ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT (APS)

APS No. KeG -APS-01-2024

Issuance Date:	**3 June 2024**
Closing date	**30 November 2024**
Concept Paper submission deadline:	**every 15th day of the month of July, August, September, October, and November.**
Application:	**Interested applicants can submit their concept papers at grants@eGovKosovo.org,**

Dear Applicant:

USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG, implemented by Chemonics International, is seeking **concept papers** primarily from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other eligible organizations legally registered in Kosovo (see Section III) on important topics of digital services, including improved access and promotion of digital services for women, youth, minorities, underserved populations, individuals with disabilities and other venerable groups. The grants will be awarded and implemented in accordance with USAID and US Government regulations governing grants under contracts and Chemonics internal grant management policies.

USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG and Chemonics employees may not ask for, and applicants are prohibited from offering, any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, thing of value, or compensation to obtain or reward improper favorable treatment regarding this solicitation. Any improper request from a project employee should be reported to the chief of party or BusinessConduct@chemonics.com.

The following Annex is included with this APS:

- **Annex A** - *Concept Paper form with simple budget table*

NOTE: If the concept paper is selected for further consideration, then the successful applicant will be required to complete the annexes listed below. The annexes below are not attached to this APS.

- ***Annex B -*** *Grant Application Form*
- ***Annex B.1*** - *Implementation Timeline*
- ***Annex C*** - *Grant Application Budget Form*
- ***Annex D*** - *Applicant Self-Assessment Form*
- ***Annex E*** - *Required Certifications*

SECTION I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

IA.   OBJECTIVE

USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG is awarding grants to CSOs and other eligible organizations legally registered in Kosovo (See section III) to foster a collaborative ecosystem where CSOs can contribute significantly to digital transformation efforts, ensuring that technological advancements in governance are accessible, equitable and responsive to the needs of all citizens, thereby promoting an inclusive digital environment. CSOs are encouraged to engage in research for creative incentives to contribute to e-Governance and spreadhead activities on important topics of digital services. Thus, CSOs are expected to become an active promoter of digital services on all levels.

The objective of USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG is to develop the role of CSOs as watchdogs, as advocates, as mentors to institutions or as facilitators between e-service providers and their users. Through the issued APS, USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG invites vocal and proactive CSOs, known for their high- quality input and ability to mobilize others to contribute with their expertise and insight, ensuring that digital transformation is inclusive, effective, and aligned with the public interest.

IB.   BACKGROUND

USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG is a five-year project financed by USAID and implemented by Chemonics International. The goal of the project is to improve the Government of Kosovo's digital service delivery and management of digital government systems by clarifying institutional roles and processes, strengthening institutional capacity to deliver services, and engaging civil society and the private sector. USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG will accelerate transformation into an agile digital government, which ensures that Kosovans receive high quality, efficient and accessible government services. USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG focuses on the following three program objectives:

1. Institutional roles and governance processes are clear, actionable, and implemented.
2. Key institutions have the technical expertise and program management skills to develop, manage, and deliver digital government platforms and services.
3. External feedback and oversight mechanisms on digital priorities and service delivery are established and used.

IC.   PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Scope of Work

The objective is to foster a collaborative ecosystem where CSOs can contribute significantly to digital transformation efforts, ensuring that technological advancements in governance are accessible, equitable and responsive to the needs of all citizens, thereby promoting an inclusive digital environment. CSOs are encouraged to engage in research for creative incentives to contribute to e-Governance and spreadhead activities on important topics of

digital services. Thus, CSOs are expected to become an active promoter of digital services on all levels.

USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG aims to empower CSOs to influence government priorities in digitalization and ensure that digital platforms, including e-Kosova, are interactive. This initiative is structured around five key focus areas:

1. <u>Watchdog and Advocacy</u>: Monitoring over the implementation of Kosovo Digital Agenda and e-Government Strategy.
2. <u>Privacy Oversight and Awareness</u>: Advocacy for compliance with the data protection law and regulations across institutions and digital platforms.
3. <u>Representation and Promotion</u>: Facilitate interaction between e-service providers and their users, informing the government on digital priorities.
4. <u>Support and Mentor Institutions/CSOs</u>: Support government institutions and/or CSOs to strengthen their capabilities to deliver citizen-centered e-services and effectively contribute to the implementation of the e-Government Strategy.
5. <u>Empowering Diverse Communities and Youth</u>: Advocacy for the representation and integration of diverse groups in digital service efforts, specifically tailored to meet the needs of minority groups, women, diaspora, and individuals with disabilities. Additionally, spreadhead initiatives for increasing the engagement of women and youth-owned businesses to contribute to digital governance.

