



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Issue Date: June 11, 2021  
Deadline for Questions: June 25, 2021 (5:00 PM EST)  
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Closing Time: 5:00 PM (EST)

Subject: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Number: 7200AA21 RFA00022

Program Title: Democratic Elections and Political Process (DEPP) LWA

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 98.001

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications from all eligible organizations for a program to seek sustainable solutions to electoral and political processes constraints leading to more responsive and effective governance that is able to meet the needs of citizens. Please refer to the Program Description (Attachment A) for a complete statement of goals and expected results. The authority for this RFA is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

USAID intends to award a single Leader with Associate Award. A Leader with Associate Award (LWA) is a grant or cooperative agreement that covers a specified worldwide activity. USAID intends to make an award to one of the applicant(s) who best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity based on the merit review criteria described in this NOFO subject to a risk assessment. Eligible parties interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements and selection process.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NOFO and meet eligibility standards in Section C of this NOFO. This funding opportunity is posted on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), and may be amended. It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity and to ensure that the NOFO has been received from the internet in its entirety. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or accessing the NOFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) for technical assistance.

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section D.6(g). The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the process.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section D. The deadline for questions is shown above. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government nor does it commit the Government to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of comments/suggestions or an application. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "G. Serapis Irby".

G. Serapis Irby  
Agreement Officer

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## **SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

This funding opportunity is authorized under the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. The resulting award will be subject to 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, and USAID’s supplement, 2 CFR 700, as well as the additional requirements found in Section F.

### **I. BACKGROUND**

USAID’s overarching goal in the Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) sector is to support the establishment and consolidation of inclusive and accountable democracies to advance freedom, dignity and development. The role of the Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Center (DRG Center) is to provide USAID and other development practitioners with technical support, intellectual leadership, and implementing mechanisms to strengthen democratic development around the world.

Within the DRG Center, the Democratic Elections and Political Processes (DEPP) technical team supports the Agency’s objective to encourage more credible and competitive political processes and transitions. DEPP implements programs, supports USAID Missions, and conducts research all in support of Agency programs to support sustainable development and self-reliance.

This Democratic Elections and Political Processes (DEPP) LWA will primarily support USAID’s goals and objectives under the “Governing Justly and Democratically” area of the Foreign Assistance Framework, and, more specifically, the “Political Competition and Consensus Building” program element in the framework.

This activity builds on 20 years of LWAs in the context of addressing elections and political processes. USAID democracy assistance focused on the building blocks of democratic processes – civil society, institutions of democratic governance, rule of law, and competitive political processes. Countries emerging from years of autocracy had incipient civil society, a citizenry that long had its political participation suppressed, and state institutions geared toward centralized and top-down control. Democracy assistance supported the dramatic social, institutional and political change underway.

Electoral assistance targeted the many institutions, capabilities, and processes that are needed for a free and fair election. Among the areas of assistance include election administration and the operational and strategic capability of electoral management bodies (EMBs). Legal frameworks needed to be developed and aligned with international norms and standards. Other areas of focus included civic and voter education to ensure an informed and active citizenry, support for election monitoring, and political party assistance.

An electoral cycle approach underpins USAID’s approach to electoral processes and recognizes the many processes that occur from the lengthy pre-electoral phase, throughout the election, and into the post-electoral period. Electoral assistance focuses not only on the institutions and processes needed to ensure voting and counting of results but also the values and incentives that underpin competition among candidates and parties. Electoral assistance seeks to develop fair ‘rules of the game’ and legal frameworks to enable fair competition and an informed and active citizenry able to engage constructively in political processes.

More recently, the world has witnessed what is being called a “democratic recession,” with some metrics pointing to a 14th year of consecutive declines in political freedom globally. What was once believed to be a steady advance toward more democratic political systems has been called into question with the rise of resurgent authoritarianism.

