



MONGOLIA ENERGY GOVERNANCE ACTIVITY

Mongolia Energy Research and Innovation Fund

Annual Program Statement #2023-001

“Policy and Consumer Advocacy to Support Mongolia’s Energy Sector Transition”

The Mongolia Energy Governance (MEG) Program is a five-year USAID-funded project to promote a secure, stable, diversified, and modern energy sector. Through the Mongolia Energy Research and Innovation (MERI) Fund, grants will be awarded that sustain the progress of MEG activities by building a more sustainable energy sector ecosystem, strengthening institutional and workforce capacity of Mongolian organizations, and providing tools to carry forth the energy sector transition.

The MEG Activity is guided by the following development objectives:

1. Improve planning and operational performance of the electricity and heating systems;
2. Increase market competitiveness in the power sector;
3. Enable adoption of modern energy generation and management technologies;
4. Promote energy efficiency and demand side management;
5. Raise awareness and lead to behavioral change of energy use;
6. Promote Gender and Social inclusion in the energy sector;

A key element of the MEG Activity is the use of grants under contract (GUCs) to partner with Mongolian actors to support energy sector transformation. The MEG Activity’s MERI Fund will be designed to accommodate a variety of approaches depending on USAID/Mongolia’s priorities for the overall Activity. The use of the MERI Fund will incentivize co-investment and leverage and facilitate identification of innovative initiatives by public, private and civil society sectors while considering cross-cutting themes, such as gender balance, social inclusion and youth participation.

In support of the Activity objectives, MEG will provide grants to think tanks, consulting firms, community organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private firms, energy institutions, and other relevant Mongolian organizations to implement a variety of interventions. MEG’s MERI Fund hereby issues this Annual Program Statement (APS) to invite concept papers from organizations seeking to participate in its Policy Advocacy Program. Unless amended or canceled, this APS will be valid from May 17, 2023 through October 30, 2023.

“Policy and Consumer Advocacy to Support Mongolia’s Energy Sector Transition”

The Policy Advocacy Program offers grant funding to support Mongolia’s energy sector transition where key challenges remain in policy and consumer advocacy, including the development and implementation of promising solutions to key challenges in the energy sector, such as:



- **Strengthening policy and research capacity** aims to equip energy sector individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to effectively develop, implement, and evaluate policies and research programs. Some examples of activities under this program include evaluating policy alternatives and their impact on different groups, improving local expertise in sector planning and operations, evaluating energy innovations for scalability, and providing training and capacity-building programs for energy researchers and policymakers. The program also promotes knowledge exchange and dissemination through conferences, publications, and online platforms to support energy policy reform.
- **Improving accessibility of data and transparency** empowers consumers to make informed decisions about sustainable and affordable energy sources while holding energy companies and governments accountable for their impact and policies. It promotes energy transparency by developing online tools and platforms that provide easy access to energy-related data, fostering innovation and competition in the energy sector.
- **Strengthening professional associations, Community based organizations (CBOs) and NGOs** benefits professionals and the community through networking, capacity building, expertise, and advocacy. NGOs and CBOs can improve energy access, affordability, and sustainability by promoting sustainable energy practices and efficient energy use. They also advocate for the roles and responsibilities of consumers, service providers, and the government, and promote tariff reform.
- **Promoting the gender equality and advancement of women in energy sector** is essential for creating a sustainable and equitable world. Women have been historically underrepresented in the industry, and it is crucial to work towards a more diverse and inclusive sector that reflects women's perspectives in energy planning, policy, and decision-making. Unequal access to energy has a significant impact on women, increasing their workload for unpaid work and reducing opportunities for paid labor. To improve governance, it is necessary to create an inclusive, healthy work environment that encourages women's participation in the power sector. Activities should focus on designing gender-inclusive interventions and conducting community engagement activities, particularly among women and other vulnerable populations, to promote consumer advocacy.

