



Issuance Date: November 3, 2022  
Closing Date: November 30, 2022 (4 weeks after issuance date)  
Closing Time: 6:00 pm local (Tbilisi) time

**Subject:** Request for Applications (RFA) Number RFA-036  
“Grant Opportunity for Creative Industries”

**Reference:** Issued Under the Economic Security Program USAID Contract No.  
72011419C00001

The USAID Economic Security Program (the Program) is a five-year, USAID-funded project implemented by DAI to accelerate broad-based growth of sectors that show strong potential to create jobs, to increase incomes, to increase micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) revenues, and to support diversification to more productive economic activities. Please refer to the Program Description for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

Pursuant to 2 CFR 700.13, it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments such as grant awards. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the grant program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (2 CFR 200 Subpart E for all US-based and for non-US based non-profit organizations, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for for-profit organizations), may be paid under the grant.

For non-US organizations, the Standard Provisions for Non-US Nongovernmental Recipients will apply. See Annex I for Standard Provisions.

The Program is pleased to announce a Request for Applications for interested MSMEs working in the Creative Industries sectors to provide them with financial support for enhancing innovation and advancing their competitiveness in Georgia and across the globe. The activity is intended to improve the overall performance of companies/organizations, increase their profitability, and help achieve their sustainable growth in the Creative Industries sector.

Subject to the availability of funds, DAI intends to provide multiple grants under this RFA to one or more entities listed in Section A “Eligibility requirements” up to the 110,000 GEL. This amount is a ceiling for each grant application.

The expected duration of DAI support is from February 1, 2023 to November 30, 2023. DAI, as primary implementer of the Program, reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

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

- Section A – Grant Application Instructions
- Section B – Special Grant Requirements



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Section C – Selection Process  
Section D – Program Description  
Annexes

Applications must be received no later than 6:00pm on November 30, 2022. Applications and modifications must be submitted in pdf (preferred) or other electronic format to the Program's grants staff at [GESP\\_Grants@dai.com](mailto:GESP_Grants@dai.com).

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

Any questions concerning this RFA should be submitted in writing not later than November 10, 2022 to [GESP\\_Grants@dai.com](mailto:GESP_Grants@dai.com).

Response to the questions will be provided no later than November 15, 2022. **Please, note that responses to the question might be shared publicly hence do not submit the questions that may include sensitive information regarding your organization and/or application.**

Information session for the RFA-036 will be held online at 4pm, on November 10, 2022.

Thank you for your interest in the USAID Economic Security Program,

Sincerely,

The USAID Economic Security Program Team

Address: 29, Chavchavadze Ave.,  
7th floor, Tbilisi, 1079, Georgia  
Phone: +995 595 038 946  
e-mail: [GESP\\_Grants@dai.com](mailto:GESP_Grants@dai.com)  
FB: @EconSecProgram  
Office working hours: Monday to Friday from 9:30 to 18:30



**RFA-036**  
**“Grant Opportunity for Creative Industries”**

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## Section A – Grant Application Instructions

### I. Application Procedure

#### A. Completion and submission of applications

##### Eligibility Requirements

###### Types of Entities that are Eligible to Apply

This RFA is issued as a public notice to ensure that all interested and qualified organizations have a fair opportunity to submit applications for funding. Grant support may be extended to Local Entities if they are legally registered and recognized under the laws of Georgia. The Program may not award a grant to a U.S. organization.

###### Types of organizations who can apply for a grant:

- MSMEs<sup>1</sup> (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) which have business operations in Georgia can apply for a grant.

###### Additional Eligibility Requirements

The companies/organizations willing to receive a grant for Creative Industries, must operate in the following value chains under the designated sector:

- **Creative Industries Sector:** Production, Post-Production, and Artisan

The companies receiving grants must employ at least one intern on at least a 50% part-time basis.

Applicants must submit a brief description of the organization's profile, including work experience and achievements (including list of partner/funder organizations) in relevant sector and value chain

##### Application Submission Requirements

- Applications may be submitted only by email to [GESP\\_Grants@dai.com](mailto:GESP_Grants@dai.com)
- Applications must include:
  - Completed Application Form
  - Completed Project Workplan
  - Projected Grant Budget and Budget Notes

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<sup>1</sup> MSMEs are defined by GeoStat as such: Micro-Enterprises are those that satisfy 2 of the 3 following criteria: 1) company assets do not exceed GEL 1 million; 2) annual company turnover does not exceed GEL 2 million; and/or 3) the average number of employees does not exceed 10. Small enterprises are those in which employees do not exceed 50 and average turnover is more than GEL 2 million but less than GEL 12 million. Medium Enterprises are those with an employee range between 51/250 with an average turnover of more than GEL 12 million but less than GEL 60 million.



