program objectives:

1. Improve autonomous, horizontal communication between: (a) Kosovo Albanian and non-majority communities; and (b) the GoK and non-majority communities;
2. Improve economic opportunities in target municipalities;
3. Increase the efficiency and capacity of target municipal administrations to respond to the needs of all their citizens.

Pursuant to 22CFR226.81, profit under this award is not allowed. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, which are related to the grant program and are in accordance with the applicable cost standards (22CFR226, OMB Circular A-122, A-21, and FAR Part 31) may be paid under the grant.

All awards to Non-U.S. Organizations will be administered in accordance with applicable regulations as follows:

- ADS303, Mandatory Standard Provisions for Grants
- 22 CFR 226
- Applicable OMB Circulars
- Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental Organizations
- 48 CFR 31.2 (for-profit organizations)

Regulations listed above can be accessed via the USAID webpage:

<http://www.usaid.gov/business/regulations/>

Subject to the availability of funds, we anticipate awarding multiple grants on or around April 2016. The size of any single grant awarded under this RFA will not exceed \$6,000.

Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution/USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Advancing Kosovo Together - Local Solution appreciates that the applicants demonstrate their commitment to program success by including cost-sharing.

For the purposes of this program this RFA is being issued and consists of this cover letter and the following:

- Section I – Funding Opportunity Description;
- Section II – Award Information;
- Section III – Eligibility Information;
- Section IV – Application Submission Information & Contacts;
- Section V – Application Review Information;
- Section VI – Award Administration Information;
- Section VII – Other Information; and
- Section VIII – Attachments.

Thank you for your interest.

Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

IA. Background – Introduction

AKT Program (also AKT – LS) is implemented in 16 municipalities¹ with considerable presence of Serbian community. In essence, all three interventions are designed to contribute to expedited inclusion of Serbian community in the institutional and political life in Kosovo and increasing the exchanges between majority and minority communities across all spheres of life. Improvement of small-scale infrastructure and service delivery systems, coupled by increased ability to deliver quality services on the part of local governments and the efficient advocating of community needs and priorities, are encompassed in the project as different dimensions of intervention. These dimensions are expected to lead to improvement of both horizontal linkages across municipalities and vertical linkages with line ministries, through which lives of communities will be improved.

Employment and economic development are also envisaged by the project as key intervention measures aimed at contributing to the overall inclusion of the economies in the 16 beneficiary municipalities. Provision of opportunities for savvy entrepreneurially predisposed individuals and labor force development measures are the two main tools to be used for promoting employment and self-employment in the targeted communities.

In addition, the program will offer assistance to local municipalities to provide services in the most efficient manner, using transparent processes, which resulted in the setting of many standards across all municipalities, such as the creation of annual work plans, Service Improvement Action Plans (SIAPs) and citizen engagement plans. Such assistance was particularly helpful for the newly created municipalities, which did not typically have experienced leadership. This assistance will help target municipalities to continue instituting practical and concrete initiatives that will strengthen the legitimacy of Kosovo's local government system and improve service delivery in the targeted municipalities.

IB. Project Description

Advancing Kosovo Together - Local Solutions (AKT - LS) is a three-year project that aims to increase constructive inter-ethnic cooperation and interaction, primarily between the majority Kosovo Albanian community and Kosovo Serb community, which is vital to the security and stability of the Balkans. The AKT – LS is part of the USAID Forward, the new USAID strategy of development aid delivery, where involvement of local know-how and expertise is essential for maximizing aid efficiency. The AKT – LS Project is part of the AKT Program, which aside from the intervention subject to this document, also includes AKT US Project, implemented by Chemonics Inc. The two projects implemented by the AKT US and CDF-led consortium of organizations both contribute to the same development objectives and are expected to cooperate closely in implementing their measures and achieve synergies.

The AKT – LS as a component of AKT Program, has a projected budget of **7 Mil USD**. Of these, a net investment of **5 Mil USD** is envisaged to be implemented as direct grant interventions through three different grant schemes, one for municipalities, one for private sector development, and one supporting civil society efforts and other grassroots inter-ethnic initiatives.

¹ Municipalities include: Gjilan/Gnjilane, Graçanicë/Gračanica, Istog/Istok, Klinë/Klina, Killokot/Klokot, Leposaviq/Leposavić, Mitrovicë e Veriut/ North Mitrovica, Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, Obiliq/Obilić, Partesh/Parteš, Pejë/Peć, Ranilluk/Ranilug, Shtërpçë/Štrpce, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Zubin Potok/Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zvečan.

