

# ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT FOR AWARDING OF GRANTS

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<b>Funding Opportunity Title:</b>	<b>2024 USAID National Governance Program Annual Program Statement</b>
<b>Announcement Type:</b>	Annual Program Statement
<b>Funding Opportunity Number:</b>	APS-001
<b>Issuance Date:</b>	May 13, 2024
<b>Questions for <u>First Round</u> of Evaluations Due By:</b>	May 20, 2024
<b>Deadline for Submission of <u>First Round</u> Concept Papers:</b>	May 28, 2024
<b>Questions for <u>Second Round</u> of Evaluations Due By:</b>	June 30, 2024
<b>Deadline for Submission of <u>Second Round</u> Concept Papers:</b>	July 8, 2024
<b>Questions for <u>Third Round</u> of Evaluations Due By:</b>	November 4, 2024
<b>Deadline for Submission of <u>Third Round</u> Concept Papers:</b>	November 26, 2024
<b>Final Closing Date:</b>	November 26, 2024
<b>Submit Questions to:</b>	GEgovProgGrantsQuestions@dai.com
<b>Submit Concept Papers to:</b>	GEgovProgGrantsSubmissions@dai.com

*If Concept Paper is short-listed, then applicants will be requested to develop a full application.*

## To Interested Applicants:

The purpose of this Annual Program Statement (APS) is to solicit concept papers and then full applications for funding from USAID National Governance Program in Georgia.

The USAID National Governance Program, through USAID implementing partner DAI Global, is announcing this Annual Program Statement as a multi-phased co-creation process to identify and select eligible applications from non-governmental organizations in support of the Program's overall purpose of more citizen-responsive governance based on greater accountability, transparency, and institutional independence. This purpose includes strengthening the "demand-side" of citizen responsive governance and empowering Georgian civil society and the private sector to demand more accountability of governance institutions.

Grants supported under this APS will contribute to the Program's overall goal and objectives of increasing government accountability and responsiveness to citizens by enhancing the effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of governing institutions, enhancing the effectiveness and independence of oversight institutions and empowering citizens to hold the government to account. Together these objectives are seeking to contribute to USAID's efforts to strategically partner with Georgia to advance aspirations for Euro-Atlantic integration and strengthen resilience to malign influence.

Competition for this APS will be open from **May 13, 2024**, to **November 26, 2024**. All concept papers for review in the first round of evaluations are due by **May 28, 2024**. All the available funds for this APS may be allocated to awards resulting from the first round of evaluations. At the discretion of DAI, applications received after the first round of evaluations may be considered on a rolling basis or as part of another round of evaluations.

DAI on behalf of USAID anticipates awarding multiple grants up to **GEL 250,000** each during the term of the APS to fund successful concept papers submitted in response to this APS. DAI may choose to fully fund or

incrementally fund the selected application(s). The number of awards and amount of available funding is subject to change and DAI reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this APS.

This APS is seeking applicants to propose creative and effective approaches to enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency of governance and oversight institutions, while empowering citizens to actively participate in decision-making processes. By fostering a culture of responsiveness and inclusivity, the program seeks to contribute to the advancement of Georgia's European integration aspirations and foster a stronger, more resilient, and inclusive democratic society as outlined in the Overview section.

Applicants may choose among a range of initiatives or scale up small projects that have demonstrated success. Awardees will be expected to share evaluation results and key lessons and disseminate periodic activities and outcomes with the broader community.

Applications outside the geographic focus will not be considered. Applicants must demonstrate success in managing cultural and political considerations in the proposed focus country or region as well as success in addressing DAI's development objectives.

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## SECTION I - FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

**Purpose.** The purpose of this Annual Program Statement (APS) is to solicit concept papers and then full applications for funding from USAID National Governance Program in Georgia.

