

Dated: August 10, 1998.

**Philip Metzger,**

*Director, Trade Compliance.*

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## UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

### Regional Investment Initiative (RII) Internet Project in Samara Oblast: Public Access Internet Sites, Training and Development of Internet Resources

**ACTION:** Notice—Request for proposals.

**SUMMARY:** The Office of Academic Programs, Academic Exchanges Division, European Programs Branch of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award. Public and private non-profit organizations with at least four years experience administering international exchange and training programs and demonstrated experience administering Internet projects in the Russian Federation and meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may apply to develop the Regional Investment Initiative (RII) Internet Project in Samara Oblast.

For the RII Internet Project in Samara Oblast, USIA seeks proposals that would: Establish and/or enhance at least five non-commercial public access Internet sites at libraries, universities or other RII partner institutions in Samara and Togliatti designated by the United States Information Service in Moscow with the concurrence of the oblast administration; Train staff of the partner institutions to manage and maintain the public access Internet sites; Provide e-mail and Internet training to diverse groups of end-users, including participants in and alumni of USIA and other U.S. government-sponsored programs; Develop, adapt, or identify Russian language training materials for individual and group instruction and training of trainer courses at public access Internet sites; Publicize the project to target audiences; Organize a series of topical seminars designed to attract target audiences to the public access Internet sites, and; Administer a small grants competition for the development of Internet materials in Russian and English that further higher education and professional training in business, law, public administration, and transparency of governance.

Proposals should reflect a thorough understanding of the

telecommunications infrastructure in Samara Oblast, technical requirements for implementing all aspects of the project including procurement of appropriate equipment and services required to connect partner institutions to the Internet and establish non-commercial public access Internet sites, and the political, economic, and social environment in which the program activity will take place.

The goal of the RII Internet Project is to foster free and open access to Internet-based information resources and facilitate the dissemination of useful online information in Russian and English to students, professors and practitioners of business, law, public administration, non-governmental organizations and other constituencies in Samara and Togliatti that promote and support Russian-American cooperation and communication. The Regional Investment Initiative is a new program to expand trade and investment between Russia's regions and the U.S., foster U.S.-Russia economic, social, and community-based linkages, and coordinate U.S. government assistance in the Russian Federation. USIA expects the Internet project to achieve results on two levels: by building institutional capacity in Samara and Togliatti and by empowering end-users to obtain and publish online information resources, such as Web sites, newsletters, and listservs in business, law, public administration and related educational and professional fields. Applicant organizations must include a plan with clear benchmarks that demonstrates how permanent results will be achieved, monitored, and reported to USIA as a result of the activities funded by the grant.

Successful applicant organizations will be required to work in ongoing consultation with the United States Information Service in Moscow, the State Department's Regional Investment Initiative Coordinator in Samara, and the United States Information Agency in Washington to ensure effective implementation of project activities.

Interested organizations should read the complete **Federal Register** Announcement and request a Solicitation Package from USIA prior to preparing a proposal and should consult with USIA and USIS Moscow about the proposed partner institutions for public access Internet sites in Samara and Togliatti before submitting a proposal.

Applicant organizations may apply to administer the Project individually or as a consortium, via a subcontract arrangement, as long as one organization is designated to be the recipient of the grant. USIA anticipates awarding one

assistance award in an amount not to exceed \$350,000 for the implementation of this Project for a period of 20 months. The award is expected to begin in late October 1998. Project activities should be completed by June 30, 2000.

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries . . . ; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations . . . and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world."

The funding authority for the project is provided through the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Act of 1992 (Freedom Support Act). The legislation was established to assist the economic and democratic development of the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union. Programs and projects must conform with Agency requirements and guidelines outlined in the Solicitation Package.

**Announcement Title and Number:** All communications with USIA concerning this RFP should refer to the announcement's title and reference number E/AEE-99-01.

**Deadline for Proposals:** All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, DC time on Thursday September 17, 1998. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Documents postmarked by the due date but received at a later date will not be accepted. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the above deadline.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** The Office of Academic Programs, Academic Exchanges Division, European Programs Branch, E/AEE, Room 246, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547; telephone number (202) 205-0525; fax: (202) 260-7985 to request a Solicitation Package containing more detailed award criteria. Please request required application forms, and standard guideline for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget.

