**GEORGIA INTEGRATION GRANTS FACILITY (IGF) GUIDELINE /Request for Applications (RFA)**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Total estimated budget: | $4,000,000 (2023 – 2026) |  |
| Anticipated annual award number: | 15-20 grants for both Lots |  |
| Grants facility dates: | All awards must end before December 15, 2026 |  |
| Grants Decision Timeline | Award decisions will be made on a quarterly basis  |
| Grants Commission meeting dates and proposal submission deadlines | **PROPOSAL DEADLINES**September 29December 29March 29June 28 | **GRANTS COMMISSION MEETINGS**January 30March 29June 28September 27 |
| Subaward duration: | Up to 18 months  |  |
| Indicative ceiling: | $ 120,000 \* |  |
| Eligibility: | CSOs, media, academia, businesses, startups, and others. |
| Grant instruments used: | Fixed Amount Awards, Grant Agreements, Cost-Share Grants |
| Issued under: | USAID Unity Through Diversity Program, 72011422CA00003 |

**Introduction**

The IGF Guideline serves as a fundamental resource designed to furnish prospective applicants with a cohesive, standardized, and detailed framework, which systematically guides them through the application process and supports them in effectively navigating the multifaceted requirements of proposal submission aligned with the fundamental objectives that underscore the essence of the Georgia Integration Grants Facility (IGF).

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# **ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT**

USAID Unity Through Diversity Program is pleased to announce the Annual Program Statement for the Georgia Integration Grants Facility to support the activities that will contribute to the inclusive civic and economic development of Georgia. All awards shall work towards promoting diversity, equality, equity, multiculturalism, nation-building, social cohesion, private sector engagement, civic and economic integration, and inclusion.

The details of the grant modalities, including eligibility criteria, priorities, the application process, reporting requirements, and monitoring and evaluation, can be found in this guideline. UNA-Georgia reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Any award and subsequent incremental funding will be subject to the availability of funds and continued relevance to programming under the prime award.

Issuance of this funding opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of UNA-Georgia or USAID, nor does it commit to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of questions or an application. Applications are prepared and submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant’s expense.

All inquiries shall be submitted electronically to una@una.ge (subject line must read “Georgia Integration Grants Facility”). Online information sessions will be organized at least twice a year, and the information will be made available through UNA-Georgia’s web and social media channels.

All email inquiries must include full contact information, inclusive of return email, contact person, phone number, and address.

Considering the volume of received applications, UNA-Georgia might not be able to reply to all questions and inquiries. Only apparently successful candidates will be contacted.

## **BACKGROUND**

Georgia Integration Grants Facility is made available under the USAID Unity Through Diversity Program. USAID Unity Through Diversity is implemented by the United Nations Association of Georgia (UNA-Georgia, [www.una.ge](http://www.una.ge)) - a local nonprofit that has worked since 1995 to encourage, support, and safeguard the democratic aspirations of the people of Georgia. UNAG works to protect human rights, promote freedom of speech, advance good governance, and stimulate informed national discussions by encouraging citizen participation in the processes and decisions that affect their lives.

Launched in July 2022, USAID Unity Through Diversity is a USD 20 million program that supports the Government of Georgia, civil society, and the private sector to create a comprehensive national framework for addressing political, social, and societal resilience to malign influence by involving Georgia’s ethnic and religious minorities in national and local policy development and by strengthening mutually beneficial social, civic, and economic linkages between minority and majority populations. Ultimately, the program aims to broaden Georgian identity to allow for and celebrate the inclusion of diverse ethnic and religious affiliations.

The USAID Unity Through Diversity Program expects to achieve this purpose by creating a broad coalition of civic, public, and private actors, providing funding instruments to empower Georgia’s minorities, and assisting all state and non-state actors in building the resilient infrastructure of national integration. The Program works through two integrated and mutually reinforcing objectives:

* **Increase participation of ethnic and religious minorities in government policies and services -** support minority participation in policy-shaping by establishing effective consultative mechanisms on central and local levels triggering minority-to-majority dialogue; advocating for minority rights and supporting strategic litigations; creating sectoral knowledge products on the country development agenda affecting minorities and addressing challenges to the participation of minorities in social, economic, and cultural life.
* **Expand and strengthen mutually beneficial socio-economic linkages between majority and minority communities –** support the economic integration of minorities by connecting the communities with high linkage potential and incentivizing private sector actors and major market players to design specific market-based solutions to minority integration; co-creating and co-funding solutions with them to expand operations in minority regions; connect value chains, equip minority population (including minority youth) with marketable skills, and facilitating meaningful connections between young people nationwide.

The USAID Unity Through Diversity program operates across the country, with a special emphasis on fostering economic integration in minority regions, municipalities, and their surrounding rural areas:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Region** | **Municipality** |
| Kvemo Kartli | Dmanisi, Marneuli, Tsalka, Bolnisi, Gardabani |
| Samtskhe – Javakheti | Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsikhe, Ninotsminda |
| Mountainous Adjara | Shuakhevi, Keda, Khulo |
| Kakheti | Akhmeta, Sagarejo, Kvareli, Lagodekhi |

## **KEY FUNDING PRIORITIES**

National unity is a two-way process with society and government facilitating the integration efforts of individuals as well as promoting mainstream public support for diversity, so that all citizens, regardless of their origin, can effectively contribute to the country’s economic, social, and democratic development. The purpose of the Integration Grants Facility (IGF) is to invite a broader group of public and private stakeholders in co-creating a more conducive environment for the social cohesion, economic development, and acceptance of diversity necessary for Georgia’s democracy to function.