This Request for Grant Applications solicits proposals from existing micro and small enterprises and start-ups in the 16 municipalities covered by AKT – LS Program for activities that may be not limited to:

- Job creation, with an affirmative focus on the employment of non-majority women and youth;
- Activities that support job skills training for non-majority women and youth;
- Creating economic opportunities for non-majority youth and women;
- Expanding business development and access to finance opportunities for non-majority businesses, youth entrepreneurship and women-owned enterprises.

IC. General Criteria for Selection

AKT LS under the Component 2 aims improving economic prosperity and outlook of the 16 targeted communities. Improving the efficiency of the private sector to boost development and generate employment are the two core variables that the proposed action seeks to change. Investment support in core equipment and tools, training, and backstopping support services will be put to the service of private sector as part of the proposed project to eliminate some of the growth barriers that MSMEs face.

A valid proposal under the AKT LS Grant scheme must meet the following criteria:

- Be innovative and unique;
- Be independently originated and developed by the applicant;
- Be consistent with and supportive of USAID/AKT LS strategy and objectives;
- Be able to improve economic opportunities in target areas of the AKT – LS Program.

Section II: Award Information

1. Advancing Kosovo Together - Local Solution intends to fund a single grant in response to this RFA. Allowable costs must be consistent with USAID policies and procedures and be reasonable, allowable, allocable, and well documented and justified for the proposed project and budget.

2. Under this RFA a grant will be made to the following types of organizations:

- **Start-ups, Micro and Small² Enterprises**

3. Grants are expected to be less than one year in duration.

4. All Grant applications received by the deadline will be reviewed by the Advancing Kosovo Together - Local Solution Review and Evaluation Committee (REC) within two weeks of the submission deadline according to the evaluation criteria outlined in this RFA.

5. Submissions received after the Closing Date and Time will not be considered in the review process. Both electronic and hardcopies must be received before the closing date and time.

6. Following submission of your *complete* Application, within **fifteen** calendar days from the deadline for acceptance of applications, the Advancing Kosovo Together - Local Solution's Grants Manager will schedule a date for our REC to review and evaluate your Application. Those applicants receiving the highest scores, up to the point that available funds are expended will move to the pre-award/negotiation phase of the grant award process. Note: The inclusion of a detailed budget and detailed budget notes will help to expedite the

² According to Law No.03/L-031, a Micro Enterprise is considered any enterprises having 1 to 9 employees and a Small Enterprise is considered any enterprise having 10 to 49 employees.

negotiation phase. Once an application has been successfully negotiated and approved by USAID, it will be funded upon availability of resources.

7. Simplified, Fixed Obligation or In-Kind Grant Agreement will be awarded.

8. Pre-Award Certifications, Assurances and other Statements of the Recipient – All non-U.S. organizations prior to signing of any grant agreement must sign the following certifications, assurances and other statements: a signed copy of the Certification Regarding Terrorist Funding required by the Internal Mandatory Reference AAPD 04-14, Self-Certification and Certification of Recipient.

Section III: Eligibility Information

This RFA is open to organizations registered in Kosovo (more specific types of organization is referenced in Section II. 2 above).

In addition, Grantees must:

- Be legally registered and recognized under the laws of Kosovo [**please provide copy business registration certificate**];
- Have sufficient staff and capacity to undertake proposed activities;
- Possess the sound managerial, technical, and institutional capacities to achieve the results of the project;
- Possess a system of internal controls that safeguard assets and protect against fraud, waste, and conflicts of interest;
- Be willing to sign applicable certifications; and
- Not be found on the list of System for Award Management (SAM) and/or OFAC's SDN and Blocked Person List.

The following organizations are *not* eligible for Advancing Kosovo Together - Local Solution grant funding:

- Political parties, their subsidiaries, or affiliates;
- Organizations that appear on the SAM, OFAC or U.N. 1267 list;
- Organizations that promote or engage in illegal activities or anti-democratic activities;
- Faith-based organizations whose objectives are for discriminatory and/or religious purposes, and whose main objective of the grant is of a religious nature;
- Any entity affiliated with Community Development Fund (CDF) (Advancing Kosovo Together - Local Solution), its officers, directors, or employees; and
- Public International Organizations.

Section IV: Application Submission Information & Contacts

1. The RFA includes all information required to apply for a grant, however, questions on this RFA should be submitted to:

Attention: Grants Department
Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution Office
Sejdi Kryeziu, no.16, Peyton, Pristina, 10000, Kosovo
Office Numbers: 038 249 677/678
E-mail: grants@kcdf.org

Attention: NGO AKTIV Office
Kralja Petra I 183a, North Mitrovica, Kosovo

The deadline for questions is **February 23, 2016** at 16:00 hrs. Both the questions and answers will be distributed to all applicants by **February 29, 2016** by 16:00 hrs.

