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The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)  
USAID Mission in Serbia  
Office of Democracy and Economic Growth

### **Request for Information (RFI) - Fund for Media Innovation Activity**

USAID Serbia is in the planning phase for a potential new activity and is seeking comments and information from interested parties.

USAID's goal in Serbia is to advance the country's stability and Euro-Atlantic Integration. USAID sees that accurate and objective information is essential for developing a stable and democratic Serbia. For this reason, USAID has several programs that are focusing on strengthening the media sector in Serbia. However, access to finance remains a constant challenge for small and medium media outlets throughout the country. Therefore, USAID is looking to address this issue through the potential new activity.

#### **Goal**

The goal is to build greater economic sustainability within the Serbian media sector by increasing access to investment capital and/or business development finance.

The activity will work with SMEs in the media sector. This includes, but is not limited to, media outlets, information providers for analytical services that support media outlets, and others that: (1) contribute to the provision of accurate and relevant information; (2) have limited access to business development finance and/or investment capital; and (3) have a high-quality product, sizeable audience /market share or significant potential to grow.

The activity has two planned objectives:

1. Small and medium sized professional media companies are better prepared for investment. Financing sources are not limited to and include equity investors and SME business development loans.

Interested organizations would be free to propose approaches including how the program will provide a package of technical assistance and advisory services in marketing skills, cost reductions, etc.

2. Small and medium sized professional media companies raise more business development capital, attract more equity investment, and/or have better access to

business development loans.

Partners may propose a wide range of tools and services, including but not limited to, transaction advisory services, providing catalytic capital, recoverable grants, etc, so that the activity's partners can access/attract business development capital and/or development finance, increase revenues, increase market share and audience reach, and become more financially sustainable business entities.

One of the aspects of the anticipated program is the establishment of a stand-alone, sustainable media investment fund with the goal to provide business development finance/investment capital to professional media and other participants in media market beyond the life of the activity. USAID foresees its role as a provider of seed capital, first loss guarantee or similar credit/equity enhancement instruments. Therefore, the fund will have to be established with the support of other donors, private capital, or a combination of both. A key component of USAID’s support for the media investment fund will be ethical investment criteria that will be developed in coordination with other investment stakeholders to support development of professional media/information providers, increased public access to accurate and objective information, and/or increase in citizen’s critical thinking skills.

**Other Partners**

This new activity will closely cooperate with USAID’s [Strengthening Media Systems](#) activity, as well as with other related USAID activities.

Given the complex nature of this potential activity, USAID/Serbia is reaching out to interested organizations to get comments/suggestions on the above objectives and approach. In addition, USAID/Serbia seeks feedback on the following specific issues:

- The potential of cost-sharing/cost-matching under Objective 2 with corporate sector/existing investment funds.
- The feasibility and process for establishing a stand-alone, sustainable media investment fund within the planned four-year timeframe.

**Illustrative Timeline**

Activity/quarter	Y20 Q3	Y2 0Q 4	Y2 1Q 1	Y2 1Q 2	Y2 1Q 3	Y21 Q4	Y2 2Q 1	Y2 2Q 2	Y2 2Q 3	Y2 2Q 4	Y23 Q2	Y23 Q3
Objective 1												
Objective 2												
Investment Fund												

**Submission of Information**

Please submit your comments/suggestions in English only via email to [arexhepi@usaid.gov](mailto:arexhepi@usaid.gov) and [bbulatovic@usaid.gov](mailto:bbulatovic@usaid.gov) no later than the date and time indicated on Page 1.

Issuance of this RFI does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government nor does it obligate the U.S. Government to cover any of the costs associated with the preparation or submission of information.

Regards,

Carter Saunders

/s/

Regional Contracting and Agreement Officer