**To Download a Solicitation Package via Internet:** The entire Solicitation

Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://www.usia.gov/education/rfps>. Please read all information before downloading.

**To Receive a Solicitation Package via Fax on Demand:** The entire Solicitation Package may be received via the Bureau's "Grants Information Fax on Demand System", which is accessed by calling 202/401/7616. Please request a "Catalog" of available documents and order numbers when first entering the system.

Please specify USIA Program Manager Rhonda E. Boris on all inquiries and correspondences. Interested applicants should read the complete **Federal Register** announcement before sending inquiries or submitted proposals. Once the RFP deadline has passed, Agency staff may not discuss this competition in any way with applicants until the Bureau proposal review process has been completed.

**Submissions:** Applicants must follow all instructions given in the Solicitation Package. The original and 9 copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/AEE-99-01, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

Applicants must also submit the "Executive Summary" and "Proposal Narrative" sections of the proposal on a 3.5" diskette, formatted for DOS. This material must be provided in ASCII text (DOS) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. USIA will transmit these files electronically to our overseas posts for review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get posts' comments for the Agency's grant review process.

**Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines:** Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal. Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and

democracy", USIA "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Proposals should account for advancement of this goal in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Samara Regional Investment Initiative Internet Project is intended to be a collaborative effort between the U.S. and Russian governments, regional authorities and public and private sector organizations of both countries. Applicant organization must demonstrate the ability to collaborate with other organizations that support Internet projects in Samara Oblast and U.S. and Russian scholarly, educational, and professional organizations in fields such as business, law, and public administration. Such collaboration is intended to ensure the dissemination of high quality information to the USIA's designated audiences, expand the scope and impact of USIA grant funding, maximize resources, avoid duplication of effort, and lay the groundwork for sustaining Internet access costs beyond the USIA funding period.

Partner institutions for public access Internet sites may include, but should not be limited to, the Samara Oblast Public Library, the Samara State Aerospace University, the Togliatti Public Library, and the Togliatti International Business and Banking Academy. USIA expects applicant organizations and all institutions participating in the project to provide significant in-kind contributions and cost-sharing, such as facilities and services required for the public access Internet sites, existing network and computer equipment, connectivity, designated staff, staff time, volunteers, and training materials, as appropriate. Proposals should include evidence of the in-kind contributions or direct cost-sharing to be provided by potential partner institutions, Internet service providers, and other organizations interested in collaborating on the project.

USIA encourages applicant organizations to include the following supplementary materials: A feasible and realistic plan for expanding connectivity that builds on existing infrastructure and networks; Draft partnership agreements with institutions designated for public access Internet sites; Proposed equipment packages, services, staff coverage, Internet service provider, security, and hours of operation for each public access site; Sample training

program, courses, topics, and materials for staff of partner institutions, individual and group instruction for end-users; curriculum for training of trainer program; Draft program announcements, publicity plans, and methodology for community outreach; Proposed topics and structure of seminar series; Concept paper for administration of small grants competition to develop Internet-based information resources and draft grant application which cites eligibility requirements and selection criteria; Position descriptions for project team members; Other materials that are reasonable and appropriate.

### Guidelines

Administration of the program must be in compliance with reporting and withholding regulations for federal, state, and local taxes as applicable. Organizations should demonstrate tax regulation adherence in the proposal. Procurement of required computer and networking equipment and applications software must be in compliance with year 2000 requirements (Y2K). Applicant organizations should demonstrate compliance with Y2K requirements in the proposal.

### Proposed Budget

Funding for the Regional Investment Initiative Internet Project in Samara Oblast is anticipated at \$350,000. Applicant organizations must submit a comprehensive line item budget request for program costs and administrative costs based on the specific guidance on the Solicitation Package. There must be a summary budget as well as a breakdown reflecting both the administrative budget and the program budget and a budget narrative demonstrating how costs were derived. Organizations whose proposals include an administrative budget that is less than 20% of the grant amount requested from the USIA will be considered competitive.

