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THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION / EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## **USAID AWARDS CIVIL SOCIETY PROJECT**

September 7, 2005

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announces a Civil Society project agreement award as part of its expanding technical cooperation with Azerbaijan.

USAID is launching a five-year, \$15.5 million project to strengthen civil society organizations' ability to bring the benefits of economic growth and political pluralism to the Azerbaijani people. The project has a small-grants component of approximately \$6 million over five years to support Azerbaijani non-governmental groups. The balance will go to activities such as on-the-job training, in-country and international internships, advisory services, and an improved legal environment.

The goal of this project is to assist the citizens and government of Azerbaijan in developing a more representative and better functioning democracy. The project includes two major components – strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations to effectively advocate their cause, and promoting civic activism by increasing citizens' ability to identify and prioritize their concerns.

The Civil Society Project will be implemented by the U.S.- based non-governmental organization Counterpart International, which has implemented similar civil society projects in many countries, including the Central Asian republics and Afghanistan.