In the wake of Georgia's elevation to EU candidacy status in 2023, the Integration Grants Facility (IGF) strategically underscores the integration of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (AA) and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) Agreement into its core priorities, wherever relevant, to bolster the civic, economic, and political unity of ethnic and religious minorities within the framework of these international accords and commit to a multifaceted strategy that advances Georgia’s integration into the European fold where diverse communities are actively engaged and integrated into the national socio-economic framework.

With these goals, the USAID Unity Through Diversity invites local civil society organizations, think-tanks, industry associations, academia, media entities, private sector entities, and other stakeholders to submit applications that will contribute to achieving one or more of the following objectives:

* State language and access to quality education for integration: promote the state language proficiency among Georgia’s minority groups, including through supporting the existing or new language education opportunities, increasing the quality of training and education opportunities, and expanding access to quality education across a wide range of educational settings.
* Equality, civic and political participation: support Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic integration, including through strengthening an equality-based environment, media access, civic, political, and public participation to foster the development of civic attitudes and political views, uphold principles of equality and promote awareness on Euro-Atlantic values in a multiethnic society.
* Social and economic integration: improve the socio-economic ecosystem in ethnic minority regions and support ethnic and religious minorities’ access to public services by promoting entrepreneurship and business development in ethnic regions, improving access to finance and basic services to reduce disparities, and ensure that ethnic and religious minorities can fully participate in social and economic life.
* Inter-cultural dialogue: support cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue by promoting social cohesion and fostering greater understanding and respect between different communities, aiming at building inclusive societies that value and respect the differences and similarities between different cultures and traditions.

## **FUNDING LOTS, OBJECTIVES OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES**

The specific objective of the Integration Grants Facility (IGF) is to support existing or new activities, services, and opportunities that will contribute to the following operational priorities:

**Lot 1 - Policy, Participation, Advocacy Grants:** Civic integration and inclusion through active participation of minorities in state building and public services, supporting equality and protection of human rights.

*Indicative sub-themes under Lot 1:*

* Enhancing access to quality education for ethnic and religious minorities across all levels, including preschool, general, higher, and vocational education, as well as informal and non-formal learning opportunities.
* Ensuring the meaningful engagement and representation of ethnic and religious minorities in political processes, public consultations, and policy decision-making at both central and local levels.
* Promoting equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination and unequal treatment based on ethnicity and religion, and protecting the civil and political rights of ethnic and religious minorities to foster a more inclusive society.
* Promoting the inclusion of ethnic and religious minorities in sectoral public policies and legislation, including healthcare, social protection, public services, and infrastructure.
* Improving minority access to healthcare, social protection, housing, and other essential public services, such as civil and business registry services, local community development and welfare services, public transportation, and local infrastructure.
* Encouraging minority-to-majority dialogue and participatory approaches at both central and local levels to promote social cohesion and understanding.
* Fostering diversity and inclusion in communities and institutions, including educational institutions, businesses, and state bodies, to build a more inclusive and tolerant society.
* Supporting intercultural dialogue and expanding the socio-cultural linkages between the majority and minority groups, with a particular focus on youth and women.
* Encouraging positive media discourses that reflect diverse perspectives and present a positive image of minority groups to counter negative stereotypes and prejudices and supporting resilience to Anti-western propaganda.
* Supporting other processes, services, and activities that where applicable are aligned with the AA national agenda and contribute meaningfully to the policy objectives and themes of the funding opportunity.

*Illustrative types of activities under Lot1*

* *Advocacy, policy dialogues and consultations on central and local levels; capacity building and training; research, monitoring, and evaluation; policy and institutional support; strategic litigation; information campaigns and awareness building; co-creation, innovation, and knowledge-building; engagement and empowerment of members of minority communities; media programming; other activities that support the policy, participation, and advocacy objectives.*
* **Lot 2 - Growth, Employment, Linkages Grants:** Economicintegration through supporting national and local business actors to develop their businesses in the minority regions and make their resources, expertise, supply chain infrastructure, market linkages, skills, jobs, and youth opportunities, available for economic integration.