Information sessions with potential applicants will be organized as follows:

1. Assembly Hall, Address: 'Aleksandër Moisiu', Pejë/Pec on **February 15, 2016** at 10:00 am
2. AKTIV Office, Address: Kralja Petra I 183a, North Mitrovica, Kosovo on **February 16, 2016 at 10:00am**
3. Assembly Hall, Vushtrri/Vučitrn on **February 16, 2016 at 2:00 pm**
4. Assembly Hall, Gračanica/Graçanicë on **February 18, 2016 at 10:00 am**
5. House of Culture, Klokot/Kllokot on **February 18, 2016 at 2:00 pm**
6. Assembly Hall, Štrpce/Shtërpçë on **February 22, 2016 at 10:00 am**

The USAID/AKT – LS program will not cover any costs related to participation in the Info Days. Applicants must submit the application using the forms/templates included:

Attachment 1: MSME Proposal Form

2. Successful applicants will be required to sign all applicable certifications from ADS 303.3.8: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>. For this RFA, applicants will sign certifications prior to any grant agreement signing; the certifications are labeled as followed:

- A signed copy of the Certification Regarding Terrorist Funding required by the Internal Mandatory Reference AAPD 04-14;
- Self-Certification; and
- Certification of Recipient
- Representation by organization regarding a delinquent tax liability or a felony criminal condition (AAPD 14-03, august 2014)

3. Applications can be submitted only in English. Applicants must submit 3 hard copies (one original and two copies) in a sealed envelope to the address above.

When sending by e-mail, please insert "Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution RFA-012-AKT-LS" in the subject line.

4. Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution will incorporate its USAID-Approved Branding and Marking Plan to all awards under this RFA.

5. Funding restrictions:

- Applicants are encouraged to submit their proposed list of commodities to be reviewed by AKT - LS during the evaluation process. However, please note that any ineligible commodities shown on applicants proposed list of commodities are subject to approval of from AKT - LS. A complete list of allowable and eligible commodities can be found at ADS 312: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/312.pdf>
- The award will not allow the reimbursement of pre-award costs. That is, only allowable obligations incurred during the period defined within the grant agreement will be reimbursed.

Applicants should submit the following to Advancing Kosovo Together Local Solution:

- MSME Proposal Form;
- A copy of the Applicant's valid legal business registration certificate and type of activity;
- A copy of the Kosovo ID card.
- List of registered employees from KTA or Pension Fund

- Pictures of the business premises where you do your business activity (or the business premise which you plan to use in your business activity)
- Contractual agreements with any partner, supplier, etc. (if you possess any).
- Detailed technical specification of the equipment requested to be purchased through grant support
- Pictures of the equipment requested to be purchased through grant support
- A pre-offer from any local vendor for the equipment requested including technical specificities, pictures and price.

Hard copies of Application may be delivered to one of the following addresses:

CDF Office, Grants Department
 Address: 'Sejdi Kryeziu', no.16, Peyton, 10000, Pristina, Kosovo
 Office numbers: 038 249 677/678

AKTIV Office, North Coordinators' Office
 Kralja Petra I 183a, North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Section V: Application Review Information

1. A Review and Evaluation Committee (REC) will formally evaluate and rank all proposals independently and uniformly in writing, using an Application Evaluation Form.

Final selection of the grantees will be based upon field visits that will be undertaken and based on the following criteria:

- Viability and sustainability of the enterprise in general (including management, accounting, quality, market, employee competences, etc.);
- Technical aspects of the proposal (feasibility, creativity, soundness);
- Total number of jobs to be created, part-time and full-time;
- Number of jobs to be created for members of vulnerable groups (women and youth);
- Social and environmental impact;
- Competition to be faced.

2. A Review and Evaluation Committee (REC) consisting of a minimum of three individuals will review and evaluate all applications.

Section VI: Award and Administration Information

Once this RFA is released, any questions related to this RFA must be directed to the Grants Manager only.

Once the REC has convened and evaluated applications, successful recipients will receive an e-mail from the Grants Manager to schedule the following negotiation tasks:

- (1) SURVEY PRE APPROVAL FILED VISIT FORM ³ (for In-Kind grants AKT – LS will do the Field Visit Before Approval Survey);
- (2) Technical/activity negotiations, including cost analysis of the budget;
- (3) Environmental assessments, if considered necessary.

