**OPEN GRANTS COMPETITION**

**PROMOTING FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND STRENGTHENING INDEPENDENT MEDIA IN UKRAINE**

February 2012

Internews` Strengthening Independent Media in Ukraine (U-Media) Program supported by USAID invites to submit grant proposals within the open grants competition acting on a rolling basis. The competition is intended for officially registered, in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, national and regional media outlets, media non-government organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), research institutions, media law and other non-profit organizations that will work to improve the media sector in Ukraine through the objectives and criteria described below.

U-Media is searching for innovative projects and ideas on independent media development in Ukraine that will result into improvement of the enabling environment for media in Ukraine and media information quality for citizens.

U-Media will support projects that will contribute to the following objectives:

1. Support and promote freedom of speech and media independence*.*
2. Increase the variety of news sources and improve news quality*.*
3. Improve the enabling environment for media and freedom of speech.

Internews will also support projects aiming at encouraging journalists in disseminating objective and complete information on election processes, parties` and candidates` programs during the *parliamentary election 2012* that will contribute to public awareness and the conscious voting. Grant activities during the pre-election campaign can correspond to the priorities mentioned below. Grant proposals within such types of activity should be submitted by July 10, 2012.

Within the open grants competition Internews will consider project proposals with budgets not exceeding $ 25,000 (if other sum not mentioned in priority tasks description) for up to 12-months and focusing on the U-Media`s priority types of activities, namely:

1. ***Media literacy training.*** Stimulating public and journalists` demand for quality journalism. Namely, creating mechanism for submitting complaints by representatives of media and public in order to inform about ethical standards violations. On regional level, activity can be focused on narrow audience, e.g. senior schoolchildren, students, pensioners, representatives of business environment and civil society. Activity could include lectures, extra-class activities, networks/clubs creating and meetings for quality media discussion, debates and press-conferences for highlighting media monitoring results to be conducted by U-Media or other media organizations. Media literacy campaigns could result in ability to expose paid materials in media, ability to identify media content quality, knowledge about possible actions in case of low-quality content identification, awareness about media owners, etc.
2. ***New Media.*** Promoting and assisting Internet media, convergence, safety and observance of copyright in Internet. Possible activity: consultancies and trainings for regional independent editorials on technologies and skills in creating interactive Internet platforms, journalism standards, successful practices in transition of traditional media into convergent platform, social market, etc.

Within activity on promoting transition to convergent platforms, the special attention will be paid to:

* + ***Online resources safety trainings*** that will help to reduce risks of interference into online resources and their shutdown.
	+ Traditional and new media grants for **modernization and filling** their Internet media with quality content (up to $ 4000).
1. ***Content production.*** Supporting production of balanced, objective, analytical content/news for different formats (TV, radio, Internet, print, social networks). Content can include topical programs on economic, social issues, democracy development and media role in society, assist in increasing state authority`s transparency and involving of public in decision making on local level.
2. ***Investigative journalism.*** Conducting and publication of quality investigations on actual topics – human rights violation, land issues, budget expenses, health care, education, judicial system, etc. Supporting cooperation of journalists and civil society when conducting investigations, monitoring of investigative journalism influence, additional requests and highlighting reaction of authority to investigative journalism publications. Project encourages for cooperation of regional journalism organizations and associations which will assist in increasing quantity and enhancing investigative journalism quality.
3. ***Media ownership transparency.*** Media ownership monitoring on national and regional levels, informing on its influence on editorial policy of media in regions. Project could research, monitor, publicize information on media ownership of national and regional media, cooperate with journalists-investigators for searching and highlighting this issue. Possible products of such projects are creation of interactive media ownership map, informational campaigns, expert and public discussions on media owners influence on editorial policy.
4. ***Advocacy.*** Systematic organized activity aiming at journalists` rights protection, observance of legislation, protection of rights and freedom of speech and freedom of press protection. Possible types of activity: informational campaigns, cooperation of journalists and NGOs, reaction on censorship cases, pressure on and violation of journalists` rights, creation of interactive crowdsourcing maps on journalists` rights violation, etc.
5. ***Regional media and inter-regional connections*** aimed at creation and strengthening of connection and mutual understanding between local media and NGOs for production of local news and highlighting events from other regions of Ukraine. Possible activity: regular meetings of journalists and NGOs` representatives to share experience and information on issues important for their regions, familiarization visits of journalists to other regions, joint creation or use of content, creation of inter-regional news sections, etc.
6. ***Transition to digital format of broadcasting.*** Expert consultancies and media support during the transition to digital format of broadcasting, monitoring of legislation and highlighting the process of transition to digital broadcasting, awareness campaigns for the public to make easier the transition to consumption of digital signal.
7. **Gender aspects of media development**. Assisting gender equality and gender issues learning are one of the main aspects of democratic society development. The projects implementers can study barriers for equal participation of women in media management, journalist activity and/or media organizations, propose ways for overcoming gender inequality if such cases are exposed, increase the public discussion intensity on gender issues in media sphere.

