



Issuance Date: July 31, 2024
Total funding available (all grants): \$15,000
Application period: Until January 1, 2025
Total Anticipated Number of Grants: N/A
Maximum grant amount: up to \$5,000

REF: The USAID Financial Innovation Program
Prime Contract Number: 72011423C00001
Subject: Palladium’s Request for Applications (RFA) Number: 217810-EFP-2024-004

Dear Prospective Applicants,

Palladium is seeking applications from qualified entities, compliant to eligibility requirements described in SECTION II of this RFA, to implement the **Events Funding Program** under the USAID Financial Innovation Program implemented by Palladium under USAID Prime Contract #72011423C00001.

The RFA is comprised of the following main sections:

- I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION
- II. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
- III. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS
- IV. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION
- V. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Successful Applicants will be responsible for ensuring achievement of the program objectives. Please refer to SECTION I of this RFA entitled Funding Opportunity Description for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

Subject to availability of funds, Palladium intends to provide up to \$15,000 in total funding for activities to be implemented for the period between July 31, 2024 to January 1, 2025, with a single award ceiling up to \$5,000. Palladium reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted and to modify or cancel this RFA.

To be eligible for the award, Applicants must provide all required information in their application, including the requirements found in any attachments to this RFA. Applications that are submitted incomplete or are non-responsive will not be considered. Awards will be made to the responsible applicant(s) whose application(s) best meet the requirements of this RFA and the evaluation criteria contained herein. Grants will be distributed on a “first come first served” basis until the total funding available is utilized.

Palladium intends to use a single-stage application process to evaluate and select grantee(s) under this RFA. This selection process requires the submission of a full technical application which will be evaluated in accordance with SECTION IV of this RFA.

Palladium requires that applications be submitted electronically no later than the respective due dates shown above, following the instructions included in SECTION III of this RFA.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of Palladium, nor does it commit Palladium to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, Palladium reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. Applications are submitted at the risk of the Applicant, and all preparation and submission costs are at the Applicant's own expense.

Sincerely,

Palladium Grants Manager

Attachments:

- A. Full Technical Application Template
- B. Full Cost Application Template
- C. Required Representations and Certifications of Offeror (must be reviewed and signed)

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

Program Description and Background

The USAID Financial Innovation Program (hereinafter, “the Program”) is the five-year program, with the aim to increase the flow of diversified investment resources and innovative financial products to Georgia’s private sector to expand businesses, create jobs, and attract additional private investment. The main goals of the Program include:

- Strengthen the financial market’s regulatory environment and infrastructure;
- Deliver innovative financial products and services to the private sector; and
- Build long-term private sector capacity through expanding commercial business advisory services.

The Program aims to mobilize an anticipated USD 325 million in additional financing (i.e. financing that would not have occurred without the Program), through diverse innovative and alternative financial products and services, like equity and quasi-equity instruments, asset-backed financial (ABF) products, etc. The Program focuses primarily on expanding access to finance for startups and SMEs with high potential for employment generation. It also includes an emphasis on non-traditional finance providers.

In order to achieve its goals, the Program identified key constraints on the Georgia’s financial market to be addressed:

1. Lack of risk capital for growth-oriented companies;
2. Limited supply of factoring, leasing, and warehouse receipts; and
3. Insufficient enabling conditions for retail investors, such as the Georgian diaspora.

In order to further the Program’s objectives in supporting Georgia’s private sector, especially startups and SMEs, in raising risk-tolerant financing, the Program team acknowledges the importance of holding various networking and pitching events, and conferences. Those events should help Georgian businesses to engage with potential investors (e.g. Angels, VC funds, private equity funds), as well as market Georgia internationally to potential investors interested in investing in Georgian companies at various stages of development.

1. Scope

In order to address identified needs, the Program designed the Events Funding Program (hereinafter, “the Events Program”) to issue grant funding for entities interested and capable of organizing high-quality events and conferences to support startups and SMEs in connecting with potential investors as well as market Georgia to international investors’ community.

The objectives of the applications for the Events Program should include at minimum the following:

- Market Georgia as a destination for VC and PE funds, as well as international and local investors;
- Engage startups and SMEs and connect them with potential investors;
- Support building long-term partnerships;
- Facilitate information/knowledge/experience sharing, etc.

The Events Program will be primarily focused on events and conferences linked to financial markets, including early stage financing, capital market development, as well as financial innovations and technologies.

The Program intends to issue grant(s) to entities considered to provide the best strategic fit, technical approach, and organizational capacity for the project. Grant funding may be used to cover organizational expenses, given that other matching financing resources are secured by the applicant(s).