It is anticipated that organizations/businesses will be the best suited to the accomplishment of the intended outcomes; however, all organizations that meet the eligibility criteria will be considered. If selected for award, each recipient will be **expected to achieve results** (not limited to) which provide significant benefit to the Mongolian Energy sector, as measured by one or more of the following performance indicators:

Overall, **“Policy and Consumer Advocacy to Support Mongolia’s Energy Sector Transition”** interventions can lead to more effective, collaborative, and legitimate advocacy efforts, ultimately resulting in policies that better reflect the needs and interests of the communities they serve.



- **By strengthening policy and research capacity:**
 - Increased public awareness of important issues and challenges.
 - Improved accountability which is responsive to the needs of public and business
 - Increased collaboration between government, CSO and private sector.
 - Increased evidence-based and effective policies.
 - Improved capacity of program and project design and plan.
- **By improving accessibility of data and transparency:**
 - Improved data collection methods, flow and reporting.
 - Improved communication by using qualified and concise data.
 - Increased accountability for energy utilities and companies to operate in a responsible and sustainable manner.
 - Increased use of technologies or services to increase energy safety and quality
 - Increased research capacity by enabling data accessibility.
- **By strengthening professional associations and Community based organizations (CBO) and NGO:**
 - Improved credibility and trust among stakeholders.
 - Improved advocacy and representation (building stronger voices).
 - Increased professional development and standards of practice.
 - Improved management practices.
- **Promoting the gender equality and advancement of women in energy:**
 - Increased representation of women and supporting their voices in energy policy and planning.
 - Improved network and collaboration of women in energy.
 - Increased diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
 - Increased operational performance and competitiveness.
 - Improved health, education consequences as a social issue in energy.

Focus area	Example of high-level activities
Strengthening policy and research capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and implement strategies to facilitate equitable citizen participation in process for sector planning and tariff rate setting. ● Build or improve programs to develop local expertise in sector planning, regulation, and operations, including investment and procurement. ● Evaluate the impact of policy alternatives, including differential effects on men, women, and children. ● Advocacy campaign to encourage the building of communities of practice and enable champions to continue encouraging behavioral change around household energy consumption and tariff reform. ● Evaluate energy innovations to determine their potential for scale and strengthen technical capacity building and vocational training. ● Support the mobilization of young professionals as future energy leaders to contribute to the national energy dialogue towards a more sustainable, affordable and reliable energy system. ● Support journalists and media to learn more about the energy sector in order to motivate them to have more interest in this sector. ● Improve impact by promoting results-based policy advocacy approaches to air pollution reduction measures (e.g.. monitoring public-funded programs which decrease air pollution.



Focus area	Example of high-level activities
<p>Improving accessibility of data and transparency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote transparency in energy planning and policymaking, energy infrastructure and investment, and energy-related environmental and social impacts. ● Support increased access to information about energy sources, production, distribution, and consumption to enhance public understanding and promote informed decision-making. ● Introduce standards and certifications by adopting and adhering to international standards and certifications, such as those related to energy efficiency, environmental management, social responsibility, and human rights, to help ensure that energy companies operate transparently and responsibly. ● Develop energy transparency assessments or indices so that state-owned enterprises will disclose relevant information, such as financial data, environmental and social impact assessments, and governance structures, to promote transparency and accountability. ● Assess digital readiness to promote efficiency and prevent corruption, such as transparency in licensing, and procurement processes, to enhance accountability and promote public trust in the energy sector.
<p>Strengthening professional associations and Community based organizations (CBOs) and NGOs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop professional training modules and opportunities to access exclusive resources and participate in networking events, such as conferences and workshops, where members can share their expertise and learn from one another. ● Provide leadership and mentorship opportunities for their members and future young professionals. ● Promote community-led energy initiatives for supporting the development of community energy projects, such as solar energy installations and insulations or advocating for policies and programs related to air pollution. ● Collaborate with other organizations, businesses, and government agencies so that NGOs and CBOs can leverage their resources and increase impacts on increasing awareness about the importance of energy efficiency and tariff reform. ● Carry out capacity building of communities of practice and enable champions to continue to advocate and model behavioral change to reduce air pollution in ger districts via energy consumption and tariff reform.
<p>Promoting gender equality and advancement of women in energy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide support to an NGO that will amplify the voices of women and address gender issues in the energy sector. ● Support community engagement activities around consumer advocacy, especially among women and other vulnerable populations. ● Encourage strong leadership of women in energy; provide mentorship, coaching and networking programs. ● Conduct research on workplace environment assessment and implement institutional capacity building to address implicit social stereotypes and biases, while promoting diversity and inclusion and eliminating any types harassment and discrimination in the workplace environment.