Purpose of the Funding

Through this funding opportunity, USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG invites eligible applicants to propose concrete solutions or ideas that aim to sustainably enhance digital governance, as highlighted in five focus areas.

USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG views this funding initiative as more than a grant distribution mechanism; it is an opportunity to establish partnerships between USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG and capable organizations to elevate digital governance. In other words, the program is designed to attract partners who can identify challenges and design solutions that effectively engage CSOs to contribute with their expertise and insight, ensuring that digital transformation is inclusive, effective, and aligned with the public interest.

Systematic Approach

USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG provides funding and supports initiatives where a bidder or applicant demonstrates that its proposed activities will have a broader systemic impact in the respective focus area. The applications are expected to have a systematic impact, by which the proposed activities for funding show benefits that reach far beyond the

level of one entity or partner. Successful proposals by applicants will make a clear and credible argument regarding the nature of the systemic impact the bidder expects to result from the partnership with USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG.

To determine systemic interventions, some of the helpful questions to evaluate an intervention idea would be as follows (list not exhaustive):

- Will the intervention benefit a large number of actors/entities/companies/ participants, or only one actor/entity/company?
- Will the intervention influence change in the behaviors of a large number of actors?
- Will other actors adopt new behaviors?
- Will the intervention widespread a new norm, understanding or compliance?
- Will the intervention address the needs of underrepresented groups, ensuring that digital services are accessible and equitable for all?
- Does the proposal adopt a collaborative approach to digital governance?
- Will the proposed intervention or solution be sustainable in the long term?

Problem Statement

The limited engagement of CSOs underutilizes the opportunity to tap into the digital transformation potential for improvements in service delivery, governance and transparency. A significant challenge lies in the limited understanding and engagement of CSOs in e-Governance, which is crucial for their meaningful contribution to the digital agenda. This gap highlights a broader issue of capacity within CSOs, which, if unaddressed, could continue to hinder their ability to influence and shape digital transformation initiatives effectively.

Compounding this issue is the absence of external CSO oversight in the e-government strategy and Kosovo Digital Agenda implementation, leaving a void in accountability and quality assurance in digital governance. Additionally, with rising concerns over data privacy, the insufficient monitoring and promotion of data protection laws signals a pressing need for CSOs to ensure institutional compliance.

Furthermore, CSOs are not engaged in providing expertise, support and mentoring to government institutions. This deficiency hinders the possibility of government institutions to fully exploit the potential of CSOs to contribute to the improvement of digital service delivery, which is crucial for executing public sector digital transformations.

The fragmented landscape of CSO engagement in digital governance reveals the necessity for a cohesive network of CSOs to pursue a citizen-centered digital transformation agenda and

ensure responsive feedback mechanisms. Additionally, this strategy should include an enhanced representation of private sector interests within digital governance discussions. Although CSOs are crucial stakeholders, there is a significant gap in leveraging the private sector's contributions and integrating their needs into digital governance. This disparity risks producing digital services and policies that are misaligned with sectoral demands and economic implications.

E-service enabling platforms such e-Kosova face challenges which arise from the insufficient promotion and advocacy initiatives for digital services among different demographics such as women, minority groups, diaspora, and individuals with disabilities, leading to their underrepresentation. This lack of targeted outreach and engagement strategies limits their participation and the reflection of their specific needs in policymaking and e-service design. Addressing this gap is vital for empowering these demographic groups, ensuring equitable access to digital government services, and creating a digital governance framework that is truly representative and responsive to the entire population's needs.

Furthermore, there is a noticeable shortfall in the engagement and inclusion of women and youth-owned businesses in digital government. Despite their potential to drive innovation and introduce original perspectives, these vital contributors are significantly underrepresented in the digital government ecosystem. This underutilization not only hinders the dynamism and inclusivity of the digital governance environment but also overlooks the unique insights and entrepreneurial spirit that the younger generation and their businesses could offer.