- CVs and BioData (EBD) forms of all project team members (key personal only)
- Completed Financial Capability Questionnaire and attachments
- Statement of liability (part of application form)

### **Deadlines**

Applications must be received not later than 6:00pm local (Tbilisi) time on November 30, 2022. Applications and modifications thereof shall be submitted in pdf (preferred) or other electronic format to the Program's grants staff at [GESP\\_Grants@dai.com](mailto:GESP_Grants@dai.com).

### **Late Applications**

All applications received by the deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness and programmatic merit according to the specifications outlined in these guidelines and the application format. Section C addresses the evaluation procedures for the applications. Applications which are submitted late or are incomplete run the risk of not being considered in the review process.

## **B. Preparation Instructions – Technical**

**Page Limitation:** Applications should be specific, complete, presented concisely and shall not exceed 20 pages (exclusive of annexes).

**Applications submitted in response to this RFA must include the following information:**

- 1. Project Description:** The applicant must provide a detailed description of the project, specifying its goal, activities and results.
- 2. Monitoring (Results and Benchmarks):** The applicant should define, to the maximum extent possible at the application stage, results and benchmarks for monitoring the performance towards attainment of program objectives.
- 3. Sustainability:** The applicant should describe how the project or its benefits will continue after grant funding ends.
- 4. Personnel.** Each applicant should provide, as part of their application, detailed curriculum vitae that demonstrate the Key Personnel's ability to perform the duties outlined in the statement of work and in accordance with the evaluation factors found herein. DAI expects key personnel to be individuals responsible for developing new products and services. DAI will evaluate the CV to determine the individual's knowledge, skills and abilities in the areas listed herein. More detail is provided in Annex 3 Section IV.
- 5. Organizational Capability:** Each application shall include information that demonstrates the applicant's expertise and ability to meet or exceed the goals of this program.
- 6. Past Performance:** Applicants must present evidence of their past experience in subject field. Past performance should demonstrate how the applicant remains competitive in their respective market. These references should include three (3) clients' names and emails who will serve as references.



**7. Budget:** All proposals must include a completed budget (exclusive of VAT), more details provided below in sub-section C (page 7).

**8. Cost Sharing Contribution:** Details regarding the proposed cost sharing contribution by your organization must be included.

Grantees are required to contribute resources from their own private or local sources. The requirements are as follows:

- Grants provided to MSMEs must not exceed 70 percent of the total new estimated cash investment required for obtaining services offered through the present Request for Applications (introduce and/or upgrade products/services/projects that enhance innovation and advance MSME's competitiveness). Loans may be used to meet matching requirements; however, in-kind contributions will not be considered. Grantee cost share is 30 percent minimum.

Cost share should be cash, for example:

**Cash Contribution:** If the applicant proposes cash as part of their cost-share, the awardee is expected to invest the cash in a manner that can be independently verified (through receipts, etc.). This may also include loans.

**9. Other materials:** Applicants may also want to submit other materials as attachments along with their applications such as letters of reference, newspaper clippings reporting on the organization's activities, brochures or other promotional material. Support letters demonstrating partnerships and cooperation with local government are of particular interest. However, attachments should be limited to 5 pages and they will not be returned to the applicants.

### **C. Preparation Instructions – Financial and Administrative Documentation**

**I. Completed Budget.** All budget lines must be clearly linked to specific project activities. DAI will support organization staff and operating costs that are necessary for reaching project goals, applicants should direct their resources primarily to project implementation, rather than organization operating costs. The format for the budget is included in the RFA: See attached Annex 5 for the budget form. Supporting information/budget narrative shall be provided, as necessary, in sufficient detail to allow a complete analysis of each line item cost.

Taxes:

The prices proposed by the applicant should be net of VAT and customs duties. Under the terms of the 31.07.1992 Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the United States and the Government of Georgia, the awardees, as grantees to the USAID Economic Security Program, are exempt from VAT and customs duties. Accordingly, no such fees, charges, tariffs, duties or levies will be paid under any Grants awarded. The USAID Economic Security Program will facilitate VAT exemption for activities under that grant see Section C for more details.