*Indicative sub-themes under the Lot 2:*

* Targeted financial and technical assistance to micro, small, and medium enterprises in ethnically diverse regions and entrepreneurial communities, boosting economic growth and employment of minorities, supporting forming, or strengthening value chains, and promoting diversity and inclusivity in the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the minority regions.
* Co-financing of the micro, small and medium businesses (MSMEs) interested in "going regional" and entering the minority regions stimulating regional economic growth - enhancing value and supply chains, increasing national market linkages, upgrading trade infrastructure, creating new job openings and opportunities for ethnic minorities, especially youth, and women.
* Awareness raising, advocacy, and consultancy (business potential diagnostics, assistance in generating business ideas, developing business plans, budgeting, guiding in the application process, etc.) of ethnic minorities to enhance access to MSME-supportive state programs and services (Enterprise Georgia; RDA; GITA)
* Tailored support for regional SMEs to accelerate business startup opportunities (e.g., pre-acceleration and acceleration programs, business incubators);
* Building business development skills and financial literacy for existing and potential ethnic minority entrepreneurs.
* Building awareness and encouraging ethnic minorities to enroll in the VET system.
* Support of VET institutions to meet and accommodate the needs of ethnic minority students and improve support mechanisms for their participation in VET.
* Introducing consultative platforms with private businesses and business associations in the VET system of the targeted regions.
* Support the introduction of short and long-term (training/retraining) programs in vocational education based on the regional labor market demands.
* Mentorship, networking, and peering targeted opportunities for minority entrepreneurs with access to experienced business leaders and resources to help them develop and grow their businesses.
* Support the establishment of industry and sectoral industry associations in minority regions benefiting both the local economy and the minority community.
* Creating linkages and trade opportunities with majority and minority regions, providing support and resources to businesses in the area, and creating opportunities for minority-owned businesses to connect and collaborate with same-industry operators, connecting value chains.
* Support minority SMEs in elevating their awareness and engaging in commercial endeavors to harmonize with the EU Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) standards and harness the benefits and market diversification opportunities offered by the DCFTA, facilitating their entry and expansion within broader, more diverse markets.
* Other issues that correspond to the goals and priorities of the grant program.

*Illustrative types of activities under Lot 2*

* *Startups and local co-investments; Expansion of capital and business operations in the targeted regions; Awareness raising and consulting of minorities on access to finance and entrepreneurship support state programs and services; Co-creation and co-funding solutions with the private, public, and civic sectors; Expanding and introducing industry associations in minority regions, etc.; Vocational Education and training activities for the ethnic minority jobseekers; Mentoring and networking.*

## **ESTIMATE OF FUNDS**

Total estimated funding for the Integration Grants Facility is $ 4,000,000 and all awards will be made and concluded before **December 15, 2026.** Individual awards shall vary from **USD 2,500 – USD 120,000**. UNA-Georgia retains the right to allow the higher funding ceiling, where applicable. UNA-Georgia estimates awarding an estimated 15-20 awards annually under the Integration Grants Facility.

The awards requested under the IGF shall not exceed the organization-wide financial turnover of the award recipient during the last calendar year, as of the date of submission of application[[1]](#footnote-2). The requirement does not apply to awards with a budget of $10,000 or less.

The grant funding amounts in the grant agreements will be fixed in U.S. Dollars (USD). Disbursements will be made in the local currency, Georgian Lari (GEL), according to the disbursement schedule established in the grant agreement. Advance payments will be authorized for a maximum of three months.

A 10% de minimis indirect rate on Modified Total Direct Costs can be applied to local non-profit organizations, which have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate.

## **AWARD INSTRUMENTS**

The following award instruments shall be applied: **fixed amount award, grant agreement, and cost-share grants (with private enterprises and entities).** The selection of the type of grant will be made based on three primary factors: (a) project duration and budget, (b) proposed project structure and goals; and (c) the capacity of the organization to manage the funds and to deliver the stated project results.

Fixed amount awards (FAA) will be applied if the project structure and activities allow detailed planning (milestones are easily discernible), if high accuracy can be achieved in cost determination if the project duration is less than 12 months, and if the project budget is $10,000 or less, altogether. Standard grant agreement and cost-share grant agreement (with private sector partners) will be used in all other scenarios.

English shall be the official language of all award documents (agreements).

## **COST-SHARE**

**Required:**

The 50% cost-share is required for projects focusing on profit-driven business development and business expansion. Loans, grants, and other co-financing from other sources (including Enterprise Georgia, Rural Development Agency, Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency, etc.) are encouraged and will count towards the cost-share. In-kind contributions will not be accepted as cost-share.

To qualify for a cost-share, the stated objectives of the grant award obtained from another source must align with the goals and objectives of the award made under IGF.

In the case of cost-sharing, the sequence in which funds are set aside and spent by the receiving company, is figured out individually for each situation, considering the organizational and financial capacities of the involved party as well as the project's content.

**Waived:**

Co-financing is waived for individuals benefiting from micro-entrepreneurial preferential taxation. If a grant application is submitted under this status, the micro-entrepreneur must provide an official, valid document verifying their micro-entrepreneurial status.

Co-financing is also exempted for profit-oriented applications when the project entails launching an entirely new startup venture[[2]](#footnote-3), rather than concentrating on the enhancement and growth of existing business operations.

In the case of ethnic and religious minorities, youth, women-owned startups, or other priority cases, UNA-Georgia reserves the right to reduce or tailor the cost-share requirement, accept in-kind contributions, or waive the cost-share requirement altogether.

Cost-share is not required and is optional for all other awards under the IGF.

## **SUBAWARDS**

Subawards are not permitted under the IGF, except for the joint proposals, where the lead applicant will be sub-awarding the award funds to the co-applicant(s). UNA-Georgia will assess and verify the capacity and responsibility of all co-applicants prior to the award. The lead applicant shall be the final responsible party for the implementation, delivery, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, and financial compliance of the award.

## **PERFORMANCE DATES**

The maximum duration for all awards made under the IGF is **18 months.** The award duration shall be up to 10 months for projects with a budget under $10,000**.** Recipients will be eligible to apply for continuation funding, if and as applicable, and based on the success of the program. Eligibility does not constitute a guarantee that the continuation funding will be awarded.

Project activities can only begin upon signature of the agreement between the applicant and UNA-Georgia. Costs incurred before the award agreement is fully executed will not be reimbursed unless approved by UNA-Georgia in prior and in writing.