The results and lessons learned from previous activities and evaluations, as well as innovative, promising, and novel global interventions, informed the design of this program. Consistent with USAID’s Evaluation Policy, the DRG Center will conduct external evaluations of this activity’s performance in relation to its immediate objectives and its contribution to Center-level strategy objectives.

The design team incorporated findings and recommendations from the 2019 rapid learning assessment of the Global Elections and Political Transitions LWA, responses to a Request for Information (RFI), and a pre-solicitation conference as well as ongoing feedback and dialogue with DRG Center colleagues managing global DRG awards and related research and learning activities. This recent feedback on DRG LWAs, as well as via the DDI Client Services development process, further supports the choice of an LWA because of the (1) flexibility of instrument, (2) ease and speed of use, and (3) adaptability to emphasize local focus when appropriate and desired.

In accordance with Automated Directives System (ADS) 303.3.6.4 (b), the Agency would award the LWA through unrestricted competition and “consistent with the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, USAID,” encourages unrestricted competition in the award of discretionary grants and cooperative agreements.

## **II. PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

### **a) General Information**

This NOFO will be used to award a Leader with Associates (LWA) for worldwide activities, and for subsequent Associate Awards by USAID Missions or other USAID operating units. No further competition or waiver of competition is required for any Associate Agreements awarded within the terms of the Leader Award. Each Associate

Award is a separate Assistance Agreement funded by a USAID Mission or other USAID operating unit and awarded to the Leader Award recipient to support a distinct local or regional activity that fits within the scope of the broad worldwide program description in the Leader Agreement.

An Associate Award may be a grant or a cooperative agreement, independent of whether the Leader Award is a grant or cooperative agreement. If an Associate Award is a cooperative agreement, it must spell out the terms of any substantial involvement. Under individual Associate Awards, the need for cost-sharing will be individually determined by each Mission or Bureau for their respective programs. Associate Awards will not contain separate standard provisions. Instead, they will be subject to the standard provisions of the Leader Award.

Associate Awards may be awarded for up to an initial five-year period. Associate Awards may be issued until the Leader Award expires. Associate Awards may be extended for a cumulative term of up to ten years, but in no event may Associate Awards extend for more than five years past the expiration of the Leader Award. In no case may an Associate Award extend more than five years into the future at any given time.

The Leader Award made subsequent to this RFA will include the following ceiling as more fully described in the sections below:

- Leader Award Ceiling: \$35,000,000
- Associate Award Ceiling: \$800,000,000

This figure is a ceiling only. There is no guarantee regarding the magnitude of Associate Awards in dollars or number of awards. The actual total award amounts of all Associate Awards cannot exceed this ceiling.

#### **b) Leader Award**

The Leader Award consists of three elements in the following order of priority:

- I. **Rapid and Flexible Response Programs:** This robust program component will respond to unanticipated needs, emerging opportunities and critical gaps in programming. Rapid response activities can enable a rapid startup of activities in a time sensitive and rapidly evolving situation. In addition, this component enables activities under the leader to address specific, targeted needs that can be addressed through a short-term intervention and would generally not be of sufficient scale and scope to necessitate an Associate Award. Activities under rapid and flexible response that are

Mission buy-ins will typically last less than one year and have a budget less than \$1,000,000.

- II. Targeted Interventions or Pilot Programs:** This component will encourage awardees to test innovations, creative solutions and/or target distinct issues or solve specific problems, including in countries not undergoing transitions. This component of the leader will allow awardees to take measured risks in testing new solutions and implementing innovative activities to address elections and political processes' challenges. This component will also enable partner organizations to implement narrow scope, targeted interventions in a country, including but not limited to conducting a feasibility study, implementing a stakeholder dialogue process, deploying a short-term international observation, or conducting a short-term training or technical assistance program. These programs will typically last less than one year.
  
- III. Technical Leadership:** Through the leader, awardees will conduct innovative research resulting in the development of widely disseminated, practical, and user-friendly guides, tools, and training publications in the field of elections and political transitions. This may include applied research, knowledge management activities, and evaluation of programs and experiences across regions to identify best practices and lessons learned. Technical leadership may also include convening events to share and disseminate lessons learned throughout the development community and among relevant stakeholders.