2. **Completed Financial Capability Questionnaire**, which includes:
  - a. **Audited Financial Reports:** Copy of the applicant’s most recent financial report, which has been audited by a certified public accountant or other auditor satisfactory to DAI. If no recent audit, a “Balance Sheet” and “Income Statement” for the most current and previous fiscal year.
  - b. **Incorporation Papers or Certificate of Registration and Statute**
  - c. **Organizational chart**
3. Documentation that the applicant has the ability to comply with the award conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the applicant. The applicant must demonstrate its ability to segregate funds obtained from the award of a capital grant from other activities of the organization. A separate bank account is required should a grant award be made, depending on the award type. (Documentation may include certification from the applicant’s bank or a summary of previous awards, including type of funding, value, client, etc.)
4. Documentation that the applicant has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics. (Documentation may include references from other donors or clients and a summary of previous awards, including type of funding, value, client, etc.)
5. *Depending on size, type, and complexity of the grant, the following may also specifically be requested at this stage:*
  - *if applicable* – NICRA, or if no NICRA, the profit and loss statements which include detail of the total costs of goods and services sold, by information of the applicant’s customary indirect cost allocation method, together with supporting computations of the basis for the indirect cost allocation method
  - cash flow, description of management structure, and/or oversight procedures, if available
  - copy of applicant’s accounting manual (if exists)
  - copy of applicant’s operations manual (if exists)
  - copy of purchasing policies and description of the applicant’s purchasing system (for large grantees) (if exists)
6. **Unique Entity ID (SAM)** There is a mandatory requirement for the applicant to provide a Unique Entity ID (SAM) to DAI. Without a Unique Entity ID (SAM), DAI cannot deem an applicant to be “responsible” to conduct business with and therefore, DAI will not enter into an agreement with any such organization. The award of a grant resulting from this RFA is contingent upon the winner providing a Unique Entity ID (SAM) to DAI. Organizations who fail to provide a Unique Entity ID (SAM) will not receive an agreement and DAI will select an alternate awardee.

All U.S. and foreign organizations which receive a grant with a value of \$25,000 and above **are required** to obtain a Unique Entity ID (SAM) prior to signing of the agreement. Organizations are exempt from this requirement if the gross income received from all sources in the previous



tax year was under \$300,000. DAI requires that grant applicants sign the self-certification statement if the applicant claims exemption for this reason.

For those required to obtain a Unique Entity ID (SAM), see Annex 8- Instructions for Obtaining a Unique Entity ID (SAM)- DAI'S Vendors, Subcontractors and Grantees.

For those not required to obtain a Unique Entity ID (SAM), see Annex 9- Self Certification for Exemption from Unique Entity ID (SAM) Requirement

## Section B. Special Grant Requirements

The applicant shall bear in mind the following special requirements for any grants awarded in response to this RFA:

**Separate Account:** A separate account must be established to house all funds provided under the grant, as well as all interest income, depending on the grant type.

**Permitted Uses of Program Income:** The Grantee will inform DAI of any program income generated under the grant and agrees to follow USAID's disposition requirements for such program income, which is in accordance with 2 CFR 200.307. Program income earned under this agreement shall be applied and used in the following descending order:

1. Added to funds committed by USAID and the recipient to the project or program, and used to further eligible project or program objectives;
2. Used to finance the non-federal share of the project or program; and
3. Deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

If the terms and conditions of the award do not specify how program income is to be used, then number 2) shall apply automatically. Grantees who are commercial organizations may not apply Option 1) to their program income.

**Use of Funds:** Funds provided under any grant awarded shall be used exclusively to the grant objectives. Specifically, for the RFA-036 "Grant Opportunity for Creative Industries". Diversion of grant funds to other uses will result in cancellation of award and retrieval of funds disbursed to the grant recipient.

**Reporting Procedures:** A description of reporting requirements will be included in the Grant Agreements. The types of reporting required, along with the schedule of reporting, will depend on the grant type and project duration. Reporting forms will be provided to grant recipients. Types of reporting may include the following:

- **Program report** to be submitted during project implementation according to a schedule determined by DAI. This report will include a description of project activities



and progress towards meeting the project goal; problems in project implementation; actions taken to overcome them; and plans on how the next phase of the project will be implemented.

- **Final program report** will describe how the project objectives and goals were reached, results of the project, and problems and solutions during implementation. This information should be presented in a manner suitable for presentation to the public.
- **Financial reports** will be submitted to DAI according to a schedule described in simplified and standard grant agreements. Types of financial reports, as well as the schedule of reporting, will depend on the type of grant, length of project, and amount of grant funding. Financial reports will be required in order to receive grant installments. These reports will describe the amount of grant funds spent during the previous period, total amount spent to date, and amount remaining in each budget line item. In addition, all grant recipients are required to submit a detailed Final Financial Report.