Allowable program costs include, but are not limited to, equipment and services required to build on existing networks and infrastructure in order to expand connectivity to the beneficiaries of the project, and to provide low-cost high speed sustainable access to the Internet for the public access Internet sites; required workstations, hardware, software, peripherals, training materials, services, and supplies to establish or enhance public access Internet sites; monthly Internet access fees (if required); salaries to support project team members; materials for seminar series; honorarium for selection committee for grants competition to

develop Internet resources; consultants to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations.

Allowable administrative costs would include staff salary and benefits, staff travel to project sites; office expenses, communications, and shipping. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

#### Review Process

USIA will acknowledge receipt for all proposals and will review them for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of USIA officers for advisory review. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the USIA Office of East European and NIS Affairs and the USIA post overseas, where appropriate. Proposals may be reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel or by other Agency elements. Funding decisions are at the discretion of the USIA Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants or cooperative agreements) resides with the USIA grants officer.

#### Review Criteria

Technical eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. Program planning and ability to achieve objectives: Program objectives should be stated clearly and precisely and should reflect the applicant organization's experience administering Internet projects and training programs in the Russian Federation. Objectives should respond to the project activities cited in this announcement and should relate to the current state of connectivity, Internet access, and training available in libraries, universities, and NGOs in Samara Oblast. A detailed work plan should explain step by step how objectives will be achieved and include a timetable for completion of all critical technical and programmatic components of the project. The training methodology and curriculum should be discussed in detail. Responsibilities of all partners should be clearly described.

2. Institutional capacity: Proposed personnel and organizational resources must be adequate and appropriate to implement the project. The narrative must demonstrate proven ability to handle the technical and programmatic requirements of the project, including a

knowledge of useful Internet resources in English and Russian in business, law, and public administration, and to effectively coordinate logistics and project components with diverse Russian and U.S. public and private sector organizations.

3. Organization's track record: Relevant USIA and outside assessments of the organization's experience with academic exchange and training programs and Internet projects in Russia, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past grants as determined by USIA's Office of Contracts.

4. Multiplier effect/impact: Proposed programs must demonstrate an impact on the wider community through the sharing of information and the establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

5. Cost-effectiveness: Overhead and program and administrative costs, including required equipment, services, connectivity, salaries, and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Preference will be given to proposals that leverage existing resources in Samara Oblast, maximize in-kind contributions and cost-sharing through other U.S. and/or Russian public and private sector partners as well as institutional direct funding contributions, and submit an administrative budget that is less than 20% of the grant amount requested from the USIA.

6. Support of diversity and pluralism: Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity throughout the program.

7. Program evaluation: USIA is results-oriented. Proposals must include a plan to evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold at each public access Internet site and at the end of the project. A draft survey questionnaire plus a description of a methodology to be used to link outcomes to original project objectives is required. USIA recommends that the proposal include draft questions for focus groups for staff and end-users at the public access Internet sites.

#### Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any USIA representative. Explanatory information provided by the Agency that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Agency reserves the

right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

#### Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

Dated: August 7, 1998.

**James D. Whitten,**

*Acting Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.*

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### UTAH RECLAMATION MITIGATION AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

#### Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Angler-Access Mitigation Program Strawberry Aqueduct and Collection System, Bonneville Unit, Central Utah Project

**AGENCY:** The Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission (Mitigation Commission).

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of the draft environmental assessment.

**SUMMARY:** The purpose of the Proposed Action is to complete several mitigation obligations that were identified as mitigation for the construction and operation of the Bonneville Unit of the Central Utah Project. As originally planned in 1965, construction of the Bonneville Unit was estimated to inundate approximately 40 miles of stream habitat and adversely impact an additional 240 miles of streams by altering stream flows. It was estimated that 73 percent of the adult trout habitat on impacted streams would be lost as a result of constructing and operating the Strawberry Aqueduct and Collection System (SACS), a feature of the Bonneville Unit. To mitigate for these impacts, several mitigation obligations were identified. Although the emphasis of this Draft Environmental Assessment is achieving angler access, several other mitigation measures are addressed. The mitigation obligations that are addressed by the Proposed Action are as follows:

- The 1988 Aquatic Mitigation Plan for the Bonneville Unit identified the acquisition of 51 miles of angler access on seven impacted streams as partial mitigation for the construction and operation of SACS. Approximately 42.25 of the 51 miles identified for angler-access acquisition have already