**U-Media Grants Proposals Writing Instructions:**

All proposals should be submitted in Russian or Ukrainian, in **type font.** Proposal structure includes the following part:

**I. Cover Page – 1 page:**

**This page should contain the following information:**

1. Project Title
2. Brief Project Description: *In one paragraph, clearly and concisely summarize your project.*
3. Organization: N*ame and contact information.*
4. Project Coordinator: Full n*ame and contact information.*
5. Duration of the Project (in months)
6. Amount Requested in USD

*Please indicate ELECTION 2012 in the upper right corner of the cover page if the project foresees activities assisting journalists work during the election campaign.*

**II. Program Description – 5 pages maximum:**

1. Description of major project goals and objectives connected to the U-Media objectives.
2. Activities that are based on achieving the objectives.
3. Expected results, outcomes/outputs and impact of the project.
4. Monitoring and evaluation tools and indicators.
5. Timetable (monthly) that explains project logic and implementation.
6. Partners -- both public and private.

**III. Budget – 2 tabs in Excel format – must use attached template – and a budget narrative that explains the proposed costs** (instruction is attached)**.** The budget form is available on<http://umedia.kiev.ua/u-meda/anonsi/270-vdkritiy-grantoviy-konkurs-spriyannya-svobod-slova-ta-posilennya-nezalezhnih-zm-ukrayin.html>.

A one-tab budget table and details per each event at second tab of Excel file in the attached format. It should describe major expense categories that show clear cost effectiveness. The suggested cost share should be **not less that 10 percent from the requested sum of the grant**. An accompanying Word document should describe the justification for each cost (composition of each expense category, pricing principles, scope of work for personnel, etc.).

**IV. Capacity and previous experience in project implementation – no more than one page:**

1. Business or project management experience
2. Previous grants received

*Internews also invites newly-established organizations for submitting their proposals. If your organizations` experience in media projects implementation is insufficient, please, refer other relevant projects indicating a competence level of the main employees and consultants of the future project.*

**Proposals should be sent electronically to** **umedia@internews.org****, cc:** **umedia.internews@gmail.com**. If you don`t receive your application receipt acknowledgment within two days, please, contact U-Media on tel. (044) 458 4439/41 or send your proposal one more time.

**Proposals evaluation**

**Proposals which do not correspond to the U-Media`s priority types of activities and proposals requirements will not be considered.**

A U-Media jury made up of independent experts to evaluate proposals and select the winners. The jury will evaluate proposals ones a two months.

Rounds of proposals submission: by 10 March, by 10 May, by 10 July, by 10 September, by 10 November, by 10 January.

*Projects focusing on parliamentary election should be submitted by* ***10 July 2012****.*

Internews may contact an organization-applicant if further information about submitted proposal is required.

Please note that the projects evaluation process can take a calendar month. The period from the date of receiving a positive response from U-Media about your proposal supporting to the date of money receiving can take up to eight weeks, because of procedures related to grants program administration.

All awards are subject to available funding and USAID approval.

Organizations which proposals are not supported can receive an oral consultation about the reasons of their proposal rejection.

**Grant Selection Criteria**

Each proposal will get an appropriate number of points in accordance with the following list of criteria:

1. The proposal offers innovative approach for achieving at least one of U-Media program priorities.
2. Expected results and impact are reasonable.
3. The project can achieve expected results at the appointed period.
4. The proposed types of activities make possible achieving expected results.
5. The applicant demonstrates sufficient technical skill, experience and capacity for the activities proposed.
6. The budget of the project is reasonable and cost effective.
7. The cost share is not less that 10 percent from the requested sum.

If you have any questions related to the grants competition terms, please, contact U-Media staff on business days from 10.00 to 17.00.