



**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)
UNDER THE MODEL COURT INITIATIVE (MCI) GRANTS PROGRAM**

Issuance Date: February 7, 2024
Closing Date: March 28, 2024
Closing Time: Midnight
Subject: Request for Applications (RFA) Number 2004-RFA-004
Model Court Initiative (MCI) Grants Program
Reference: Issued Under a Dexis Model Court Initiative Task Order/Contract
Number 72011721F00001

This Request for Applications (RFA) outlines the information required by the applicant for the development and submission of a proposal for consideration. The potential applicant is expected to review, understand, and conform with specifications contained in this RFA. Failure to do so will be at the applicant's own risk.

All reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the grant program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (2 CFR 200 Subpart E Cost Principles or the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for-profit organizations), may be charged under the grant.

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

This RFA is being issued and consists of this cover letter, Schedule A, and Annexes.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the MCI nor does it commit MCI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. The application is submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in the MCI grants program.

Sincerely,

Natalia Vilcu,
Chief of Party



MODEL COURT INITIATIVE

SCHEDULE A

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Model Court Initiative (MCI) is a six-year project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Dexis Consulting Group ('Dexis'). The Project aims to improve the performance of courts in delivering quality justice services and to improve the connection between courts, communities, and system users. MCI is implemented in two phases: January 11, 2021 – January 10, 2024 (Phase 1) and January 11, 2024 – January 10, 2027 (Phase 2).

During its Phase 2, MCI will work toward two objectives:

- Selected Moldovan courts identified and supported through targeted assistance to improve functioning and services to gain model court status.
- Supplementary national level assistance provided in key areas necessary for changes to enhance court improvement at the individual level, including but not limited to support to the newly created Superior Council of Magistracy, the new Supreme Court of Justice, and other key legal actors in Moldova.

The purpose of the MCI Grants Program is to strengthen CSOs so that they: (1) have ready capacities to advocate to improve laws, policies, and services; and (2) can participate directly in supporting the development of MCI initiatives in model courts and at the national level.

To develop partnerships with CSOs in the justice sector and build their capacity, the Project launched and implemented three grant programs during MCI Phase 1. The Project grantees participated in implementing MCI initiatives in Pilot Model Courts (PMC) and at the national level to improve delivery of justice services and strengthen the connection between courts and communities.

In MCI Phase 2, the grants program for CSOs will aim to build upon the achievements of Phase 1 and significantly increase the impact of CSOs on the delivery of justice services and improved access to justice of the population. The CSOs are expected to participate in activities designed to develop national level policy documents aiming to improve access to justice for vulnerable groups, increase the professional competencies of court staff and judges, and raise public awareness of digital tools available in courts.

Fourth Grants Program Scope

Dexis invites registered non-governmental organizations to submit proposals that align with the specific objectives outlined in the fourth round of the MCI Grants Program:



- Developing and implementing comprehensive policy documents that will significantly increase access to justice for vulnerable populations, including minors, elderly, persons with disabilities, and victims or potential victims of domestic violence.
- Increasing the professional competencies of employees and judges within selected PMCs in key areas crucial for effective public engagement and information dissemination, including, but not limited to legal writing, public and media communication, press-release writing, social media management, and prevention of professional burnout.
- Raising awareness of digitalization in the judiciary and promoting the adoption of good practices in this area by national courts and other judicial institutions.
- Increasing the organizational capacity of grantees.

Eligible activities include, but are not limited to advocacy and awareness raising campaigns to promote policy reforms, strategic advocacy efforts aimed at influencing decision-makers and key stakeholders, enhancing communication between communities and courts, increasing access to justice for vulnerable groups, storytelling to promote successful stories about the judiciary, advancing citizens' access to courts and access to legal information, capacity-building training to judges and other court representatives, raising awareness about digitalization and good practices in courts, capacity building activities for awarded grantees.

Note: For the purpose of this request for applications, vulnerable groups include women, girls, ethnic minorities, juveniles in contact with the law, people with disabilities, youth, and the elderly.

The grants can be implemented at the national, regional and/or local levels. Grant activities with a national scope may be prioritized under this RFA. For grants with a regional or local scope, part of the proposed activities must be implemented in districts served by Hincesti, Straseni, Drochia and Criuleni first instance courts.

The applicant may budget up to 10% from total costs for organizational development. It includes trainings, development of internal policies and procedures, coaching and mentoring in areas where the organization needs improvement.

Allocation of organizational development costs can be made as follows:

- Based on the applicant's needs described by the organization in the application form.
- Based on the needs and priorities identified in the pre-award risk-assessment stage conducted by Dexis.

Gender Consideration

Promoting gender equality and advancing the status of all women and girls around the world is vital to achieving program development objectives. As part of the design of any proposed activity, the recipient will assess and identify gender issues which impact the participation of men and women equally in the participation of this program. Refer to USAID ADS 205 found at https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-04/205_1.pdf for more information on integrating this policy into their approach.