Key Desirable Outcomes

Applications submitted under this solicitation are required to demonstrate how their funding requests and proposed activities contribute to at least one of the outcome indicators below. While applications are evaluated from multiple angles, those that clearly demonstrate greater potential for impact in one or preferably more outcome indicators will (all else equal) have a greater chance of receiving funding.

- Improved quality and accountability in the implementation of the Kosovo Digital Agenda and e-Government Strategy.
- Increased institutional compliance with data protection law and regulations.
- Increased number of collaborative projects between CSOs, government institutions and private sector entities.
- Increased citizen engagement and effective feedback mechanisms within e-Kosova.
- Enhanced governmental capabilities to develop, manage and effectively deliver digital services.

- Increased number of innovative digital solutions, utilizing incentives to foster creativity and effectiveness in addressing digital governance challenges.
- Increased digital inclusivity for women, diaspora, marginalized groups, and individuals with disabilities.

Priority Areas for Funding

Through this funding opportunity, USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG invites impactful and innovative proposals that significantly enhance e-governance within USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG focus areas. Applications should aim to generate systematic change and clearly demonstrate their contribution to the project's outcome indicators, as listed above.

However, USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG will attach a reasonable degree of priority in funding submitted proposals that advance the implementation of the project's Year 1 Work Plan (Y1WP). The key Y1WP priorities are listed below, organized by focus areas of overseeing digital strategy implementation, ensuring compliance with data protection laws, facilitating interactions between e-service providers and users, mentoring government institutions and promoting inclusive digital service utilization. Applications that include plausible links with minorities and diaspora engagement will be considered favorably.

1. Watchdog and Advocacy

Applications under this thematic area would focus on oversight and reporting mechanisms over the implementation of digital government strategies. Main priorities include but are not limited to:
- Facilitate oversight mechanisms over the implementation of Kosovo Digital Agenda and e-Government Strategy.
- Other activities to monitor and oversee digital government (i.e. quality and responsiveness of priority e-government services; impact of policies of e-government regulations on constituents and society; analysis of the costs versus the benefits of these policies etc.)

2. Privacy Oversight and Awareness

Applications under this thematic area would focus on increasing institutional compliance with the data protection law and raise awareness regarding privacy standards across digital platforms. Main priorities include but are not limited to:
- Monitor and advocate for the adherence of institutions and their digital services to the law for personal data protection, ensuring compliance across digital platforms.
- Develop and implement awareness initiatives (i.e. awareness campaigns, online data privacy awareness training modules etc.)

3. Representation and Promotion

Applications under this thematic area would focus on facilitating better communication between e-service providers and users, along with increasing citizen awareness of digital platforms. Main priorities include but are not limited to:

- Facilitate interaction between e-service providers and their users, by providing feedback to the government on access to and quality of service provision.
- Promotion to increase citizen awareness and usage of digital platforms.

4. Support and Mentors to Institutions and/or CSOs

Applications under this thematic area would focus on supporting government institutions and/or CSOs to strengthen their capabilities to effectively manage and contribute to the implementation of the e-Government Strategy. Main priorities include but are not limited to:

- Spreadhead initiatives aimed at streamlining processes and increasing efficiency in the management of digital projects and services.
- Facilitate new modalities and approaches on supporting the government and its bodies in implementing the e-Government Strategy and Kosovo Digital Agenda, especially in e-services.
- Engage with the government and other stakeholders to collaboratively shape digital transformation efforts and treat other important topics of digital governance (i.e. priority digital services; e-procurement; datasets; interactivity, futureproofing digital services, mechanisms of feedback etc.)
- Provide capacity building programs to increase CSO capacities to effectively oversee and contribute to the implementation of e-Government Strategy Kosovo.

5. Empowering diverse communities and youth
5.1 Women and Youth

Applications under this thematic area would focus on integrating and empowering women and youth within the digital governance landscape of Kosovo. Main priorities include but are not limited to:

- Facilitate educational initiatives focused on increasing digital skills and knowledge among women, enabling them to effectively utilize and benefit from digital services.
- Facilitate activities that drive the engagement of women and youth-owned businesses to take an active role as contributors to digital initiatives.

5.2 Diaspora

Applications under this thematic area would focus on mobilizing diaspora's potential for contributing with their expertise and resources. Main priorities include but are not limited to:

- Establish engagement mechanisms to leverage the expertise of the diaspora in

relevant subjects and ensure their needs are represented in the digital services domain.