**All awards must be concluded before December 15, 2026.**

## **PLACE OF PERFORMANCE**

USAID Unity Through Diversity views the target beneficiaries as ethnic and religious minorities, but the program needs to work with value chains and majority populations nationwide in order to achieve its objectives. While all awards will be expected to focus on expanding and strengthening socio-economic linkages between minority communities in Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kakheti (Pankisi Valley), and Muslim minority areas of Adjara with wider Georgia, significant aspects of the awarded projects may work nationwide. Potential applicants are advised to additionally refer to the priority geography of the prime award, as indicated in the guideline.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Funds may be awarded to non-profit and for-profit recipients (civil society organizations, private-sector, SMEs, financial institutions, associations, and private educational institutions). Organizations must be registered with applicable local authorities and eligible to receive the funding.

Specifically, the USAID Unity Through Diversity will encourage applications from:

* Non-profit organizations
* Community based organizations
* Higher and vocational education Private institutions
* Startups, social enterprises, micro, small, and medium enterprises
* Financial institutions and other large businesses
* Media outlets, communication agencies
* Industry sector associations

Applicants must have established financial management, monitoring and evaluation processes, internal control systems, and applicable policies and procedures.

Additionally, UNA-Georgia may determine the need for a pre-award survey to conduct an examination that will determine whether the prospective recipient has the necessary experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award.

## **INELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

Funding will not be provided to the following organizations:

* Any entity that has been found to have misused grant funds in the past.
* Political parties, including their subsidiaries and affiliates.
* Organizations that advocate or promote anti-democratic policies or illegal activities.
* Any entity included in any supplementary information concerning prohibited individuals or entities that may be provided by the US Government.
* Any entity whose name appears in the System of Award Management (SAM), on the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) and Blocked Persons List maintained by the U.S. Treasury for the Office of Foreign Assets Control, sometimes referred to as the “OFAC List” and in the United Nations Security designation list with an active exclusion; and
* An organization that refuses to sign all required certifications and assurances.

All costs under the IGF awards must be reasonable, allocable, and allowable. IGF funds cannot be used 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, property, and fertilizers without the previous approval by UNA-Georgia.
* 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.
* Purchases of goods or services restricted or prohibited under the prevailing USAID source/nationality regulations (applicable regulations will be supplied by UNA-Georgia).
* Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by UNA-Georgia, 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.

If critical to program implementation, the potential applicant/award recipient may request the waiver and written approval from UNA-Georgia to procure any of the following commodities:

* Agricultural commodities, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, used equipment, and fertilizers.

## **PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

Proposals will be accepted, processed, and reviewed on a continuous basis until March 30, 2026. The grants review commission shall meet 4 times in a year, and potential applicants must follow the following timeline:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PROPOSAL DEADLINES**September 29December 29March 29June 28 | **GRANTS COMMISSION MEETINGS**January 30March 29June 28September 27 |

Applications will be received on a rolling basis (open-door) but will be processed and reviewed through the above timeframe. For example, all applications that will be submitted between the end of June – September shall be reviewed by the Grants Commission on January 30, allowing 3-6 months for the review, clarifications, pre-award assessments, and other processes before the award. Subsequently, all applications received between the start of October – end of December will be reviewed at the March 29 meeting. Considering the volume of received applications, the Grants Commission may delay the review of some of the applications to the subsequent quarter, of which the successful candidates will be notified in advance.

## **REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

UNA-Georgia's strategic approach to the review and evaluation of grants is deeply anchored in a set of guiding principles of being reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary. The overarching goal is to ensure that the expenditures associated with the activity are not only otherwise allocable, allowable, and reasonable but also reflect a commitment to fiscal responsibility and transparency.

Application submission is a single-stage process, and each application is received through the official mail of UNA-Georgia, una@una.ge. UNA-Georgia will review and process applications in a four-stage process:

**1. Initial screening:** in the initial review, UNA-Georgia will evaluate all received applications to check for compliance with all submission requirements and alignment with the IGF objectives and priorities. Initial screening will also check for compliance, eligibility, clarity, relevance, and the capacity of the applicant.

All applicants will be notified if their application passes the initial screening stage. **Considering the volume of received applications, UNA-Georgia cannot guarantee to provide detailed justifications for all such review decisions.**

**2. External review:** eligible applications that pass through the initial screening will be reviewed by external reviewers, who have specialized knowledge and expertise in applicable areas. External reviewers will evaluate the proposals based on the criteria that are defined in these guidelines and will make recommendations on the feasibility and sustainability of the proposed approaches. All external reviews will be verified and confirmed by UNA-Georgia.

External reviewers will check for:

* **Quality Assurance:** evaluate the quality and feasibility of grant proposals; ensure that the proposals meet the Grants guideline priorities and grants assessment methodology criteria; cross-check the trustworthiness of the information given in the proposals; where appropriate provide valuable feedback and recommendations to improve the interesting proposals.
* **Compliance Check:** Verify proposals against all required documentation, budgets, timelines, and supporting materials, minimizing the risk of rejection due to non-compliance.
* **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** Evaluate the potential impact and value of the proposed projects towards Grant Facility goals and priorities; assess the cost-effectiveness, sustainability, and expected outcomes of the projects.

UNA-Georgia estimates a one-month period for the external review and scoring, which will be performed anonymously. Experts' assessments are recorded in pre-developed standard forms, which are developed based on the criteria and requirements established in this document.