Issuance of the final installment of grant funds is contingent upon DAI's receipt and acceptance of Final Financial and Final Program Reports.

**Project Monitoring:** DAI staff will monitor projects in terms of both programmatic and financial aspects. Grant recipients will be expected to facilitate monitoring by making relevant information available to DAI staff.

**Restrictions:** The Grant Funds provided under the terms of this Agreement shall not be used to finance any of the following:

(a) Ineligible goods and services:

- (1) Military equipment
- (2) Surveillance equipment
- (3) Commodities and services for support of police and other law enforcement activities
- (4) Abortion equipment and services
- (5) Luxury goods and gambling equipment, or
- (6) Weather modification equipment.

(b) Restricted goods:

- (1) Agricultural commodities,
- (2) Motor vehicles,
- (3) Pharmaceuticals and contraceptive items
- (4) Pesticides,
- (5) Fertilizer,
- (6) Used equipment, or
- (7) U.S. government-owned excess property.



(c) Ineligible Activities and Unallowable Costs

- Private ceremonies, parties, celebrations, or "representation" expenses.
- Purchases of restricted goods and Prohibited goods under USAID regulations,
- Purchases of goods or services restricted or prohibited under the prevailing USAID source/nationality regulations per 22 CFR 228 and relevant Standard Provisions; or from countries or suppliers as may be identified by USAID's consolidated list of debarred, suspended, or ineligible subcontractors at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov).
- Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by DAI, including any grantee headquarters expenses that are not directly linked to the implementation of the proposed program.
- Previous obligations and/or bad debts.
- Fines and/or penalties.
- Creation of endowments.
- Other costs unallowable under USAID and/or federal regulations, such as alcoholic beverages.

**Other:** As mentioned, grant will be made available to the eligible organizations in Georgian Lari (GEL) up to the 110,000 GEL each. This amount is a ceiling for grant application. Payment will be made according to a monthly or installment schedule, and in no event will more than 90% of the total agreed budget be disbursed prior to receiving and approving the Final Financial and Final Program Report.

## Section C. Selection Process

After the deadline for submitting applications, a selection committee will convene. Throughout the evaluation process, DAI shall take steps to ensure that members of the selection committee do not have any conflicts of interest or the appearance of such with regard to the organizations whose applicants are under review. An individual shall be considered to have the appearance of a conflict of interest if that person, or that person's spouse, partner, child, close friend or relative works for or is negotiating to work for, or has a financial interest (including being an unpaid member of a Board of Directors) in any organization that submitted an application currently under the panel's review. Members of the selection committee shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from parties to the awards. The Program values diversity and gender equity, and thus will endeavor whenever possible to construct its grant evaluation committee with this in mind.

All applications that meet the application requirements will be reviewed by the selection committee. Verification of the application submission requirements will be conducted at the Economic Security Program's office by the Program's grants staff.

If suitable applications are received, one or more awards will be made after the selection committee meeting within a reasonable amount of time provided that the awardee (s) furnish (es) DAI with all the required documentation as itemized in Section A of this RFA.



The applications will be evaluated according to the evaluation criteria set forth below. To the extent necessary (if award is not made based on initial applications), negotiations may be conducted with each applicant whose application, after discussion and negotiation, has a reasonable chance of being selected for award. **Award will be made to responsible applicants whose applications offer the best value.**

Awards will be made based on the ranking of applications by the selection committee according to the evaluation criteria and scoring system identified below:

<b>Evaluation Criteria for RFA</b>	<b>Points</b>
Demonstration of how the proposed activity contributes to the objectives and outcomes of the Program regarding economic growth and development impact	20
The applicant demonstrates clear understanding of the advantages and benefits the introduction and/or upgrade of products/services/projects will bring to its company	30
Technical approach is feasible and achievable within the activity budget and has potential for sustainability	25
Applicant’s capabilities, resources and past performance and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of the Program	15
Provides opportunities for youth and women, as well as for economically and socially disadvantaged groups	10
Total	100

While not specified in the evaluation criteria scoring, the Program encourages creative and innovative approaches to designing activities and maintaining their sustainability beyond the life of the grant. The application should pass the minimum required threshold of 70 points. Applications scored below this threshold will not be accepted for next step of the process.