Within the framework of the present RFA, the Program invites eligible organizations **to submit a full technical application.**

Full technical applications will be assessed by the Grants Evaluation Committee (GEC) created for this purpose. All applications will be evaluated based on the criteria described in Section IV APPLICATION REVIEW

INFORMATION of this RFA.

Instructions for the submission of the full technical application are described below in Section III APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS. All applicable templates are attached to this RFA.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the Events Program are to:

- Develop the startup ecosystem in Georgia;
- Help to diversify Georgian economy by supporting entrepreneurship and innovation for startups and small businesses that create high-quality jobs;
- Promote commercialization of early stage startups and develop early stage investment tools/culture;
- Support establishment of viable startups and their ability to raise financing;
- Promote capital raising related activities;
- Support promotion of private equity investing;
- Market Georgia to international investors' community;
- Support the creation and introduction of innovative products/services to the Georgian and regional markets.

3. Requirements

Entities wishing to apply for grant funding must submit to the Program a full technical application.

Full Applications must conform to the structure in Attachment A, Technical Application Format, which is described in more detail in SECTION III of this RFA.

4. Schedule and Funding

The Program anticipates awarding **Fixed Amount Award (FAA)** grant(s) as a result of this solicitation process with a single award ceiling up to \$5,000 starting from July 31, 2024¹.

5. Milestones/Deliverables and Payments

Each selected grant recipient will have an individual, specifically tailored, milestone and payment plan, based on their approved full application. Milestone payments will be made by the Program on a periodic basis according to the accomplishment of performance targets as will be set forth in the approved milestones schedule, which will be a part of the grant award. The final milestones schedule will be negotiated between the Program and the grant recipient prior to finalizing the grant award.

Milestone Payments

The payment schedule will be determined individually for each grant recipient based on proposed milestones and payments table provided by the applicant as part of the Full Technical Application of this RFA. Payments will be made no later than 30 calendar days after approval by the Program of each successfully submitted milestone/deliverable and an invoice. The invoices must be presented in local currency.

¹ The Grants Evaluation Committee is eligible to increase the single award ceiling in an exceptional circumstance

6. Project Guidance and Post-Award Communication

During the grant period, the Grantee will report to the Grants Manager for overall guidance related to this grant. The Grantee will also report technical matters to the appointed technical staff and monitoring and data collection activities to the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning/Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (MEL/CLA) Manager. Palladium will provide relevant templates to the selected Grantee(s).

7. Monitoring & Evaluation

The USAID Financial Innovation Program grantees will be responsible for complying with the Program's monitoring and evaluation needs and data requirements and for accurately reporting performance progress and the achievement of indicators as set forth in their respective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plans. The grantees should develop their initial M&E plans based on their proposed grant activities and scope of work. The Program MEL/CLA Manager will coordinate with the grant recipients to finalize their M&E plan, as well as introduce the data collection forms, which grantees will need to complete.

The Program grantees should accurately capture the performance related data and track them through the data collection forms, including training participant sheets, event tracking forms and/or other data collection formats specific to their grant activities. The potential grantee should also cooperate with the MEL/CLA manager and complete the beneficiary feedback survey or provide data/information about the outcomes achieved after the completion of their events.

SECTION II: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for this Events Program, an applicant organization:

- Must comply with the Geographic Code 937²;
- Must be legally incorporated;
- Must not be majority owned or controlled by a government entity and must operate as an independent non-politically affiliated organization.

In addition, the organization:

- Must demonstrate proven expertise in technical areas relevant to the scope of work or grant focus;
- Must not be debarred, suspended, excluded, or otherwise ineligible to receive U.S. Federal funding;
- Must be able to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier number and register in System of Awards Management (SAM);
- Must demonstrate functional management systems, including financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures that safeguard assets, protect against fraud, waste, and abuse.

Grant funds **must not** be used for the following activities:

- Capital expenditures, including construction activities or buying real property;
- Capital loans;
- Support for or lobbying on behalf of a particular political party;
- Religious activities;
- Support of police or military.

² Geographic code 937 covers the United States, the cooperating country/recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, and excluding prohibited sources.

SECTION III: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Palladium will award **Fixed Amount Award (FAA)** grant(s) resulting from this solicitation to the responsible applicant(s) that demonstrate the capability to carry out activities conforming to the project objectives and within the funding and other parameters set by this RFA.

This solicitation does not commit Palladium to make an award. Palladium may at its sole discretion (a) accept or reject any or all applications, at any step, in part or in full, without assigning a reason; and (b) waive informalities or irregularities in applications received.