- Encourage collaborative initiatives with the diaspora private sector to support the development of e-governance and digital service delivery.

5.3 Minorities

Applications under this thematic area would focus on ensuring that minority groups in Kosovo are fully integrated and utilize digital services, promoting equitable access and representation. Main priorities include but are not limited to:

- Facilitate community outreach programs to raise awareness about digital services and coordinate capacity building programs for minorities to increase their familiarity and usage of digital services.
- Facilitate the representation of minority interests in digital policy-making processes, ensuring their needs and perspectives are considered in the development of digital services.

6. Other Areas for Funding

As noted, USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG shall also be open to considering and evaluating _other proposals_ that fall outside of the main priority areas listed above. USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG will provide an opportunity for potential applicants, partners, and other stakeholders to submit fundable ideas that are innovative and impactful, and in line with the overall objective of the project to improve the participation and contribution of CSOs in e-governance. Therefore, USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG will be open to reviewing and funding (on a case-by-case basis) innovative, sustainable, and impactful proposals that may fall outside of the project's focus sectors and subsector.

Through such concerted efforts, the initiative aspires to establish a solid foundation that actively promotes inclusivity and accessibility, striving to become a model of digital innovation and excellence.

USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG recognizes that some grantees may need technical assistance to more effectively carry out the activity. Consequently, applicants are encouraged to specify their needs for technical assistance and/or training in their application.

ID.   AUTHORITY/GOVERNING REGULATIONS

USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG grant awards are made under the authority of the U.S. Foreign Affairs Act and USAID's Automated Directive System (ADS) 302.3.5.6, "Grants Under Contracts." Awards will adhere to guidance provided under ADS Chapter 303, "Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations" and will be within the terms of the USAID Standard Provisions as linked in the annexes, as well as the USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG grants procedures.

ADS 303 references two additional regulatory documents issued by the U.S. Government's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the U.S. Agency for International Development:
- 2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, Subpart E (U.S. applicants are subject to 2 CFR 200 in its entirety)

Full text of 2 CFR 200 can be found at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl. *Kosovo e-Governance Activity is* required to ensure that all organizations receiving USAID grant funds comply with the guidance found in these circulars, as applicable to the respective terms and conditions of their grant awards.

Under the USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG grant program, USAID retains the right at all times to terminate, in whole or in part, USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG grant-making authorities.

SECTION II. AWARD INFORMATION

USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG anticipate*s* awarding approximately **80,000€ for this APS** with a range from between **5,000€ - 50,000€,** but the final amount will depend on grant activities and final negotiations and may be lower or higher than that range*.* The duration of each grant under this solicitation is expected to be no more than *one year***.** The estimated start date of grants awarded under this solicitation is **July/August 2024 for the first round,** which will continue until the end of this APS on **November 30, 2024.**

Preference will be given to Kosovo organizations with previous experience implementing projects in the related activity area and showing tangible results and impact. Organizations must be able to show a recent history of implementing a minimum of one grant equal to a value of at least 75% of the amount they request from this APS. The type of grant (standard, simplified or fixed amount) will be determined during the negotiation process.

SECTION III. ELIGIBILITY

IIIA.   ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS

- Applicants must be a registered in *Kosovo* as: *Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), (not-for -profit, and for-profit), Media Outlets, Private Enterprises, Professional Associations, Foundations and Associations* formally constituted, recognized by and in good standing with appropriate *Kosovo* authorities, and compliant with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations.

- Applicants may submit multiple concept papers per prime organization under this APS but will be awarded only for one.

- Applicants must be able to demonstrate successful past performance in implementation of integrated development programs related to USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG priority areas.

- Applicants must have established outreach capabilities with linkages to the beneficiary group(s) identified in the program description. This should be reflected by the incorporation of the beneficiary perspective in the application.

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to share the costs of implementation of the proposed activities. The leverage/cost contribution may be financed from recipient resources or from an approved third-party contribution. All contributions must be clearly identified, and all assigned costs must be reasonable and in accordance with prevailing open market conditions. Third-party contributions are acceptable and may be considered part of the recipient contribution in part or in whole. The nature and amount of this contribution will be clearly defined in the Grant Application and in the Grant Agreement.