The above evaluation criteria are further explained here:

**Demonstration of how the proposed activity contributes to the objectives and outcomes of the Program regarding economic growth and development impact:**

- Will the activity catalyze local or international public or private investments?
- Will the activity create high-value jobs for Georgian citizens (this refers to job creation that offers monthly wages higher, and in many cases significantly higher<sup>2</sup>, than the current average monthly wage in Georgia and/or will move the country’s priority sectors up the value chain)?

<sup>2</sup> “Higher” that the current average monthly wage in Georgia should be more than \$410, which is the average monthly wage in GeoStat. “Significantly Higher” should be at least 50% higher than the average monthly wage. If the wage rate is lower than the average, the applicant must make a strong case as to how this activity will benefit wages in the future OR how it increases the average monthly wage of a region (which may be below that national average).



- Will the activity increase sales and revenues?
- Will the activity provide substantial return on Program investment<sup>3</sup>?

**The applicant demonstrates clear understanding of the advantages and benefits the introduction and/or upgrade of products/services/projects will bring to its company**

- Will the introduction and/or upgrade of requested products/services/projects help the company to produce goods and services in compliance with applicable laws and consistent with international production standards?
- Will the introduction and/or upgrade of requested products/services/projects facilitate improvement of the product/service quality, and/or company's production capacity, and/or efficiency of business operations?
- Will the introduction and/or upgrade of requested products/services/projects help the company to build reputation of its brand and better position its products/services/projects on existing or new markets?
- Will the newly introduced and/or upgraded products/services/projects help the company to generate additional revenues?
- Will the newly introduced and / or upgraded products/services/projects facilitate to increase the export potential and access to EU or US markets, etc.?

**Technical approach is feasible and achievable within the activity budget and has potential for sustainability**

- Does the technical approach provide comprehensive description of reasonable and consistent activities leading to successful accomplishment of the RFA objectives?
- Does the technical approach entail mechanisms that ensure the project sustainability?
- Is the timeframe clear and realistic for achieving the intended objectives?
- Does the overall budget seem reasonable and realistic to implement the activity?
- Do the budget line items commensurate with the existing market prices for the similar services/goods?

**Applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of the Program.**

- Does the applicant organization have adequate work experience and achievements, including the implementation of different donor-funded programs) in the targeted sector/value chain?
- Does the applicant demonstrate sustained institutional and financial capacities?
- Does the proposal include an appropriate number of staff with adequate competencies in compliance with the program requirements?

**Provides opportunities for youth and women, as well as for economically and socially disadvantaged groups**

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<sup>3</sup> The term "substantial" means at a minimum of 2 times the Program investment.



- Does the applicant provide equal opportunities for youth (female and male), as well as for economically and socially disadvantaged individuals?
- Is the composition of the technical team diverse in terms of gender, age, etc.?

**DAI and USAID reserve the right to fund any or none of the applications received**

### **Signing of Grant Agreements**

Upon USAID approval of the grant, a Grant Agreement will be prepared. After DAI and the successful applicant have signed the Grant Agreement, DAI will provide training on financial management and reporting on grant funds. All reporting and contractual obligations will be explained to the grant recipients. Before receiving the first grant installment, depending on the award type, some grant recipients must open a separate bank account, as this is the only means by which grant funds will be transferred from DAI to the grant recipient.

## **Section D. Program Description**

The USAID Economic Security Program is pleased to announce a Request for Applications for interested MSMEs working in the Creative Industries sectors to provide them with financial support for enhancing innovation and advancing their competitiveness in Georgia and across the globe. The activity is intended to improve the overall performance of companies/organizations, increase their profitability, and help achieve their sustainable growth in the Creative Industries sector.

### **I. Project Background:**

The USAID Economic Security Program (the Program) is a five-year, USAID-funded project implemented by DAI to accelerate broad-based growth of sectors that show strong potential to create jobs, to increase incomes, to increase MSME revenues, and to support diversification to more productive economic activities in the identified sectors and value chains such as tourism, light manufacturing, shared intellectual services, solid waste management and Creative Industries. Within these sectors, the program focuses on the following value chains: gastronomic, adventure and culture tourism; business process outsourcing (BPO), ICT; packaging and furniture manufacturing, toys, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), construction materials; and production media, post-production, and high-end artisan products. The Program is committed to diversity in its policies, initiatives, and relationships with partners and stakeholders, as well as in its efforts to build, maintain, and promote a culture of equity and inclusion.