**US Government (USG) Regulation:**

For non-US organizations, the Standard Provisions for Non-US Nongovernmental Recipients will apply. (Annex 1)

SECTION II: AWARD INFORMATION

Subject to the availability of funds in the framework of the MCI Grants Program, Dexis expects to award up to 5 grants, ranging from \$50,000 to \$150,000. The total amount available is \$350,000. The expected duration of Dexis' support, or the period of performance, is from June 2024 to September 2026 and cannot exceed a maximum of 24 months. MCI reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. The final amount will be dependent upon grant activities and final negotiation. Under exceptional circumstances, a grant may be awarded that is outside this range. Applicants may only submit one application under this RFA.

Dexis anticipates funding a Fixed Amount Award (FAA) for this program in accordance with ADS 303saj - [Fixed Amount Awards to Non-Governmental Organizations - An Additional Help Document for ADS Chapter 303 \(usaid.gov\)](#).

All applicants (unless the applicant is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c) or has an exception approved by the Grant awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d) are required to:

1. Be registered in SAM at the time of the award. SAM is the primary registrant database for the U.S. Grant Government. SAM collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data about the Grant government's trading partners in support of the contract award, grants, and the electronic payment processes. To register please access <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>.
2. Always maintain an active SAM registration with current information during which it has an active Grant award or an application or plan under consideration by a Grant awarding agency.

Organizations are encouraged to register during the application period. Registration is free. Registration in SAM can be activated in up to two weeks. If the organization encounter difficulties while registering in SAM, finalist grantees will be assisted by MCI Grants Team with registration prior to award.

Pre-award Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and other Statements of the Recipient.

All grantees will be required to sign and comply with the content of the certifications as part of the grant agreement (Annex 4).

SECTION III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

The applicant/application must meet the following requirements:



- Be officially registered and working in compliance with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations, including, but not limited to pertinent local laws and status. In lieu of official registration, a grantee may show proof of effort to secure registration, exemption from registration, or show cause why such registration is either not optional or practicable.
- Meet the project's objectives and principles.
- Contain expected outcomes and results consistent with and linked to the project's objectives.
- The applicant is not a debarred organization.

Types of Grantees Eligible:

- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Journalistic, media associations and outlets
- Legal clinics
- Partnerships or consortia between entities mentioned above.

Cost share is not required.

SECTION IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Any questions concerning this RFA should be submitted in writing not later than 14 days prior to the closing date shown above to Veaceslav Luca, Grants Specialist at the email – MCigrants@dexisonline.com. Responses to questions will be made available the same way the RFA was communicated. Applicants should retain for their records one copy of all enclosures which accompany their application.

The application must be sent in electronic form to the address indicated below no later than the closing date listed on the front page of this RFA. Applications and all supporting material must be submitted in English. Pre-award costs are not allowable and will not be reimbursed. The application and modifications thereof shall be submitted in electronic format to the following address: MCigrants@dexisonline.com.

The complete application package must be submitted in the required format with the required attachments.

- Grant Application Form (Annex 2):
 - a. Organizational information and profile
 - b. Executive summary of the technical proposal
 - c. Context analysis
 - d. Technical application (max. 5 pages)
 - e. Other relevant documents or information (risk assessment, references, human resources, etc. as specified in Annex 2)
- Budget (Annex 3).
- Required certifications as per ADS 303.3.8 (Annex 4)



- Grantee self-assessment (Annex 5)
- Confirmation of registration (certificate or decision) or excerpt from the State Register
- The last organizational financial report
- The last audit report, if available
- The last activity report, if available

Budget

The proposed budget must include all direct costs associated with the implementation and completion of activities, as well as any indirect costs (if applicable) as detailed in the budget. These amounts are subject to revision depending on both reasonableness and the availability of funds. Cost sharing cannot be used with Fixed Amount Awards.

The proposed budget must provide cost estimates for the management of the program (including program monitoring, when applicable). Applicants will minimize their administrative and support costs for managing the program to maximize the funds available for program activities. All costs must be reasonable, allowable, and allocable; budgets deemed unrealistic may result in the disqualification of an Applicant's proposal.

Applicants will provide the following:

- a. Proposed budget must be submitted in an Excel spreadsheet with all cells and formulas visible and unlocked that includes a summary budget and a detailed/itemized budget. Budgets should be proposed in USD; note that the award will be paid in local currency based on the exchange rate at the time of the award.
- b. The detailed budget must include cost notes/budget narrative explaining all estimated costs. Please note that the budget narrative must not only express the calculation of the estimate and purpose but also the basis of estimate – the rationale used to determine the cost estimate was fair and reasonable.