**3. Internal review:** Applications shortlisted based on the external/expert scoring and will undergo full internal review by the grants management team. Through the internal review, UNA-Georgia will thoroughly:

**a.** **Check for potential duplications of activities under the USAID Unity through Diversity or with other ongoing USAID projects in Georgia,**

**b. Evaluate the feasibility of proposed methodologies against the available studies, surveys, consultations, and other knowledge,**

**c. Evaluate the complementarities between the proposed activities and already ongoing processes, to potentially improve on the efficient use of resources,**

**d. Improve alignment with the goals and objectives of the prime award,**

**e. accommodates for the existing budget limitations, and**

**f. Suggest other applicable and qualified improvements for the proposed activity.**

UNA-Georgia may recommend the successful application for funding without any reservations to the Grants Review Commission or may engage the successful candidate for suggested revisions to the project proposal and the budget. Apparently, successful applicants will be entitled to refuse the suggested modifications.

**4. Grants Review Commission:** The Grants Review Commission shall review the final project proposals and make the final determinations on the award, rejection, or further revision of submitted applications. The Grants Review Commission will also discuss all appeals and make the final decision on appealed applications. All applicants will be notified accordingly. The Grants Review Commission will evaluate all applications based on methodology, approach, innovation, relevance, cost-efficiency, and their alignment with the objectives of the prime award. The Grants Review Commission reserves the right to withhold any justifications for all its award decisions.

Updates regarding the grant review commission's meetings and decisions will be published on the official website and social media pages of the United Nations Association of Georgia, accessible at: [https://www.una.ge](https://www.una.ge/?lang=ge); <https://www.facebook.com/una.ge>

## **COMMUNICATING REVIEW DECISIONS**

All applications are evaluated on a rolling basis. While some applications may be rejected due to eligibility issues, those who lack sufficient methodology or information may be asked to provide additional details. In applicable cases, the applicant may be invited to make a presentation to further clarify the Program's goals and address any potential questions.

UNA-Georgia is committed to establishing the highest standard of transparency and accountability at all stages of program implementation. UNA-Georgia will seek to provide constructive feedback to all applicants for all project submissions, as part of the capacity-building support, but considering the volume of received applications and the extensive scope of the review process, UNA-Georgia may not be able to satisfy all inquiries. All applicants will be encouraged to exercise patience if their inquiries are not answered immediately. Applicants must note that the issuance of this RFA does not constitute any guarantee of funding and that it is the sole discretion of UNA-Georgia not to award any funding under this grant program.

It is the sole discretion of UNA-Georgia and the Grants Commission to determine the relevance, feasibility, and applicability of the proposed project, and reserve the right to withhold any justifications for all its award decisions from all communications with the applicants.

**Non-profit proposal applications under both Lots will be evaluated according to the following criteria and are listed by importance/priority:**

1. **Proposed project is fully aligned with grant objectives and priorities (15 points):** The applicant should ensure that the proposed activity closely matches the goals, objectives and priority areas of the grant, thus ensuring that their work contributes effectively to the overall purpose of the project. The evaluation process will assess the degree to which the application aligns with the goals and objectives of the grant program aimed at fostering civic integration.
2. **Proposed methodology and approach are relevant and feasible (15 points):** The applicant should present a methodology and approach that are both relevant and achievable, ensuring their suitability and practicality within the project's context.
3. **Impact is clear, measurable, and sustainable (15 points):** The applicant should elucidate how the proposed activities will yield a positive impact on the specific group the grant intends to serve. This entails acquiring a comprehensive understanding of the requirements and obstacles encountered by the target population, consequently guiding the customization of interventions in response.
4. **Applicant competently engages target communities and stakeholders (15 points):** The applicant should devise strategies to engage and empower the target groups, including ethnic and religious minorities, women, and youth, etc. ensuring their perspectives and needs are considered both in the project design and throughout the implementation.
5. **Proposed activity is innovative, adaptable, and scalable (15 points total):** The applicant should design innovative interventions that can be adapted to changing circumstances and replicated in other contexts if successful.
6. **Requested budget is reasonable, justifiable, and efficient (15 points):** The applicant needs to provide a well-justified budget that allocates resources appropriately across the proposed activities and ensures efficiency in resource utilization to maximize the project's impact and the use of funds.
7. **Applicant has adequate capacity, experience, and expertise (10 points):** The applicant must provide evidence of their background and expertise within the pertinent field, while also showcasing their capability to effectively tackle challenges as proposed by the proposal.

**Profitable proposal applications under Lot 2 will be evaluated according to the following criteria and are listed by importance/priority:**