FULL APPLICATION

Applicants meeting the eligibility criteria discussed in SECTION II of this RFA should submit a full technical application to the USAID Financial Innovation Program Grants Manager *using the template included as Attachment A to this RFA*, and which reflects the following information:

a. Cover Sheet

The applicant provides basic contact information and information regarding the status of the organization. General information includes the following elements:

- i. Legal Name of Organization
- ii. Mailing Address
- iii. Physical Location
- iv. Contact Information
- v. Organization's Legal Representative
- vi. Tax ID number
- vii. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)
- viii. "active" registration status on SAM.gov, if available

b. Instructions for Preparation of the Technical Application (maximum 8 pages total, excluding annexes)

The Technical Application should be submitted in the English language, and attached with the following annexes, using the template included as Attachment A to this RFA:

- i. Cover Letter (Attachment A) including a summary of the application and its total cost, signed by an individual authorized to commit the organization.
- ii. Project Description (Use provided template in Attachment A):

Describe the proposed event/conference, including technical and implementation details. Provide a detailed overview, including the purpose of the event/conference, invitees and expected outcomes. Describe how the event/conference corresponds to the Program's goals and objectives. Describe the use of requested grant funding as well as other sources of financing for the event/conference. Define methods and indicators for measuring results, intended beneficiaries, and plans for activity deliverables. Attach event/conference agenda (if available).

- iii. Project Implementation Plan (Attachment A):

This section may be an activities table with timelines or a Gantt chart.

- iv. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (maximum 2 paragraphs, use provided template):

Describe the monitoring and evaluation methods implemented by the recipient as well as the tools used to measure and evaluate the program activities, targets, and results.

- v. Project Milestone Schedule (use provided template):

Milestones are for a verifiable product, task, deliverable, or goal of the recipient. The milestones will generally have three parts: (1) a description of the product, task, deliverable, or goal to be accomplished; (2) a description of how the recipient will document the completion of the product, task, deliverable, or goal; and (3) the amount that The USAID Financial Innovation Program will pay the recipient for the deliverable. Some milestones may also have dates indicating when the milestone is expected or required to be completed. Milestones must be objectively verifiable regarding completion and quantity and within the recipient's span of management control to successfully complete as designed. An FAA is appropriate when 1) the program scope has measurable goals and objectives, and 2) it has adequate cost and historical or pricing data that is available to establish an FAA with the assurance that the recipient will realize no increment above the actual cost.

vi. Experience and Capacity (use provided template):

The applicant lists previous and ongoing experience implementing similar activities. This is a critical factor in assessing the capacity of the grantee to implement the activity.

c. **Instructions for Preparation of the Cost Application**

As part of the Cost Application and in addition to the Budget and Budget Narrative templates (Attachment B), the applicant shall include the following:

i. Organizational Information and Certifications

The applicant shall submit the following annexes to the cost application:

- Signed "ADS 303mav: Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient" found in Attachment C of this RFA.
- Copy of the organization's chart and bylaws and power of attorney of the authorized signer, where applicable.
- A copy of legal registration certificate.

ii. Budget, Budget Narrative and Details

This section should include a summary of the information provided in the application budget forms and includes the total grant funding request. The applicant must provide a (i) budget, a (ii) budget narrative, and (iii) adequate cost and historical or unit pricing data to establish a reasonable cost and the assurance that the recipient will not realize any profit above actual cost.

NOTE: No indirect costs will be reimbursed under this Events Program, please make sure that all costs are direct.

The applicant shall submit a Budget Narrative in **Microsoft Word format** using the attached budget narrative template which breaks down proposed costs in sufficient detail corresponding to the attached budget template to permit cost analysis. The Budget Narrative must be accompanied with the supporting documentation, as directed in the template.

Budget must be submitted in **Microsoft Excel format** using the attached budget template. The file must be unprotected and there should be no hidden columns/rows/cells. Each cost element must include a basis for estimate or rationale. **Any budget submitted without the accompanying narrative will not be accepted and the application will not be considered.** Please note that applications will be judged based on efficiency of costs vs. proposed performance targets.

NOTE: The budget must be denominated in local currency.

The budget template contains the following budget categories:

a. Salaries (activity staff)

The applicant shall provide the individual's name, position title, the unit (days), the number of units (i.e. the level of effort). Unit salaries shall be stated in days. Benefits, fees, and indirect costs should not be included in the unit salary.

b. Fringe Benefits

This could include social security, health insurance, and other mandatory withholdings for relevant grantee staff.

c. Consultants

The applicant shall provide the unit salary or consultant fee and the total salary or consultant fee. Unit salaries shall be stated in days.

d. In-Country Travel and Transportation

Travel and Transportation includes per diem as well and shall be broken down by traveler, transportation vehicle, number of trips and the corresponding number of days of per diem. Include a basis of estimate for each trip.

e. Other Direct Costs (ODCs)

As part of the detailed budget breakdown, the applicant shall submit details of all other direct costs (ODCs) required for undertaking the award grant. ODCs include costs of direct program implementation, as well as costs for communication, meetings, expendable supplies and materials, report preparation/reproduction and publications. Include a basis of estimate for each item.

f. Applicant Co-Financing

This RFA requires cost share commitment from the applicant. Co-financing or leveraging can be in cash or in kind or combination of both, and may include salaries, fringe benefits, travel and transportation costs, other direct costs (e.g., building rent, utilities, etc.), or commodities, as long as those costs are not sponsored by another US Government funding source.