The USAID National Governance Program, through USAID implementing partner DAI Global, is announcing this Annual Program Statement as a multi-phased co-creation process to identify and select eligible applications from non-governmental organizations in support of the Program’s overall purpose of more citizen-responsive governance based on greater accountability, transparency, and institutional independence. This purpose includes strengthening the “demand-side” of citizen responsive governance and empowering Georgian civil society and the private sector to demand more accountability of governance institutions.

Grants supported under this APS will contribute to the Program’s overall goal and objectives of increasing government accountability and responsiveness to citizens by enhancing the effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of governing institutions, enhancing the effectiveness and independence of oversight institutions and empowering citizens to hold the government to account. Together these objectives are seeking to contribute to USAID’s efforts to strategically partner with Georgia to advance aspirations for Euro-Atlantic integration and strengthen resilience to malign influence.

This APS outlines a multi-phased process of co-creation that includes:

- Step 1: Applicants submit concept papers that are selected for further development.
- Step 2: Full applications from shortlisted applicants are submitted.
- Step 3: Final round applications participate in co-creation process with the Program, and potentially other non-governmental or public sector stakeholders.

**Program Overview.** The USAID National Governance Program (hereafter referred to as the Program), is a five-year contract (2022-2027) to increase government accountability and responsiveness to citizens by enhancing the effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of executive institutions of the Government of Georgia (GOG), the effectiveness and independence of the Parliament of Georgia (Parliament) and other independent oversight institutions, and empowering citizens to hold the government accountable.

The Program is working in partnership with the Government of Georgia to deliver citizen-responsive governance based on greater accountability, transparency, and institutional independence. It will strengthen accountability systems, procedures, and mechanisms within both governing and independent oversight institutions and enhance their ability to serve and communicate effectively with the public. This includes strengthening the “demand-side” of citizen responsive governance, supporting localization efforts, and empowering Georgian civil society and the private sector to demand accountability of Governance institutions. To achieve this goal, the Program will:

- Increase effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of governing institutions.
- Increase effectiveness and independence of oversight institutions and
- Increase citizen demand for government accountability.

The Program is seeking to deliver impact against the following program results. For a full description please see the results table in Annex B.

Governing Institutions	Oversight Institutions	Non-governmental
<b>Improved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• policy planning and monitoring</li> <li>• financial management and internal controls</li> <li>• access to information</li> <li>• management and independence of civil service</li> <li>• cybersecurity capacity of public sector</li> </ul>	<b>Strengthened:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• oversight by Parliament</li> <li>• audit capacities</li> <li>• independence of key oversight institutions</li> <li>• public engagement in oversight</li> </ul>	<b>Increased:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSO and private sector collaboration</li> <li>• availability of research</li> <li>• monitoring of GOG performance</li> <li>• public awareness of mechanisms and partnerships</li> </ul>

The Program is using Grants Under Contract to achieve results under all three objectives of the Program. Grants under the Program include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting evidence-based policy and law making by the Government of Georgia.
- Monitoring key governance and parliamentary reforms.
- Monitoring the performance of key governing and oversight institutions.
- Facilitating partnerships between non-government actors (civil society, private sector, academia, and media) to improve government policy making and oversight.
- Supporting academia and research institutions to improve research and data communication on governance related topics.
- Raising public awareness about governance, including corruption and anti-corruption mechanisms.

## (1) Description of the proposed projects supported under the Annual Program Statement (APS)

**Introduction.** Georgia's strategic aspirations for joining the European Union, reflecting the overwhelming public support from the Georgian people and commitments enshrined in the Constitution of Georgia, has resulted in significant progress with the recent granting of EU candidate status in December 2023. This milestone presents a historic opportunity for Georgia's integration with the European Union. However, the realization of this opportunity hinges largely upon the country's commitment to comprehensive reform processes and adherence to the core values upheld by the European Union.