Restrictions:

- Grant funds provided under the terms of this RFA shall not be used to finance any of the following commodities as per ADS 312 Eligibility of Commodities:
 - **Ineligible commodities:** Military equipment, surveillance equipment, commodities, and services for support of police and other law enforcement activities, abortion equipment and services, luxury goods, gambling equipment, and weather modification equipment.
 - **Restricted commodities include:** Agricultural commodities, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, contraceptives and condoms, pesticides, used equipment, U.S. Government-owned excess property, and fertilizer.
 - **Others:** Purchases of goods or services restricted or prohibited under the prevailing USAID source and nationality and other regulations found under ADS 310 or from



- countries and suppliers as may be identified by USAID's consolidated list of debarred, suspended or ineligible subcontractors at <http://www.epls.gov/>.
- In addition, grant funds provided under the terms of this RFA shall not be used to finance any of the following costs:
 - Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to successfully complete the activity, including any grantee headquarters expenses that are not directly linked to the implementation of the proposed project.
 - Previous obligations and/or bad debts.
 - Fines and/or penalties.
 - Other costs unallowable under USAID and/or federal regulations such as referenced 2 CFR 200 Subpart E Cost Principles and FAR 31.2 Cost Principles for Commercial Organizations.

Late Application

Late applications are marked as "late" and are ineligible for review or award; however, Dexis reserves the right to accept and include late applications in the review and award process when it is considered within the best interest of Dexis to do so and if applications that were received on time have not been opened and reviewed. Applications that are submitted late or incomplete run the risk of **not** being considered for review.

SECTION V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Within 14 working days of the deadline for submitting applications, a technical review committee will convene. Throughout the evaluation process, MCI shall take steps to ensure that members of the committee do not have any conflicts of interest or the appearance of such with regards to the organizations whose applicants are under review. An individual shall be considered to have the appearance of a conflict of interest "if that person, or that person's spouse, partner, child, close friend or relative works for or is negotiating to work for or has a financial interest (including being an unpaid member of a Board of Directors) in any organization that submitted an application currently under the panel's review." Members of the committee shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from parties to the awards.

Note: Under unusual circumstances the technical review committee may be delayed.

Verification of the application submission requirements will be conducted by the field grants manager. Awards will be made within up to 60 working days after the technical evaluation committee completes its review.

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

Evaluation Criteria:



- 1. Technical merit – 35 points**
 - a. Relevance to program goals.
 - b. Sustainability of project results.
 - c. Anticipated impact on the beneficiaries.
- 2. Past performance / Organizational capacity – 25 points**
 - a. Past performance in similar projects.
 - b. Relevant staff skills to the proposed project.
 - c. Experience in geographical regions.
 - d. Written accounting and procurement procedures.
 - e. Capacity to adhere to USAID financial guidelines.
- 3. Management capacity and personnel – 20 points**
 - a. Management and staffing approach aligned to activities.
 - b. Convincing demonstration of achieving objectives and results described.
- 4. Gender mainstreaming/inclusivity – 10 points**
 - a. Gender considerations are thoroughly integrated throughout the proposal.
 - b. The organization staff is comprised of both genders, where applicable.
- 5. Feasibility and cost effectiveness – 10 points**
 - a. Costs are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.
 - b. The proposal is cost effective.

Total: 100 points

SECTION VI: AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

The recommendation or selection of an application in accordance with established procedures does not guarantee an award. All applicants must demonstrate that they possess or have the ability to obtain the necessary management competence to practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided.

A successful applicant can expect to receive an award letter. The award letter will be addressed to the organization’s point of contact as stated in the application. Applicants that were not successful can expect a letter explaining the reason for their unsuccessful application.

Following the award letter, final negotiations will take place before signing a grant agreement.

Reporting Procedures:

The Fixed Amount Award will list deliverables/milestones for the program. In addition, the grantee will be required to submit the following reports.

a) Program Reporting

Reporting requirements are summarized below:

TYPE OF REPORT	DUE DATE
	<i>(Days refer to calendar days and quarter refers to the fiscal quarter, unless stated otherwise)</i>



Project Implementation Plan	Project Implementation Plan is due for approval 30 days after award.
Quarterly Performance Report	Quarterly Performance Report is due 20 days after the end of each U.S. government fiscal quarter or 20 days after the end of reporting quarter mentioned in grant agreement.
Project Completion Report	30 days after completion of award.

b) Project Implementation Plans

The Recipient will submit a Project Implementation Plan for approval by Dexis within 30 days after award.

c) Quarterly Performance Reports

The Recipient will submit Quarterly Performance Reports that give insight into the progress of planned activities. The narrative report will include qualitative and quantitative information describing activities carried out and specific results achieved during the quarter. Reports may include annexes such as training reports, training agenda, photographs of training sessions and other related materials. Reporting periods will either coincide with USAID fiscal year quarters, with reports due no later than twenty (20) days after the end of each quarter (January 20, April 20, July 20, and Oct 20), or a personalized reporting frequency will be mentioned in the grant agreement. The reporting timeline depends on the grant duration.

d) Project Completion Reports

The Project Completion Report is a detailed report which summarizes the accomplishments and impact in relation to the expected results. The final report shall be submitted no later than 30 days after the end-date of the grant.

Issuance of the final installment of grant funds is contingent upon MCI receipt and acceptance of Final Program Reports.

SECTION VII: OTHER INFORMATION

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of Dexis, nor does it commit the MCI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

Dexis reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Further, Dexis reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this RFA.



Annex 1: Mandatory Standard Provisions

Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations

<https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/references-chapter/303mab>