The Program will lay the foundation for sustained growth through investment in these sectors that have the potential to produce employment that positively impacts the incomes and quality of life of citizens.

The Program is comprised of four complementary components:

1. Strengthen cooperation in target sectors
2. Support MSMEs to improve productivity, sales, quality and develop new products and services
3. Support industry-led workforce development
4. Build public-private partnerships

The Program accelerates the economic transformation of the country by attracting the capital and technologies needed for growth. It harnesses Georgia's growing market dynamism and catalyze multi-stakeholder problem-solving and co-investment. By putting the private sector in the lead, the Program ensures sustainability, local ownership, and self-reliance.

The Program is committed to diversity in its policies, initiatives, and relationships with partners and stakeholders, as well as in its efforts to build, maintain, and promote a culture of equity and inclusion.

## **II. Funding Opportunity Background and Description**

The Creative Industries refer to a range of economic activities which are concerned with the generation or exploitation of knowledge and information. The Creative Industries have been seen to become increasingly important to economic well-being, advocates suggesting that "human creativity is the ultimate economic resource", and that "the industries of the twenty-first century will depend increasingly on the generation of knowledge through creativity and innovation". Georgia has a strong value proposition in the Creative Industries sector, which is proven by its growing number of production and post-production companies, as well as its emerging pool of skilled labor.

Creative products and services can pop up anywhere in the world regardless of how developed the region or country is. Creativity can also be an integral part of the value chains of other products and services to generate enormous added value and competitive advantage.

Over the three years of the duration of the Program, we designed and/or supported numerous activities to enhance the Creative Industries eco-system, including those in the production and post-production value chains, the most notable of which was the Program's involvement in the filming of the Fast and Furious 9 (FF9) in Georgia. The activity was a success and laid the foundation for the Program's work in the sector and in particular the production value chain. While production of film, television, and animated content remains a key focus, global trends show significant opportunities in the post-production value chain, especially for small countries such as Georgia that does not have the scale or workforce mass to compete for many major productions. The importance of this value chain was highlighted in the Program's Value Chain Assessment for Creative Industries, and it was instrumental in urging the Government of Georgia to add post-production to the recalibrated cash rebate incentive.



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The trajectory for post-production has not been as steep due to lack of equipment, chronic labor shortages, and lack of differentiated products. It is only since the beginning of the pandemic that the post-production value chain has emerged as a solid opportunity in Creative Industries because it forced global companies to look for alternatives to live filming such as VFX and animation, all of which require significant post-production services.

When harnessed well, the creative industry can be instrumental to leapfrog the economies of many developing countries into the much-glorified knowledge economy. It can be a source of economic transformation, job creation, and sustainable human development among many other benefits. There is a need to invest in the necessary infrastructure, to intentionally support and grow the industry. Further, emphasis is put on the enforcement of copyright and intellectual property (IP) in general. The importance of the effective protection of IP rights cannot be overemphasized as this can assist in attracting both domestic and foreign investment. By nature, the creative economy is populated by solo entrepreneurs and micro enterprises making it easy to enter by underrepresented groups like women and youth.

The Program has already helped numerous entities to powerfully outline Georgia's value proposition in Creative Industries for international producers, directors, and post-production companies and the results have been outstanding. To continue the momentum and build up on the interest towards the industry, the USAID Economic Security Program is issuing a public **Request for Applications (RFA)** to ensure that all interested and qualified organizations have a fair opportunity to submit applications for funding.

The objective of the Program RFA is to invite applications from interested companies/organizations, seeking co-funding opportunities to introduce and/or upgrade products/services/projects that enhance innovation and advance MSME's overall competitiveness. Within the framework of the given RFA, the interested companies/organizations operating in the Creative Industries can apply for a Program grant. We support the active engagement of women and youth in the industry, therefore encourage youth, women-led or managed companies/organizations to apply for the grant. We are deliberately not giving illustrative examples of activities that may be funded through this RFA as we are looking for a broad range of innovative approaches that help improve the overall performance of companies/organizations, increase their profitability and/or employment, and help achieve their sustainable growth in the Creative Industries sector.

An applicant can request the Program's co-funding to engage an international service provider for introduction and/or upgrade of products/services/projects that enhance innovation and advance MSME's competitiveness only **IF such service is not available in Georgia.**



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**Annex 1: Mandatory Standard Provisions**

**Annex 2: Certifications, Assurances, Other Statements of the Recipient**

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**Annex 10: Application Checklist**

All annexes are attached as separate files to the RFA packages.