



COUNTERING MALIGN KREMLIN INFLUENCE (CMKI) DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Goal: Increased resilience of partner countries		
Objective 1: Counter efforts to undermine democratic institutions and the rule of law		
1.1 Strengthen checks and balances and rule of law	1.2 Strengthen civil society’s resilience against efforts to restrict, harass, and stigmatize independent, non-governmental activity	1.3 Reduce the vulnerability of electoral and political processes to external interference and polarization
Objective 2: Resist the manipulation of information		
2.1 Bolster the capacity of indigenous media to provide professional, trusted news and information	2.2 Increase media literacy and public demand for high-quality, independent reporting	2.3 Strengthen the legal and regulatory operating environment for press freedom
Objective 3: Reduce energy vulnerabilities		
3.1 Enhance the energy security of partner countries	3.2 Reduce dependence on Kremlin-controlled energy resources	3.3 Improve internal and external oversight and governance of the energy sector
Objective 4: Reduce economic vulnerabilities		
4.1 Promote the diversification of exports and enable firms to compete in western markets	4.2 Strengthen the ability of financial markets to meet and comply with international standards and practices	

SUMMARY

In alignment with the National Security Strategy, our mission to help governments, civil society and the private sector in our partner countries on their Journey to Self-Reliance, and the Congressionally-established Countering Russian Influence Fund, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is launching our framework for Countering Malign Kremlin Influence (CMKI).

The United States has long believed that a strong, prosperous, and free Europe is vitally important to American strategic interests. The Russian Government and its proxies aim to weaken U.S. influence in the world and divide us from our allies and partners. They are using subversive measures to weaken the credibility of America’s commitment to Europe, undermine transatlantic unity, and weaken European institutions and governments.

Our Approach

USAID’s CMKI Development Framework responds to the challenge of the Kremlin’s malign influence by building the economic and democratic resilience of targeted countries, and by working to mitigate the Kremlin’s attempts to undermine a range of key institutions.

DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW

In democratic terms, the CMKI Development Framework is built around helping to strengthen civil-society organizations, conduct credible elections, institutionalize transparency and accountability in government institutions, and promote the rule of law. These efforts will include creating tools for reform-minded leaders and civil-society voices to tackle corrupt government practices that Kremlin agents often selectively exploit for Moscow’s strategic benefit.

Examples: In Ukraine, USAID provided approximately \$2.7 million in cybersecurity equipment and training for the Central Election Commission to support free and fair elections. Our programs also support judicial vetting that exposes corruption and increases transparency. By financing local and regional civil-society and grassroots organizations, USAID helps ensure citizens can hold their governments accountable.

MEDIA INDEPENDENCE

A free, independent media and the availability of fact-based reporting is key to safeguarding citizens against Russia’s efforts to manipulate information. USAID’s funding will build the capacity of indigenous media to provide trusted, independent news, and information sources. As part of this support, USAID will promote media-literacy programs that help citizens recognize Kremlin-driven disinformation efforts.

Examples: Our investments in news cooperatives dedicated to independent reporting reach nearly 2.7 million people across ten European and Eurasian countries. In Moldova, a USAID-funded “Pop-up Newsroom” offers media professionals and civil-society activists digital behavioral analytics and social-media technologies to analyze and identify disinformation. With USAID funding, eleven strategic media partners across Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia are growing their audiences, diversifying revenue, and elevating their digital media presence.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

To reduce Europe and Eurasia’s dependency on Russia, USAID’s assistance will include working with individual states to create effective, pro-growth legal and regulatory frameworks and assisting them to join well-functioning local and regional energy markets. As part of these efforts, USAID is prepared to support effective, independent regulatory authorities and strengthen the cybersecurity of regional energy utilities.

Examples: In Ukraine, USAID funds the efforts of the Electric Transmission System Operator to transition power systems from a synchronous connection with Russia to a new connection with Central Europe. USAID also helps utilities and government ministries in Southeast European countries develop a planning model for the natural-gas network and identify key projects for the diversification of gas supplies across Europe and Eurasia.

ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

In economic terms, USAID stands ready to assist our partners in Europe and Eurasia to remove counter-productive restrictions on private enterprise and free-market operations, tackle pervasive corruption, increase integration with western economies and open up new markets for U.S. businesses. USAID will also assist the private sector to diversify exports, compete more effectively in western markets, and meet the demanding standards of international markets.

Example(s): With USAID support, Moldova and Ukraine have significantly shifted their trade away from Russia and towards the European Union (EU), which leaves them less vulnerable to Russian pressure and economic blackmail. Today, Moldova sends more than 70 percent of its exports to the EU, and only 16 percent to Russia. In Moldova, USAID’s Financial-Sector Transparency project will improve economic openness and stability by strengthening Moldovan regulatory bodies to combat financial crimes and fight systemic money laundering.