Successful applicants from Concept paper stage must:

- Applicants must display sound management in the form of financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures and present a system of internal controls that safeguard assets; protect against fraud, waste, and abuse; and support the achievement of program goals and objectives. USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG will assess this capability prior to awarding a grant.

- Applicants must sign certain required certifications prior to receiving a grant. The certifications are attached to this solicitation (Annex E) and USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG will review them with applicants. The certificates will be provided to the possible grantees during the negotiation phase.

- For any grant award(s) resulting from this solicitation that is other than in-kind, equivalent to $25,000 USD (approx. 23,000€) or more, and has no anticipated

subawards, grantees will be required to provide a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) at the time of award. If the applicant already has a UEI number, it should be included in their application. Otherwise, applicants will be expected to get a UEI number before an award is made. USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG will assist successful applicants with this process. More information on UEIs can be found **here.**

- USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG will work with the successful grantee to draft a marking and branding plan which will be annexed to the grant agreement.

- Faith-based and community groups will receive equal opportunity for funding in accordance with the mandated guidelines laid out in ADS 303.3.28 except for faith-based organizations whose objectives are for discriminatory and religious purposes, and whose main objective of the grant is of a religious nature.

USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG encourages applications from new organizations who meet the above eligibility criteria.

IIIB.   INELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS

- Any entity that has been found to have misused USAID funds in the past (unless specifically approved by the CO).
- Political parties, groupings, or institutions or their subsidiaries and affiliates.
- Organizations that advocate or promote anti-democratic policies or illegal activities.
- Faith-based organizations whose objectives are for discriminatory and religious purposes, and whose main objective for the grant is of a religious nature.
- Any entity included in any supplementary information concerning prohibited individuals or entities that may be provided by USAID.
- Any entity whose name appears in the System for Award Management (SAM) or Visual Compliance (VC) with an active exclusion.
- An organization that refuses to sign all required certifications and assurances.

SECTION IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

IVA. INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

Applicants must propose strategies for the implementation of the program description described above, introducing innovations that are appropriate to their organizational strengths.

IVB. GRANT APPLICATION

This is a two-tiered application and evaluation process.
1. Concept paper -First stage
2. Full application – Second stage.

1. The first stage is for the applicant to submit a **concept paper**. Concept paper forms with simple budget table (Annex A) will be evaluated (on a rolling basis) against the merit review criteria listed in Section V below. If the applicant successfully meets or exceeds the merit review criteria, they will be invited to submit a full application. During this stage, USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG may utilize co-creation with applicants, which involves working together with prospective and apparently successful applicants to steer applications toward greater impact and alignment with the objectives of USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG. Co-creation is an allowed practice within USAID projects with the aim of improving the quality of interventions based on a proactive collaboration between the funder and potential implementers.

Applicants that have presented a viable **concept paper** will be asked to submit a full technical and cost application. During this stage, applicants may be invited to work with USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG team to refine and develop the full project proposals. This collaborative phase is designed to ensure that projects are feasible, impactful, and aligned with the strategic objectives of the USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG.

The co-creation phase will be arranged in the structural format set forth below:

(A) Initiation and Planning
- Objective Alignment: Establishment of clear, mutual objectives for USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG, ensuring both parties agree on the desired outcomes and impact.
- Scope Definition: Definition of the scope of activities, including what will and will not be covered in the collaboration.
- Roles and Responsibilities: Definition of roles and responsibilities in the co-creation process.

(B) Co-creation Workshop
- Feasibility Analysis: Evaluation of the feasibility of proposed activities, considering resources, timelines, and potential impact.
- Prioritization: Prioritization of activities based on their alignment with USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG project goals, feasibility, and potential for impact.

(C) Development of Activities

Activity Design: Development of detailed plans including objectives, methods, timelines, and required resources, for each selected activity.

- Integration: Ensuring activities are integrated into an overall project plan, with clear connections to the project's objectives and outcomes.
- Iterative Review: Engagement in iterative reviews of the activity plans, incorporating feedback from USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG team to refine the activities.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis according to the schedule in section IVE below.

Instructions and a template to be utilized when developing the **concept paper** with a simple budget table are provided in Annex A.

The **concept paper** must be signed by an authorized agent of the Applicant.