All activities under the Leader Award will achieve results in support of the nine objectives outlined above in Section V "Program Objectives."

When a requirement for activities is identified under any of the three elements of the Leader Award described above the USAID Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) will issue technical direction to the Recipient to submit an application for this new activity under the Leader Award or through co-creation the awardee will submit a concept for discussion with USAID. The AOR will specify parameters for the anticipated budget and period of performance. If circumstances warrant, the Recipient may also notify the AOR about needs and opportunities it has identified; upon discussion between the AOR and the Recipient on the scope and extent of these activities, the USAID AOR may issue technical direction to request implementation of the discussed activities.

For each activity conducted under the Leader Award, the Recipient will provide a separate application conforming to the anticipated budget and period of performance. The Recipient's application, following the AOR's technical direction, for each activity under the Leader Award will identify the purpose of the activity, a detailed description or methodology for the activity proposed (or for sub-awards, the solicitation or the actual program application of an apparently successful sub-grant applicant), a detailed budget, the Recipient's key personnel responsible for the overall performance of the activity and quality of the final outcome(s), a performance monitoring plan, a plan for branding and marking, a list of deliverables (including their form, timeline for submission, and a plan for dissemination), and a sustainability plan.

The AOR's acceptance of the Recipient's application for individual activities under the Leader Award will not constitute a change in the program description or the budget of the Leader Award. Activities and activity budgets approved by the AOR constitute revisions to the Recipient's annual work plan and are subject to the substantial involvement of USAID in the Leader Award. All publications, reports generated under Leader Award activities, and other deliverables must be reviewed by the AOR prior to finalization. The AOR will not accept as final any report or other deliverable which does not meet acceptable quality standards.

### **c) Associate Awards**

An Associate Award is a separate assistance agreement funded by a USAID Mission, Bureau, office, or other U.S. Government agency and awarded to the Leader Award Recipient to support a distinct local or regional activity that fits within the scope of the worldwide Program Description in the Leader Award. Agreement Officers may, within the limits of their authority, issue Associate Awards.

Associate Awards may be awarded by USAID Missions and USAID/Washington offices in order to implement bilateral or regional programs. Associate Awards will usually focus on development assistance in the technical field of democracy, elections and political processes but could also be awarded for technical leadership activities. Associate Awards must support one or more of the Program Objectives listed in this Program Description.

An Associate Award may be a grant or cooperative agreement, independent of whether the Leader Award is a grant or cooperative agreement.

### **III. PLANNING, MONITORING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The Recipient will adhere to all reporting requirements listed below. The Recipient shall submit one electronic copy of each report to the AOR of the Leader Award. All reports must be in English, organized logically, and adhere to the federal government's Plain Language requirements.

In all cases, the Recipient shall submit a single report consolidating all program activities, progress towards results, and analysis of impact. The Annual Work Plan and Quarterly Progress Reports should be organized by the three program elements for the Leader Award (i.e., Rapid and Flexible Response, Pilot Programs and Technical Leadership). The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan should be organized by the nine Program Objectives described in this Program Description.

The Leader and each Associate Award is anticipated to generate a large number of performance, financial, and other reports. The Recipient is encouraged to propose an alternative on-line file management system to streamline the electronic submission of reports and ensure reliable accessibility to the Agreement Officers and AORs. Existing "off-the-shelf" information technology products and/or services would be preferred. Such a system would not alter the responsibility of the Recipient to submit documentation to the Development Experience Clearinghouse as required (see ADS 540).

#### **i. Annual Work Plan**

Within 60 days of the signing of the award for the first year and 30 days before the beginning of each subsequent Agreement year, the Recipient will submit an annual work plan for approval by USAID's AOR. Its approval by the AOR will serve as a reference point for submitting subsequent reports. For convenience, the AOR may establish an alternative schedule for annual and periodic reporting (e.g., one aligned with the fiscal or calendar year).