1. **Main Idea and Core Concept (12 points):** The applicant must provide a comprehensive description of the proposed application’s main idea and core concept. This description should address how the program will expand current business activities, contribute to economic growth and employment and/or enhance access to finance and trade linkages within minority regions, and promote diversity and inclusivity in the entrepreneurial ecosystem of these regions. Emphasis on the innovative idea, clarity, and addressing the target population's needs is crucial.
2. **Product or Service Offered (9 points):** The applicant should present a comprehensive definition of the product or service being offered. This description must encompass thorough details such as packaging, features, and usability of the product/service.
3. **Production Process (6 points):** The applicant is expected to articulate the production or service process cohesively, offering a clear trajectory from concept to market.
4. **Applicant's (Team) Experiences and Roles (10 points):** The applicant should showcase how the team's background and roles contribute to the positive outcomes of the main idea, ensuring there is clear evidence of their relevant expertise.
5. **Market Analysis (10 points):** The applicant should present a profound understanding of competitors and market segments.
6. **Capital and operational planning (6 points):** The applicant should interpret the degree of alignment between the capital requirements and the operational plan. Moreover, the applicant should demonstrate how capital is thoughtfully allocated to guarantee optimal operational outcomes.
7. **Expected Outcomes (Key Performance Indicators - KPIs) (14 points):** The applicant should define the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These KPIs should align with the core concept, delivering tangible benefits to the target groups and the larger community.
8. **Stakeholder & Inclusion Strategies (11 points):** The applicant should outline how the project intends to actively involve ethnic and religious minority groups.
9. **Detailed Budget (11 points):** The applicant should evaluate the level of detail, accuracy, and transparency in the presentation of financial components. Furthermore, they should assess how effectively the budget aligns with the main idea and its anticipated outcomes.
10. **Feasibility of projections (11 points):** The applicant should gauge the accuracy, realism, and achievability of the projections presented.

The review process will entail a meticulous evaluation of all applications in accordance with the predefined criteria. Following this comprehensive assessment, it will culminate in the identification and selection of maximum the top 15-20 proposals, encompassing both lots, that most closely align with and exemplify these specified criteria.

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Potential applicants are encouraged to send applications in the form attached to this guideline:

* **Non-profit proposal applications under both Lots:**  Annex 1.1 (Application Form), Annex 1.3 (Budget), Annex 1.2.2 (Time Schedule)
* **Profitable proposal applications under Lot 2:** Annex 1.2 (Application Form), Annex 1.3 (Budget), Annex 1.2.1 (Cashflow), Annex 1.2.2 (Time Schedule).

Applicants are allowed to apply in the Georgian language for projects with $10,000 in budget or less. All project proposals over $ 10,000 in budget must be submitted in English.

**Requirements for the application (For applicants considering non-profit proposals in Lot 1/Lot 2):**

Applicants considering non-profit proposals in both Lots are encouraged to use the **annexed application form (annex 1.1) of this Guideline**, but they also may use their own formats for proposals. Applicants must ensure that submitted proposals are under 15 pages (exclusive of attachments, cover page, executive summary, budget and the budget notes), and exhaustively cover the following at a minimum:

1. **Cover page (1 page):** must include the name and UEI of the applicant and co-applicants, project title, descriptive title (optional), project dates, requested budget, and contact information. The cover page does not count towards the page limit.
2. **Executive summary:** a general summary of the proposed project. The executive summary does not count towards the page limit.
3. **Project background (4 pages)**:
	1. Problem statement: the problem or opportunity the project addresses and the key assumptions that the project makes.
	2. Stakeholder analysis: Describe the intended audience or target group, their needs, location, and any existing limitations or challenges.
	3. Theory of change: Identify the key deliverables that will be produced and impact achieved as part of the program.
4. **Technical approach (7 pages):**
	1. Objectives and expected results: identify the specific goals and objectives of the program. What do you hope to achieve through this program? Describe specific results anticipated to be achieved by the project.
	2. Methodology and approach: briefly describe the methods and techniques that will be used to achieve the goals and objectives of the program. Describe how stakeholders will be engaged throughout the project.
	3. Detailed activities and the timeline: describe specific activities you propose to undertake under specific goals of the project. Provide an overview of the project timeline using a Gantt chart, which will include key milestones and deadlines, as well as the responsible parties for all aspects of the project.
	4. Inclusion of vulnerable groups: describe specific approaches or activities addressing the issues of vulnerable groups.
	5. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning: propose measurable indicators for tracking project’s progress, and describe specific tools and approaches to data collection, analysis, and MEL efforts.
	6. Sustainability: describe specific steps ensuring that the project's outcomes are sustained beyond the program's completion. How will the project be scaled up or replicated if successful?
5. **Organizational capacity and key personnel (4 pages):**
	1. Brief overview of the organization’s history, governance structure, mission and goals, and the programs and services that your organization implements.
	2. Brief overview of the organization’s past performance, including the description of the organization’s capacity to implement the same-level funded programs.
6. **Budget and budget notes:**
	1. Detailed budget – must be submitted in an Excel file, with all cells and formulas unlocked. Applicants may use their own format for the budget, but the template is attached as guidance **(Annex 1.3).**
	2. Budget narrative – In the second sheet of Annex 1.3 applicants must provide a detailed narrative description of all budget lines and line items. Budget notes must describe the logic and rationale behind all cost estimations.

Along with the application form the applicant should submit Annex 1.3 (Budget) and Annex 1.2.2 (Time Schedule).