Responsive and accountable public governance starts with collaborative vision-setting between state leadership and citizens, guiding development efforts towards the people's well-being. It ensures that the voices and needs of citizens are heard and considered in decision-making processes, promoting a more inclusive and representative governance. It also fosters transparency by providing access to information and holding government officials accountable for their actions. By focusing on the needs of the people, responsive governance ensures that public services are designed and delivered efficiently and effectively, leading to improved quality of life for citizens. When citizens see that their government is responsive to their needs and concerns, it builds trust in the government and enhances its legitimacy. By engaging citizens in the decision-making process, responsive governance can tap into diverse perspectives and innovative ideas, leading to more adaptive and resilient policies and programs.

Recognized as indispensable partners, non-governmental organizations play a pivotal role in advancing accountability and citizen-centered governance. They hold government institutions accountable, empower citizens to actively participate in governance processes, and amplify the voices of marginalized communities. Moreover, non-governmental organizations facilitate collaboration, both among themselves and with other stakeholders, to advocate for policy reforms that promote transparency, inclusivity, and democratic principles.

In line with these principles, under this APS, the Program is seeking to support initiatives to address the demand-side of governance, empower civil society, enhance transparency, accountability and efficiency of governance and oversight institutions, and promote citizen engagement in governance and policy making.

Through targeted interventions, the program aims to address gaps in governance accountability and foster a culture of transparency and responsiveness within governmental structures. These grants are seeking to increase the “demand-side” of citizen responsive governance and empowering Georgian civil society and the private sector to demand more accountability of governance institutions. By harnessing the collective efforts of civil society organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders, this program aims to foster a stronger, more responsive, and inclusive democratic society in Georgia.

**Concepts under this APS.** Proposed concepts should seek to contribute to one or more of the below Program Results:

- 3.1. Increased public engagement through strengthened capacity of civil society and private sector coalitions to impact policy making and demand accountability.
- 3.2. Enhanced availability and improved quality of research and data on governance-related topics, including corruption.
- 3.3. Enhanced monitoring of government performance, as well as of anti-corruption system actors.
- 3.4. Increased public awareness of and engagement in existing open government and social accountability mechanisms and partnerships.

Concepts should also consider and highlight their applicability to the program results included in Annex B.

**Build on prior investment.** Any concepts that propose research and assessment should demonstrate an awareness of and use of existing research and assessment reports when relevant to avoid duplicative investment and contribute to expanding or updating the existing body of knowledge. Existing research may include that completed with USAID funding, by other donors, and/or those funded by the Government of Georgia.

**Potential Themes & Approaches.** Areas of intervention may include, but are not limited to the following themes and approaches:

***Locally-led advocacy initiatives or civic movements by non-governmental coalitions*** focused on ensuring the legislation, policies, regulations advance the priorities of citizens and/or specific constituency groups while advancing EU integration and good governance practices.

- Coalitions may seek to be broad-based including collaboration by civil society, business associations, other private sector actors and/or academic institutions.
- Advocacy initiatives may include assessments of targeted legislation and regulatory initiative that advance alignment with EU standards and/or the EU acquis, particularly those that directly contribute to the USAID National Governance Program’s objectives and results.
- Assessments and advocacy should seek to be evidence-based and use available tools and methodologies like ex-ante regulatory impact assessments (RIA) and/or ex post regulatory evaluations.

***Public administration reform:*** Concepts that seek to advance implementation of targeted activities and priorities within the public administration reform pillars, through monitoring, research and analysis, or other activities that generate constructive evidence-based recommendations, including:

- **Agency performance monitoring/assessments.** Targeted assessments of public sector executive institutions and/or specific functions against established mandates. Assessment may include reference to the OECD/SIGMA Principles for Public Administration, the sub-principles, and corresponding best practice/checklists included in the SIGMA’s draft Monitoring Framework.
- **Public financial management.** Assessments of the effectiveness of specific components and priorities of the PFM strategy outlining ongoing public financial management reform activities and their impact including targeted recommendations on improving the effectiveness of state institutions’ internal controls, audit performance, and public participation in budget planning and monitoring.