2. Only those applicants who meet or exceed the merit review criteria at the concept paper stage will be invited to submit a full grant application. Templates with instructions and required certification when developing full application will be delivered only to those who pass the first stage. Applicants shall present their technical application and budget in the formats provided and shall follow the instructions and guidelines listed in these annexes.

All grant activity costs must be within the normal operating practices of the Applicant and in accordance with its written policies and procedures. For applicants without an audited indirect cost rate, the budget may include direct costs that will be incurred by the Applicant to provide identifiable administrative and management costs that can be directly attributable to supporting the grant objective.

IVC.   PRE-AWARD RISK ASSESSMENT

All organizations selected for the award are subject to a pre-award risk assessment conducted by USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG, to ascertain whether the organization has the minimum management capabilities required to handle US government funds. The applicant self- assessment is the first step in the pre-award risk assessment process. The Applicant Self- Assessment Form is contained in Annex D.

IVD.   INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG grant funds may not be utilized for the following:

- Private ceremonies, parties, celebrations, or "representation" expenses.
- Purchases of restricted goods, such as certain agricultural commodities, motor vehicles (including motorcycles), pharmaceuticals and contraceptive items, pesticides, used equipment, U.S. government excess property and fertilizers without the previous approval by the USAID CO. If procurement of these restricted goods is

necessary, Chemonics may decide to procure items directly and provide them in-kind to the grantee after receiving approval from the CO.

- Prohibited goods under USAID regulations, including but not limited to military and surveillance equipment, police or law enforcement equipment, abortion equipment and services, weather modification equipment, luxury goods, and gambling equipment.
- Covered telecommunication and video surveillance equipment or services – Per the standard provision entitled "Prohibition on Certain Telecommunication and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment", grant funds including direct and indirect costs, cost share and program income may not be used for covered telecommunications equipment and services ("CTES"). This means that U.S. government grants funds, including direct and indirect costs, cost share and program income, cannot be used to: (1) procure or obtain; (2) extend or renew a contract to procure or obtain; or (3) enter into a contract (or extend or renew a contract) to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems that use CTES as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as critical technology as part of any system. This prohibition covers certain telecommunications equipment and services, including, but not limited to, phones, internet, video surveillance, and cloud servers, produced or provided by Huawei Technologies Company, ZTE Corporation, Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, or Dahua Technology Company (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) unless the project has determined that there is no available alternate eligible source for the CTES. For fixed amount awards, this restriction is only applicable if any of the milestones are for telecommunication or video surveillance services or equipment.
- 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. Projects should reference Chemonics' Procurement Handbook for a list of prohibited sources.
- Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by Chemonics, 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.
- Indirect costs such as but not limited to overhead or indirect fringe (unless the applicant has documented proof of such rates through audits or a USAID-issued NICRA, or unless the de minimis rate is used). Note that if the grantee does not have a NICRA or use the de minimis rate, the indirect rate must be approved by an authorized negotiator in the Chemonics-Washington office. Indirect costs are never allowed under simplified grants.
- Construction is not allowed to be funded under grants per ADS 303.3.30 and the mandatory help document incorporated into ADS 303. In general, costs not included in the approved budget may not be allowed unless approved in writing by Chemonics.

IVE.   SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Concept papers shall be submitted in English and may not be more than 6 pages.

Concept papers (including the simple budget table) should be submitted in electronic to: **grants@egovkosovo.org**, and should reference **APS No. KeG-APS-01-2024.**

Concept Paper submission deadline:	
Round one deadline:	15 July 2024
Round two deadline:	15 August 2024
Round three deadline:	15 September 2024
Round four deadline:	15 October 2024
Round five deadline	15 November 2024

Late or unresponsive applications will only be considered at the discretion of USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG. Applicants with approved concept papers will be notified and will be invited to submit:

- Grant Application Form in Annex B
- Implementation Timeline in Annex B1
- Grant Application Budget Form in Annex C
- Applicant Self-Assessment Form in Annex D
- Signed and dated Required Certifications included in Annex E
- A copy of the Applicant's valid legal registration,
- A copy of their latest audited financial statements.

Please submit all questions concerning this solicitation via email to grants@egovkosovo.org. USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG will assist applicants in understanding the application process and can provide coaching in application development at the request of applicants.