**Apart from the abovementioned documentation the applicants must also submit:**

* Official registration document (can be submitted both in the original language of the document). The extract from the public register ([www.napr.gov.ge](http://www.napr.gov.ge)), or the copy of other registration document, must not be older than 12 months by the date of application.
* Organizational audit reports for the past three fiscal years. Should audit reports be unavailable, the applicant must provide a written and signed summary of its financial data for the past three years. In the same document, the applicant must explicitly state its agreement to supply detailed financial statements for the past three years upon UNA-Georgia’s request for the pre-award assessment purposes.
* A recent comparison of earnings from the revenue service (tax liability service).
* Two recommendation letters from international donors or local partner organizations.
* The organization’s statute, human resource manual, procurement manual, and financial management / accounting manual. If the applicant is unable to supply any of these required policies / manuals, the applicant must submit a signed letter confirming the absence of such manuals for applicable reasons (such as a startup or a newly formed non-profit), as well as the organization’s readiness to develop and implement these policies upon the request and with support of UNA-Georgia.
* Past performance references that include following information on all relevant projects implemented by the applicant/co-applicant during the last 3 calendar years: project dates, donor / contact information, budget, objectives, target groups, key activities, achieved results, and the role of the applicant organization (lead, partner, support role, etc.). Past performance references must be limited to five pages total.
* Additional documents that provide added proof of the organization's capacity and experience, such as publications, annual reports, newsletters, or other informational materials. Additional attachments should not exceed five pages in total.
* (!) In cases where one or several of the aforementioned mandatory documents cannot be submitted by the applicant organization, the organization must provide a justification for this to UNA Georgia. In such instances, the absence of the documentation will not automatically lead to the non-review or rejection of the grant application. This decision, along with other determinations, will be made by the Grant Commission.

**Requirements for the application (For applicants considering profit-oriented proposals in Lot 2):**

**Applicants considering profit-oriented proposals in Lot 2 should use the annexed application form (annex 1.2) of this Guideline, covering the following:**

**1. Program Background (maximum 7 pages)**

**1.1 Main Idea:** Provide a summary that captures the core concept of your project. Describe how your proposed activities aim to generate positive outcomes for economic growth and employment, improve access to finance and trade linkages, and promote diversity and inclusivity in the entrepreneurial ecosystem of minority regions. Outline the specific objectives you plan to achieve with this project. Ensure that objectives are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).

**1.2 Product or Service Offered:** Describe the product/service in detail. Address its purpose, necessary equipment, distinguishing characteristics, packaging, and overall features. Explain how your product stands out from competitors and the basis for its potential market dominance.

**1.3 Description of the Production/Service Process:** Detail the step-by-step process involved in creating your product or executing your service. This should encompass all stages, from conceptualization to delivery to the end user.

**1.4 Applicant's (Team's) Experience and Functional Duties:** Present the qualifications, experience, and expertise of the core team members. Emphasize why your team is ideally suited to execute the project.

 **1.5 Company’s Structure:** Provide a detailed overview of your company's structure, if available including a company chart or a breakdown of departments/teams.

**1.6 Market Overview:** Validate the market segment for your product/service and your competitive advantage. Define your target customers/beneficiaries, their characteristics, and the reasons they would choose your product/service. Discuss the potential for expanding your customer base and identify the primary channels for making your product or service accessible. Analyze your competitors in the sector.

**1.7 Capital and Operational Plan:** Start by stating the capital needed for your business ventures. Provide a breakdown of capital allocation. Illustrate the operational plan, detailing the process flow and the required resources and assets. Dive deeper into the specifics of your company, such as location, infrastructure, equipment needs, and the flow of production or service.

**2. Technical Approach to Implementation (3-5 pages)**

 **2.1 Expected Results (KPIs):**

Detail the anticipated outcomes, discussing both quantitative and qualitative results and their impact both for the applicant company and for the ethnic and religious minority community.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Impact** | **Quantity** |
| New Full-Time Equivalent Jobs for Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Company/Target Regions/Municipalities | Yes |  |
| Expected average salary (GEL) on the new Full-Time Equivalent Jobs for Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Company/Target Regions/Municipalities | Yes |  |
| Expected increase in sales (GEL) in/from the company/target regions/municipalities | Yes |  |

 **2.2 Stakeholder Engagement:**

Illustrate the strategy to onboard and collaborate with stakeholders.

 **2.3 Inclusion of Women and Youth:**

Highlight the project's focus on issues faced by women and youth and describe how the program enables the availability of supply chain infrastructure, market linkages, skills, jobs, and youth opportunities for economic integration into minority regions.

 **3. Please provide the project budget**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Budget item** | **Amount (USD)** |
|  |  |
|  **Total** |  |
| Grantee Contribution vs. UNAG Funds (%)Submitted |  |

**3.1 Detailed Budget** – **Excel Annex (Annex 1.3):** Complete and attach a comprehensive Excel sheet detailing the breakdown of costs for each project activity. Highlight the focus on ensuring that not more than 15% of the grant will be used on working capital and services.

**4. Financial Overview**

**4.1 Profit and Loss, Cash Flow Statement - Excel Annex (Annex 1.2.1):** Complete and attach an exhaustive profit and loss and cash flow statement. This document should illustrate the project's financial health, potential profitability, and projections of revenue and expenses over time.

**4.2 Time Schedule - Excel Annex (Annex 1.2.2):** Develop a detailed timeline in Excel format that underscores the significant milestones and activities planned throughout the project's duration.

The applicants must also submit:

* Organizational audit reports, financial statements, chart of account or document confirming bank turnover or financial return/balance sheets from the past three years.
* A recent comparison of earnings from the revenue service (tax liability service).
* An extract from the register, available at [www.napr.gov.ge](http://www.napr.gov.ge).
* Detailed information about past USAID grant experience - maximum 2 pages
* Any other documents that provide verification of the organization's capacity to manage grants, such as reports or informational materials.
* Additional attachments should not exceed five pages in total.