I. ELIGIBLE PARTIES

Grants program is designed for non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), non-profit, and for-profit entities. Organizations that are affiliated with a government, or any governmental entities, are not eligible to apply. Activity will accept grant applications from both not-for-profit and for-profit organizations. In order to be considered eligible for a grant award under this APS, prospective grantees must:

- Be a registered legal entity in Mongolia. Be a for-profit or non-profit organization, formally constituted, recognized by and in good legal standing with the appropriate Mongolian authorities and compliant with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations (individuals are not eligible). Registration documents will be required.
- Operates as an independent non-politically affiliated organization.
- Not be part of a government or any government structure or agency.
- Provide evidence of financial accountability to the extent possible and maintain strict and detailed records of all expenses, and have designated individual(s) responsible for financial management.
- Be in good standing with all civil and fiscal authorities in the countries they operate in, and Possess financial accountability and maintain detailed records of all expenses.
- Possess sound managerial, technical, and institutional capacities to achieve the results of the grants program.
- Possess a system of internal controls that safeguards assets and protects against fraud, waste, and conflicts of interest.
- Not appear on any list of debarred or suspended entities (as found on www.sam.gov), or on any terrorist watch list or other published list of ineligible recipients.

Grants must not fund or support any of the following activities:

- Capital expenditures, including construction activities or buying real property.
- Capital loans.
- Support for or lobbying on behalf of a particular political party.
- Religious activities.
- Support of police or military.

II. INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

Grants will be negotiated, denominated and funded in MNT. Grant award amounts under this APS will be determined on a case by case basis depending on the activities proposed, but are anticipated to be valued at between \$75,000 and \$150,000. Higher or lower values may be awarded, as appropriate to the duration and content of the activities. Grant activities are expected to last from 6 months up to 36 months in duration.



Eligible Applicants should contact the MEG Activity Grants Manager to request the Concept Note Template or click here: <https://rb.gy/vqf4p> to submit their concept paper (maximum five pages excluding annexes). The template requests the following information:

- A general description of who will benefit from the proposed activities (including estimates of how many people and the target population(s)) and the proposed impact on them.
- A description of who and how the program will be implemented as an integral part of the applicant's Implementation Plan, including leadership and number of brief of staff or workers.
- An estimate of the total amount of Grant Program funding which would be required to implement the activities, as well as details of Applicant's contribution (cash and/or in-kind), if any.
- The purpose (mission) and objectives of the organization and the proposed program.
- Documentation of the organization's past history, geographic range sites of past and current activities, and specific programs and their impacts.

All concept papers will be reviewed by the MEG team and evaluated and scored objectively using the established criteria presented below.

Only concept papers from applicants that meet the eligibility requirements below will be further reviewed. To qualify for further consideration, eligible concept notes must also meet mandatory criteria 1-5:

1. Is the purpose of the activity specified in the application consistent with the objectives of the MEG Activity.
2. Has the Applicant provided a copy of its legal registration with its concept paper?
3. Does the Applicant have the organizational capability to successfully implement the activity specified in the concept paper?
4. Does the Applicant have the financial accounting system to adequately account (as per USAID regulations) for the funds that would be provided via the award?
5. Does the Applicant intend to contribute their own resources to support the outcome of the proposed activities? If so, has the applicant included an explanation of the organization's own contribution that will be leveraged to support this grant?

III. SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants whose concept papers meet the below criteria will then be invited to submit a formal application, which will be scored according to the supplementary criteria 6-10:

Criteria	Maximum Points (100 total)
6. Strategic Fit: Does the activity contribute to the MEG's overall objectives, suggest sustainability of results and anticipated benefits to the beneficiaries, number of beneficiaries served and duration of the proposed activities.	30 points
7. Technical Approach: Do the activities have a realistic and well thought out implementation plan with clearly defined objectives, expected results, and quantifiable target/benchmarks with a technical approach that is innovative, cost-effective, transformative, and sustainable?	30 points



<p>8. Organizational Capabilities: does the applicant have past experience in Mongolia in a similar projects? Are the staff equipped with skills relevant to the proposed activity? Does the applicant possess a sound accounting system and procurement practices and capacity to adhere to USAID financial guidelines?</p>	<p>25 points</p>
<p>9. Gender and youth Considerations: Does the activity offer employment opportunities for women and/or youth that could impact women’s and youth empowerment, participation and involvement?</p>	<p>5 points</p>
<p>10. Cost Effectiveness: Is the value of the proposed grant reasonable, allocable, allowable, and cost effective? Is the Applicant contributing to the overall activity cost in cash or in kind, or using other methods to leverage resources? Applications that maximize the portion of direct activity costs including leveraging of the organizational contribution and that minimize administrative costs will be more favorably considered.</p>	<p>10 points</p>

IV. GRANT PAYMENTS

The MERI Fund expects to award multiple performance-based Fixed Amount Award grants under this APS. Each grant will be divided into several payments, to be paid upon achievement of agreed-upon milestones. Each grant agreement will define the milestones, as appropriate for each grantee. All grants will include one or more milestones related to the achievement of expected results as measured by the performance indicators.

V. CONCEPT PAPER REQUIREMENTS AND REVIEW PROCESS

1. **Information sharing session:** This session will review the information in the APSs, MEG’s outcomes and interventions and provide an opportunity for applicants to pose questions. Applicants interested in attending the information session are requested to indicate their interest by 24th of May, 2023 at 12:00 noon to register through this link: <https://rb.gy/crjoi>
2. **Closing date of application:** Concept papers should briefly and concisely address the questions provided in the template and will be accepted on a rolling basis from 15th of May 2023 to 30th of October 2023. Concept papers will be reviewed two times during this period:
 - Round 1 – for concept papers received by June 30, 2023
 - Round 2 – for concept papers received by October 30, 2023

The concept paper must be signed by an authorized agent of the applicant and must be submitted in either English or Mongolian language. Concept papers and all annexes submitted electronically via email to the MEG MERI Fund at the following coordinates:



Submission Address: Mongolia Energy Governance Activity. USAID contractor Abt Associates Inc. International Development.

Grants Manager: Grants_mongolia@abtassoc.com; Applicants must submit their concept papers using the attached via email to the MERI Fund Grants Manager. Clarification questions may also be directed to this email address. Please note, no questions will be accepted in person or via telephone. Additional questions concerning those APSs should be submitted in writing via email to email address. No questions will be answered by phone and in person. For all questions submitted, a written response will be circulated to all applicants.

The issuance of this APS does not constitute an award commitment on the part of MEG Activity, nor does it commit Abt Associates (the USAID Contractor implementing project name) to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of concept papers or applications. USAID and Abt Associates reserve the right to reject any or all concept papers/applications, if such action is considered to be in the best interest of the Project.

AUTHORIZATION AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The MEG Activity Grants Program is authorized in accordance with USAID Contract IDIQ Contract No.: 7200AA19D00021 (Task Order Contract No.: 72043822F00001). Awards will be administered in accordance with provisions contained in ADS Chapter 303, “Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations,” and/or within the terms of the USAID Standard Provisions applicable to Non-U.S. Non-Governmental Recipients.