Submission of the full Application:

Full applications must be submitted electronically via the Palladium Grants Management System **Enquire** by registering at <https://palladium-cp.enquire.cloud/login>. The User Guide for registration and navigating the portal will be posted publicly with this RFA and will be available at the request sent via email to grants217810@thepalladiumgroup.com.

Information about the evaluation of full applications is included in SECTION IV of this RFA.

SECTION IV: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The application must be fully completed in all aspects. Costs associated with preparation of the full application shall be at the expense of the applicant.

This RFA includes a single-step review and selection process, which includes the following elements:

- i. Review and evaluation of full applications received
- ii. Selection and notification of apparently successful applicant(s)

EVALUATION OF FULL APPLICATIONS

Palladium intends to issue a grant to the organization(s) considered to provide the best strategic fit, technical approach, past performance/organizational capacity for the overall project. The criteria below will serve as the basis upon which the application will be evaluated. Selection will also be based on the capabilities of the organizations as detailed in the application.

a. Evaluation Criteria

The technical applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria, which are listed in order of importance, with the most important listed first. **The applications rated at minimum of 70 scores can be considered for further review and financing.** Higher scoring will be considered the higher priority for the USAID Financial Innovation Program. Additional details are included below.

Criteria	Scoring
Project Description/Technical Approach (Proposed activity is described clearly. The degree to which it is linked to the RFA and overall Program objectives, or how the proposed activity will contribute to these objectives. The proposed activity addresses important pain points faced by the Georgia's private sector in access to finance)	0 - 40
Experience and Capacity (Organization has a qualified management team experienced in activities similar to those required by the RFA. Organization has past experience in implementation of similar activities)	0 - 25
Reasonableness and clarity for the estimated cost (Proposed costs will be evaluated for reasonableness, completeness, and overall efficiency in meeting the proposed performance targets. Availability of other financing sources is an advantage)	0 - 20
Relevance (High quality and reputational speakers are invited. Large number of relevant investing public in attendance)	0-10
Gender lens (events/conferences oriented at supporting women-led or women-owned organizations)	5
Maximum Total Score:	100

SECTION V: AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

a. Award Notices

A successful application is subject to the USAID technical concurrence/approval. As the approval is obtained, Palladium will issue the award to the grantee.

b. Award Administration Standards

Grants resulting from this solicitation will be administered in accordance with the approved Project Grants Manual, and the following regulations (as applicable):

- FAR Part 31 – Cost Principles for For-Profit organizations used to negotiate award amounts and terminations per 2 C.F.R. 200.201 (b)(1))
- Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapter 303 Grants & Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations: 303.3.25 Fixed Amount Awards to Non-Governmental Organizations
- A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 303: 303_mak Fixed Amount Award Entity Eligibility Checklist – as adapted by Palladium
- A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 303: 303_mat Fixed Amount Awards to Non-Governmental Organizations - as adapted by Palladium
- ADS 302.3.4.13 Grants Under Contracts (GUCs)
- 2 C.F.R. 200.1 Definition Fixed Amount Awards
- 2 C.F.R. 200.201 Use of grant agreements (including fixed amount awards), cooperative agreements, and contracts (as referenced in ADS 303.3.25.a.)
- 2. C.F.R. 200 Subpart E – Cost Principles for non-profit and educational organizations – used to negotiate award amounts and terminations per 2 C.F.R. 200.201 (b)(1))

c. Branding & Marking Requirements

USAID’s policy is that programs, projects, activities, public communications, or commodities implemented or delivered in cooperation with other U.S. Government agencies or other donors are “co-branded and co-marked” as follows:

- a. Projects funded in whole or in part by, or implemented in whole or in part, through participating U.S. Government Departments or Agencies must be co-branded and marked appropriately, in accordance with the terms of the applicable interagency agreement.
- b. USAID’s Missions and Operating Units should address requirements for branding and marking in the overall project agreement with co-donors. Missions and Operating Units should ensure that the USAID Identity appears on programs, projects, activities, public communications, or commodities with equivalent or greater size and prominence than any other donor’s identity or logo. Missions and Operating Units can customize this requirement to represent the relative contributions of the donor(s) or to achieve programmatic goals.

The detailed Branding Strategy and Marking Guideline will be an annex to each Fixed Amount Award and will be distributed by the Program at the award negotiation.