(!) In cases where one or several of the aforementioned mandatory documents cannot be submitted by the applicant organization, the organization must provide a justification for this to UNA Georgia. In such instances, the absence of the documentation will not automatically lead to the non-review or rejection of the grant application. This decision, along with other determinations, will be made by the Grant Commission.

All project applications must be submitted electronically to una@una.ge (subject line must read “Georgia Integration Grants Facility: Lot # and Lot Title”). The size limit for e-mail submissions is 25MB.

## **JOINT APPLICATIONS**

Applicants may act in partnership with other entities (public or private) and may submit joint applications. Co-applicants must meet the eligibility criteria applicable to the lead applicant.

Funding requests are limited by an applicant's financial turnover in the previous calendar year (for requested awards above $10,000). However, should two organizations submit a joint project proposal, they will be allowed to combine their financial turnovers and request a higher maximum ceiling for grant funding than they would be able to as separate applicants.

The lead applicant is responsible for the programmatic and financial reporting of the project to the United Nations Association of Georgia.

The allocation of the budget for coalition applications is determined by maintaining a proportional connection between the budget allocation and the degree of involvement or management in the project's implementation. This correlation is established based on the organizational turnovers of the coalition members, guaranteeing an equitable distribution that accurately represents their individual contributions and roles in the collaborative project.

The lead applicant may submit only one application at a time and may not join another application as a co-applicant while the lead applicant’s proposal is in review.

## **UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER (UEI)**

All potential applicants are required to submit UEI by submitting the application. The registration process may take several weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration (or update the registered entity) early in the process.

## **AWARD TIMELINE**

**Final award decision (estimated 3-4 weeks):** For an award to be made, UNA-Georgia must make an affirmative determination that the applicant is “responsible.” A positive responsibility determination means that the applicant possesses or can obtain the necessary management and technical competence to plan and carry out the program to be funded and that the applicant will practice mutually agreed-upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets. After Commission's final decision, the UNA-Georgia estimates 3-4 calendar weeks for pre-award all type of assessments.

## **GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**

The integration of ethnic minorities, particularly ethnic women, persons with disabilities, socially vulnerable, and young people is hindered by significant challenges, including their limited opportunities and various barriers to social, economic, and public life. To address these constraints and promote ethnic minorities' (particularly ethnic women, PWDs, and youth) access to public services, high-value economic and entrepreneurial opportunities, and ensure their equitable participation, grant applicants must consider how their proposed activities will alleviate these issues and promote engagement of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups Within the applications, they should consider the provision of equal access by supporting ethnic minorities or other disadvantaged groups in overcoming language, financial, social, or other similar challenges. Applicants should account for all potential costs related to gender and social inclusion in their grant budget.

## **SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT**

UNA-Georgia will be substantially involved in the implementation of all awards made under the IGF. Substantial involvement will include, but will not be limited to:

* Review and Approval of Recipient’s Work Plans and Monitoring and Evaluation for Learning Plan (MEL).
* UNA-Georgia monitoring to permit specific kinds of direction or redirection of the work because of the interrelationships with other projects or activities or due to GoG priorities and guidance.
* The ability to immediately halt an activity if the recipient does not achieve the specified results and/or targets specified in the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan or otherwise fails to comply with the terms and conditions in the award agreement.

UNA-Georgia staff will monitor all awards under the IGF in terms of both programmatic and financial aspects. Award recipients will be expected to comply with monitoring requirements by collecting and producing relevant information in compliance with USAID Unity through Diversity Program’s Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning frameworks.

The types and schedules will depend on the grant type and project duration. Reporting forms will be provided to grant recipients. Types of reporting may include the following:

* Quarterly report to be submitted during project implementation. This report will include a description of project activities and progress toward 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, the results of the project, and problems and solutions during implementation.
* Financial reports will be submitted to UNA-Georgia according to a schedule described in the grant agreements. Types of financial reports will depend on the type of grant, length of the project, and amount of grant funding. Financial reports will be required before subsequent grant installments are disbursed.
* Upon the responsibility and risk determinations made through the pre-award assessment, UNA-Georgia may impose additional reporting requirements on the recipient, including the submission of daily transaction ledgers, supporting documentation, and other financial verifications.
* Additionally, UNA-Georgia reserves the right to conduct financial reviews or audits, and to otherwise ensure the adequate accountability of organizations expending the grant funds. All recipients will be fully notified of the subject and rationale behind such decisions.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

1. To ensure updated information reaches all interested parties, UNA-Georgia will implement a range of outreach activities targeted to reach potential applicants. Outreach may include quarterly announcements, quarterly workshops, and information sessions. All information related to this guideline including all revisions, will be published on UNA-Georgia’s official website. It is the responsibility of all applicants to ensure they are using the latest versions of the guidelines and relevant templates.
2. All award recipients shall be required to follow all established and applicable standards, laws, and regulations of Georgia and the U.S. Government. UNA-Georgia shall provide detailed guidance, where and as needed.
3. In support of the IGF’s interest in fostering a larger assistance base and expanding the number and sustainability of development partners in promoting diversity and national unity in Georgia, UNA-Georgia encourages applications from potential new partners.
1. In the event that the applicant requests USD 60,000 in funding under IGF, the applicant organization must have a minimum of USD 60,000 in organization-wide turnover in the last calendar year. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. START-up venture, as defined in the FAQ document of this guideline. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)