- **Civil service reform:** Assessments of the effectiveness of specific components and priorities of ongoing civil service reform and their impact including recommendations for strengthening a merit-based, professional and free of political-influence civil and public service.
- **Asset disclosure & Institutional integrity risks:** Targeted assessments or monitoring of application of the existing asset disclosure requirements included targeted recommendations to address systemic challenges and improve practices, and/or other concepts that contribute to advancing a comprehensive accountability framework to address potential corruption risks and vulnerabilities.
- **Legal Entities of Public Law.** Assessment of shortcomings in accountability and transparency in the public service at horizontal level, particularly around the high number of legal entities of public law (LEPLs) which develop and implement government policies and whose staff are not covered the civil service legislation, including targeted recommendations to improve overall accountability of LEPLs and their workforce, how to revise or reduce the number of legal entities, classify them by functional criteria, and ensure that those with executing authority belong to the civil service, as outlined in the recommendations of the EC.
- **Access to Information & Open Data:** Concepts that address the targeted recommendations included in the Program supported Open Data Governance Assessment (Program 1.3.02, report in Annex C)
  - Assess and monitor compliance with required public sector commitments for ensuring access to public information including targeted recommendations for key institutions and stakeholders.
  - Assess the existing guidelines and mechanisms for the quality, accuracy, and reliability of open data
  - Mobilize targeted constituent groups to better utilize existing open data, prioritize public sector information and/or datasets, and engage public sector entities to increase availability.
  - Raise awareness about the value of open data among targeted stakeholder groups and/or other equip media, civil society, and business representatives with the necessary skills and resources to use open data to improve access to services, generate revenue, or otherwise drive informed decision-making and social progress.

**Peer-learning social accountability mechanisms and partnerships.** Concepts that seek to raise awareness and/or monitoring of implementation of international commitments and recommendations including the OGP Action Plans and/or OECD/ACN recommendations, GRECO recommendations, or other commitments made through international partnerships and peer-learning/accountability platforms. Activities may include Implementation of OGP Challenge opportunities in partnership with Public Sector partners.

**Independent oversight institutions:** Concepts that seek to monitor, assess and support the improved effectiveness and independent oversight institutions.

- Assessments of performance and activities specific parliamentary committees, and other oversight institutions like the personal data protection services, the state procurement agency, and dispute resolution council against existing mandates and/or specific functions, including targeted recommendations for improving effectiveness and independence.
- Concepts that mobilize constituent groups to utilize existing citizen engagement mechanisms developed by Parliament (e.g., petitions, legislative initiatives, public-private dialogue etc.) or other oversight institutions to foster more inclusive lawmaking, policy making, and more robust and independent oversight.

**Increasing capacity in Data Protection, Cybersecurity, and Information Security.** Concepts may include non-governmental initiatives by civil society, academic, or private sector entities that seek to use innovative training platforms to develop or adapt targeted training courses, including internationally accepted certification, in targeted topics like cybersecurity, data protection, information security, that will help public sector entities improve resilience of public sector institutions and compliance with recently enacted or amended legislation like the Personal Data Protection Law or recent amendments to the Information Security Law.

***Innovative multi-platform, long and short-form media.*** Concepts from professional media outlets to create innovative short and long-form multimedia content, with direct relevance to national government performance, accountability, integrity, and transparency. Concepts should seek to raise awareness, stimulate dialogue, and catalyze action about key issues. Concepts may seek to identify or profile examples of “positive deviance” or champions for reform both within and outside government, including active citizens and community groups that are successfully addressing governance challenges. Applicants should demonstrate an established reputations and a demonstrable commitment to journalism ethics and upholding journalistic excellence, objectivity, and independence.

## **(2) Administration of Award**

Grants to U.S. organizations are not permitted under the USAID National Governance Program. For non-U.S. organizations, USAID Standard Provisions for non-U.S. non-governmental organizations would apply.