³ SURVEY PRE APPROVAL FILED VISIT FORM is used to determine whether or not the applicant has the capacity to adequately perform in accordance with principles established by USAID and OMB in the administration of a USAID funded grant. All applicants that pass the REC will be subject to the SURVEY PRE APPROVAL FILED VISIT FORM (in accordance with ADS 303.3.9). The SURVEY PRE APPROVAL FILED VISIT FORM is a question and answer based process that typically takes place at the applicant office /business. All areas of operation are reviewed, including but not limited to: budgeting, petty cash, procurement, accounting system, inventory, etc.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing within one week following REC meeting.

Reporting requirements: Program progress and financial reporting requirements will be established during the negotiation.

Section VII: Other Information

1. USAID and/or Advancing Kosovo Together - Local Solution reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Additionally, all awards pursuant to this funding opportunity are contingent upon the availability of funds and the receipt of a sufficient number of meritorious applications.

2. Applicants are reminded of:

PROHIBITION AGAINST SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM

- (a) The Contractor/Recipient is reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibit transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. It is the legal responsibility of the Contractor/Recipient to ensure compliance with these Executive Orders and laws.
- (b) One of the applicable orders is Executive Order 13224, dated September 24, 2001. The website of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the Department of Treasury contains the text of that order and a list of the individuals and entities designated thereunder. It also contains lists of individuals and entities designated under other anti-terrorism statutes, regulations and Executive Orders. See <http://www.treasury.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/sdn/>.
- (c) USAID reserves the right to review and either approve or reject the following sub award if proposed under this contract/agreement: (i) any contract or subcontract in excess of \$6,000 with a non-U.S. organization or individual; and (ii) any grant or sub grant to a non-U.S. organization or individual, regardless of the dollar value. Furthermore, the written consent of USAID is required before certain other forms of assistance may be provided to a non-U.S. organization or individual. These include in-kind assistance such as renovation of an NGO's facilities, repair or replacement of a company's equipment, and certain training activities. No approval (or failure to disapprove) by USAID shall relieve the Contractor/Recipient of its legal obligation to comply with applicable Executive Orders and laws.
- (d) USAID reserves the right to rescind approval for a sub award in the event that USAID subsequently becomes aware of information indicating that the sub award is contrary to U.S. law or policy prohibiting support for terrorism. In such cases, USAID's Contracting Officer will provide written instructions to the Contractor/Recipient to terminate the sub award.
- (e) USAID reserves the right to terminate this contract/agreement if USAID determines that the Contractor/Recipient is involved in or advocates terrorist activity or has failed to comply with any of the requirements of this provision.
- (f) This provision, including this paragraph (f), shall be included in all contracts, subcontracts, grants and sub grants issued under this contract/agreement. The Contractor/Recipient shall promptly provide to USAID's Contracting/Agreement Officer a copy of the pages from each sub award that contains this provision.

USAID DISABILITY POLICY - ASSISTANCE (DECEMBER 2004)

- (a) The objectives of the USAID Disability Policy are (1) to enhance the attainment of United States foreign assistance program goals by promoting the participation and equalization of opportunities of individuals with disabilities in USAID policy, country and sector strategies, activity designs and implementation; (2) to increase awareness of issues of people with disabilities both within USAID programs and in host countries; (3) to engage other U.S. government agencies, host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations and other donors in fostering a climate of nondiscrimination against people with disabilities; and (4) to support international advocacy for people with disabilities. The full text of the policy paper can be found at the following website: http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/PDABQ631.pdf.
- (b) USAID therefore requires that the recipient not discriminate against people with disabilities in the implementation of USAID funded programs and that it make every effort to comply with the objectives of the USAID Disability Policy in performing the program under this grant or cooperative agreement. To that end and to the extent it can accomplish this goal within the scope of the program objectives, the recipient should demonstrate a comprehensive and consistent approach for including men, women and children with disabilities.

Restriction on Source Origin - Grantee is not to purchase any goods manufactured or produced in restricted countries list (reference ADS310, Source Origin and Nationality: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/310.pdf>)

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (JUNE 2012)

a. USAID is authorized to terminate this award, without penalty, if the recipient or its employees, or any sub recipient or its employees, engage in any of the following conduct:

(1) Trafficking in persons (as defined in the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime) during the period of this award;

(2) Procurement of a commercial sex act during the period of this award; or

(3) Use of forced labor in the performance of this award.

b. For purposes of this provision, "employee" means an individual who is engaged in the performance of this award as a direct employee, consultant, or volunteer of the recipient or any sub recipient.

c. The recipient must include in all sub agreements, including sub awards and contracts, a provision prohibiting the conduct described in a (1) - (3) by the sub recipient, contractor or any of their employees.

Section VIII: Attachments

Attachment 1: MSME Proposal Application Form