SECTION V. APPLICATION MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA

As described above, applications will be evaluated in a two-step evaluation process:

- The first step is for applicants to submit a concept paper.
- If the concept paper is accepted, you will be asked to submit a more detailed application.

All **concept papers** and applications will be reviewed (on a rolling basis) by an internal review panel comprised of USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG technical implementation staff, and recommendations may be vetted by a larger group. Concept papers will be evaluated against the criteria below:

Concept paper evaluation criteria	Ratings	
	YES	NO
Does the proposed activity fit within the Kosovo e- Governance Activity objectives described in the APS?		
Does the organization's concept paper highlight relevant past performance in this area?		
Is the request for funding commensurate with the potential impact?		
Is the product or service sustainable?		
Impact on marginalized group (women, youth, minorities, underserved populations, individuals with disabilities)?		

More specific criteria will be used for evaluating full applications for those whose concept papers have been selected:

Full applications will be evaluated against the merit review criteria in the table below.

Merit Review Category		Rating (Points)
Feasibility of Design & Technical Approach	The quality and feasibility of the application in terms of the viability of the proposed technical approach, (i.e., the proposed technical approach can reasonably be expected to produce the intended outcomes), appropriateness of the proposed methodology, innovativeness, and the work plan for achieving project objectives to offer significant impacts on e-Governance in Kosovo. The technical approach must directly contribute to the achievement of the KeG Program's expected results and performance under the activity. Evaluation of approaches may either include approaches proven to be effective or new untried approaches with promise. Proposed mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation with objectively measurable indicators will also be appraised.	30
Impact on Target Group	The extent to which the proposed activity corresponds to the needs of target group(s) and will directly benefit them. Also, the degree to which it will directly or indirectly stimulate other organizations and	10

	resources to replicate, develop, or implement activities supporting the objectives of KeG	
Management & Programmatic Capacity	Evidence of the capability to undertake and accomplish the proposed activities and positively strengthen the environment for e-governance. The application should demonstrate the organization's effectiveness in terms of internal structure, technical capacity, and key personnel, in meeting e-Governance goals. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability. The evaluation will be based principally on the background, qualifications, reputation, appropriateness and skills of its key personnel; and the "track record," reputation, and achievements (including development of self-sufficient, sustainable activities) of the organization.	**15**
Sustainability	The extent to which the funded activity will result in building and strengthening the capacity of the community and local organizations, and whether the activity itself is sustainable or will promote sustainability of the organization.	**15**
Cost effectiveness	The degree to which budgeting is clear and reasonable and reflects best use of organizational and grant resources.	**10**
Past performance	Previous or ongoing experience implementing similar activities. This examines an Applicant's references and experience, which is critical factor in assessing the capacity of the organization to implement the activity.	**10**
Impact on marginalized groups	The extent to which the proposed activity includes a marginalized group or represents a strong commitment to women, youth, minorities, underserved populations, individuals with disabilities, and other groups assessed as beneficiaries.	**10**
Overall Rating (out of 100 points)		**100**

Additionally, USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG will ensure environmental soundness and compliance in design and implementation as required by 22 CFR 216.

SECTION VI. AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

All grants will be negotiated, denominated and funded in *Euros (€)*.
All costs funded by the grant must be allowable, allocable and reasonable.

Issuance of this APS and assistance with application development do not constitute an award or commitment on the part of USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG, nor does it commit USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received and reserves the right to ask for further clarifications from the offerors. Applicants will be informed in writing of the decision made regarding their application.

ANNEX A   **GRANT CONCEPT PAPER TEMPLATE**

A.1. Purpose

The *Grant Concept Paper Template* is designed to gather basic information about the Applicant and what it is proposing to do. This format should be presented by the applicants in response to an APS, per the instructions in the solicitation.

A.2. Grant Concept Paper Form (see below Instruction by Section)

<div align="center">

KOSOVO E-GOVERNANCE ACTIVITY
GRANT CONCEPT PAPER

</div>

1. Organization name:

2. Date organization was founded and registration status:

3. Contact information:

Key contact person(s) and title:	
Office address:	Office phone:
Mobile:	
Email:	Website:

4. Briefly describe the organization, its purpose, and past related experience (**max 2 pages**):

5. List contact information for three (3) references from previous donors or organizations (U.S. and other) that your organization has collaborated with in the last two years:

Donor Agency or Organization	Nature of Relationship or Title of Project, Location	Start & End Dates of Collaboration	Contact Person
			Name & Position: Email: Tel:
			Name & Position: Email: Tel:
			Name & Position: Email: Tel:

    a.   Have any of the key personnel or leadership of this NGO been terminated or resigned in lieu of termination for any misconduct, including fraud or sexual harassment? If yes, please list the name and title.