Applicants may obtain copies of the referenced material at the following websites:

- 2 CFR 200: <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/textidx?SID=0a5b7fee6378930cce72564449dd8bb7&mc=true&node=sp2.1.200.d&rqn=div6>
- Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/303maa.pdf>
- Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental Recipients: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf>



## SECTION II - AWARD INFORMATION

### **(1) Estimated Funding Level**

DAI, on behalf of USAID, anticipates awarding multiple grants up to **GEL 250,000** each during the term of the APS (up to 7 months) to fund successful concept papers submitted in response to this APS. DAI may choose to fully fund or incrementally fund the chosen Application(s). The number of awards and amount of available funding is subject to change.

### **(2) Anticipated Start Date of this Award and Performance Period**

DAI anticipates the start date upon award with a performance period of up to 10 months.

### **(3) Award Type**

DAI anticipates awarding multiple grants (hereafter called Agreement) to fund successful applications submitted in response to this APS.

## SECTION III - ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### (1) Types of Entities that May Apply

This APS is issued as a public notice to ensure that all interested and qualified organizations have a fair opportunity to submit applications for funding. Eligible organizations could include, for example, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), associations, and any non-U.S. organizations legally registered in Georgia and compliant to all applicable regulations.

Applications from individual citizens will not be reviewed. Grants to Public International Organizations (PIOs) and U.S. organizations are not allowed on the USAID National Governance Program.

Eligible applicants must not appear on the following exclusionary and security lists:

- The excluded parties list: System of Award Management (SAM) ([www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov))
- Specially Designated Nations (SDN) and Blocked Persons List maintained by the U.S. Treasury for the office of Foreign Assets Control, sometimes referred to as the “OFAC List” ([www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/SDNList/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/SDNList/Pages/default.aspx)) and
- United Nations Security designation list [www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aq\\_sanctions\\_list.shtml](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aq_sanctions_list.shtml)).

**Restrictions:** The Grant Funds shall not be used to finance any of the following:

1. Goods or services which are to be used primarily to meet military requirements or to support police or other law enforcement activities.
2. Surveillance equipment.
3. Equipment, research and/or services related to involuntary sterilization or the performance of abortion as a method of family planning,
4. Gambling equipment, supplies for gambling facilities or any hotels, casinos, or accommodations in which gambling facilities are or are planned to be located,
5. Activities which significantly degrade national parks or similar protected areas or introduce exotic plants or animals into such areas, or
6. Establishment or development of any export processing zone or designated area where the labor, environmental, tax, tariff, and/or safety laws of the country in which such activity takes place would not apply.
7. Pharmaceuticals,
8. Pesticides,
9. Logging equipment,
10. Luxury goods (including alcoholic beverages and jewelry),
11. Establishing or expanding any enterprise that will export raw materials that are likely to be in surplus in world markets at the time such production becomes effective and that are likely to cause substantial injury to U.S. producers,
12. Activities which would result in the loss of forest lands due to livestock rearing, road construction or maintenance, colonization of forest lands or construction of dams or other water control structures,

13. Activities which are likely to have a significant adverse effect on the environment, including any of the following (to the extent such activities are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment):
  - i.) Activities which may lead to degrading the quality or renewability of natural resources,
  - ii.) Activities which may lead to degrading the presence or health of threatened ecosystems or biodiversity.
  - iii.) Activities which may lead to degrading long-term viability of agricultural or forestry production (including through use of pesticides).
  - iv.) Activities which may lead to degrading community and social systems, including potable water supply, land administration, community health and well-being or social harmony.
14. Activities which are likely to involve the loss of jobs in the United States due to the relocation or expansion outside of the United States of an enterprise located in the United States, or
15. Activities which the Grantee is aware are reasonably likely to contribute to the violation of internationally or locally recognized rights of workers,
16. Activities to support the production of agricultural commodities for export from Malawi when such commodities would directly compete with exports of similar United States agricultural commodities to third countries and have a significant impact on United States exporters.

## **(2) Potential New Partners**

DAI strongly encourages applications from potential new partners.

## **(3) Cost Share**

Cost share is not required; applicants are encouraged to contribute resources from their own private or local sources for the implementation of this program where feasible.

## SECTION IV - APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### (1) Application Process

DAI will review proposals using a two-stage process. Applicants must first submit a concept paper directly to DAI before submitting a full application. Concept papers must meet the identified needs of this solicitation. If your proposed project meets the needs of this APS, prepare a five-page concept paper ensuring that the concept meets all APS criteria.

- Do not submit a full proposal unless requested by USAID. Only upon receipt of positive DAI feedback on the concept paper is the applicant requested to put together a full proposal for DAI consideration, using the criteria below.

The concept paper and Full Application must be submitted in accordance with the instructions in SECTIONS IV (2), (3) and (4) below.

### (2) Concept Paper

In the first stage, all applicants are required to submit a short technical concept paper no longer than 5 pages that is specific, complete, and concise. The concept paper should demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this program. The instructions for developing the concept paper should take into account the instructions listed in the next section.

Concept papers will be reviewed in terms of responsiveness to the APS, appropriateness of subject matter, and creativity. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their proposed work will contribute to (objective of program), especially within Georgia.

#### Concept Paper Instructions

- The concept paper will be accepted *only* in the concept paper format given in **Annex A**.
- DAI will contact selected applicants to request a full proposal based on the information provided in the concept paper.

### (3) Full Application

#### **A. General Requirements**

Applicants that have satisfied the requirements will be asked to submit a full technical and cost application. The Full Application package will be provided only to the short-listed applicants.

*If Concept Paper is short-listed, then applicants will be expected to develop a full application.*

### (4) Submission Instructions

All materials must be in English.

**Concept Paper:** The concept paper must be submitted by email to: [GEGovProgGrantsSubmissions@dai.com](mailto:GEGovProgGrantsSubmissions@dai.com) no later than the deadline on the cover page of this APS or subsequently announced deadlines if additional reviews are announced. All correspondence must include the relevant APS number and title.

## SECTION V - CONCEPT PAPER REVIEW INFORMATION

### Evaluation Criteria for Concept Paper

Concept papers will be reviewed in terms of responsiveness to the APS, appropriateness of subject matter, and creativeness. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their proposed work will contribute to the objectives and outcomes of the Program especially within the developing country context.

Concept papers will be evaluated in accordance with the technical evaluation criteria set forth below:

<b>Technical Merit</b>	-Outstanding -Very Good -Good -Marginal -Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Relevance to program objectives, results, and cross cutting priorities</li> <li>● Sustainability of project results and outcomes</li> <li>● Anticipated impact on the beneficiaries</li> </ul>
<b>Budget Feasibility and Cost Effectiveness</b>	-Outstanding -Very Good -Good -Marginal -Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Are costs reasonable, allowable, and allocable in terms of expected results?</li> </ul>
<b>Past Performance &amp; Organizational Capacity</b>	-Outstanding -Very Good -Good -Marginal -Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Past performance in similar projects</li> <li>● Evaluate the organization's structure and determine whether it supports the achievement of its goals.</li> <li>● Evaluate the organization's human resources, including staff skills and expertise to the proposed project</li> </ul>

## SECTION VI - DAI PROJECT CONTACTS

The points of contact for this APS and any questions during the APS process are:

DAI Program Grants Team

[GEGovProgGrantsQuestions@dai.com](mailto:GEGovProgGrantsQuestions@dai.com)

Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation or interpretation of this APS must request it in writing by the date listed on the cover letter to allow a reply to reach all prospective applicants before the submission of their applications. Oral explanations or instructions given before award of a grant will not be binding. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this APS will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment of this APS, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicants.

## **SECTION VII - OTHER INFORMATION**

Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of DAI, nor does it commit DAI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

DAI reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Further, DAI reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this APS.