6. Title of the proposed grant activity:

7. Background: What is the issue or problem that the activity will address? Why is it critical to address this issue? (**max 2 pages**)

8. Objective of the proposed grant activity:

9. Describe the proposed activity and expected results in detail, keeping in mind the merit review criteria contained in the solicitation (**max 1 page**).

10. Identify beneficiaries, disaggregated by gender, if possible, number, how the grant activities will reach the intended beneficiaries, and how they will benefit from the grant:

11. Anticipated duration of activity from start to finish:

Overall length (total number of months)	
Start and end date (day, month, and year)	

12. Approximate cost of this activity (include cash, in-kind [i.e., donated goods or services], and third-party sources):

Budget Category *(The budget lines can be separated by items, sub-activities or categories)*	Applicant Resources – *if applicable* (in Euros)	Third Party Resources - *if applicable* (identify source) (in Euros)	Total Resources Needed (in Euros)
Salaries:			
Other Direct Costs:			
Training:			
Travel and Transportation:			
Goods and Materials:			
[Add more rows as needed.]			
Total Estimated Costs (in Euros)			

By affixing my signature below, I certify that to the best of my knowledge, the information provided in this application is accurate and correct:

Submitted by (name and title): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

FOR PROJECT USE ONLY
Date received _____ Grant Reference No. _____ The undersigned hereby certifies that: (a) the prospective grantee has received an official delivery receipt for its *Grant Concept*, (b) a copy of that receipt has been filed, (c) a reference number has been assigned, and (d) a grant application file has been opened. In addition, the prospective grantee has been advised as to the review and appraisal process, and its primary project point of contact. Adelina Jakupi, Grants and Subcontracts Specialist _____ Date _____

A.3. Instructions by Section

Items 1-2: Organization's name, date organization was founded, and current registration status.

Item 3: Contact Information— Contact name, title, address, telephone, fax, e-mail, etc. The contact person (agent) is responsible for communications between USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG and the Applicant. This applies to all aspects of the grant application, from initial summary through negotiation and award. The agent must have full authority and responsibility to act on behalf of the Applicant. The agent should be someone who will be directly involved with the grant activity and has a proven, established relationship with the Applicant.

Item 4: Briefly describe the organization and its activities—This section should introduce the Applicant and its background: how it was formed, its mission or purpose, major accomplishments in the area of the targeted activity, current activities, past related experience, and clients. This section must not exceed **2** pages in length.

Item 5: References—List three donors, partner organizations, or community leaders that can provide references for your organization's ability to successfully carry out the financial, administrative, and technical requirements of the grant activity. Briefly describe your relationship to the reference and the nature and duration of your work together. If the reference is a previous donor, list the activity and location of the activity(s) they funded. Be sure to provide complete information, including a point of contact, with telephone and email.

Item 6: Grant activity title—The title given to the activity should relate to the grant activity objective.

Item 7: Background—Identify the problem that the grant's activities propose to address. This section must not exceed **2** pages in length.

Items 8-9: State the grant objective; describe the activities that are proposed to meet this objective, the expected results to be achieved through the grant activities, and how the activities are linked to the grant objective. The grant objective and activities must be linked to USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG objectives as described in the solicitation. This should be the most detailed section but must not exceed **1** page in length.

Item 10: Identify beneficiaries, disaggregated by gender if possible, estimated number, location, how the grant activities will reach the intended beneficiaries, and how they will benefit from the grant.

Item 11: Anticipated duration should be stated with a degree of accuracy of plus or minus two weeks.

Item 12: Approximate cost of this activity (cash, in-kind, and third-party sources)— Applicant must submit a rough estimate of the cost of the proposed activity and sources of funds, specifying how much will come from USAID|Kosovo e-Governance Activity-KeG and the Applicant's contribution. An exact detailed budget is not necessary at this point, only a plausible estimated calculation, which should be realistic and within 15 percent (+/-) of the final approved budget. Note that the budget must be provided in (*Euros*).