The forward-looking annual work plan will outline all ongoing activities under the Leader Award that have been approved previously as a result of technical direction, and benchmarks/results to be achieved over the course of the year. The annual work plan will describe activities to be conducted at a greater level of detail than the Recipient's application. All work plan activities must be within the scope and objectives of the award. Work plans cannot change the scope and objectives or any other terms and conditions of the award; such changes may only be approved by the Agreement Officer.

The annual work plan shall represent the Recipient's holistic approach in conducting activities in the upcoming year. The annual work plan shall be organized into sections:

a. Introduction/Overview/Summary – A brief introduction will include an overall summary of the status of the program to date including significant programmatic accomplishments and their attributable outcomes, problems with program implementation, changes in the political context, and assumptions underlying the program.

b. Plan of Activities – Each annual work plan will focus on the status of implementation of approved activities under the Leader Award. The plan for activities should be organized according to each of the three program elements of the Leader Award – Rapid Response, Targeted Interventions and Pilot Programs and Technical Leadership (by sub-element) – and then chronologically by the date of approval for each activity. (Where an approved activity utilizes more than one program element, it should be placed in the report based on the dominant component.) Overall approved budget and the amounts obligated by USAID and amount spent by the recipient; names of the approved key personnel; and the period of performance should be included with the narrative of each activity. A short summary of results to date should precede the planned schedule of activities and benchmarks for each quarter of the upcoming year.

c. Administrative Management Plan – The administrative management plan should reflect the approved management structure and report any anticipated changes for the upcoming year. This section should also provide updates on implementation of the approved Branding Strategy and Marking Plan and any issues related to implementation and management of Associate Awards.

d. Performance Management Plan – The performance management plan should report on the continued appropriateness of the approved performance management plan. (Requests for changes to the performance management plan should precede the submission of the annual work plan.) The periodic performance reports, not the annual work plan, are the appropriate venue for the Recipient to report on outputs and outcomes.

e. Financial Information – Detailed financial information on approved, obligated, and disbursed funding for each activity and each Associate Award should be included.

f. Associate Award Information – A list of Associate Awards including the country or region of activity; start and end dates for the period of performance (and, if applicable, modified end date); approved (and, if applicable, modified ceiling), obligated, and disbursed funding; names of key personnel; name of the Associate Award's AO and AOR; Program Objections of the Leader Award supported; and number and date of most recent modification should be included.

Within 30 calendar days of submission of the annual work plan, the AOR will approve the work plan or provide the Recipient with written comments. The Recipient will have 15 calendar days to revise the annual work plan. If necessary, the AOR will have an additional 15 calendar days to provide a second round of comments. If no comments are received within the specified period, the work plan is deemed approved. The AOR may approve parts of the work plan while awaiting revision of the full work plan.

The Recipient may request the AOR approve modifications to the approved annual work plan, as necessary.

## **ii. Performance Management Plan**

The Recipient will develop a cost-effective, results-oriented performance monitoring plan that will provide USAID with information to improve performance and effectiveness as well as to inform planning and management decisions. The Recipient's performance monitoring approach must be consistent with USAID's Evaluation Policy, reflect industry best practices, and represent part of a larger learning agenda. The performance management plan will be approved by the AOR of the Leader Award. The Recipient will be responsible for monitoring the program benchmarks and final activity results. As part of each quarterly progress report, data will be provided for each benchmark and indicator proposed including baseline data and any data collected to date.

The performance management plan should be organized by nine Program Objectives of the Leader Award described in this Program Description. Data should be collected and reported at the level of both 1) all activities approved under the Leader Award and 2) all Associate Awards aggregated globally. (Associate Awards will additionally have their own individual performance management plans specific to each award.)

The Recipient will be responsible for establishing and maintaining a performance management plan with appropriate indicators linked to each intermediate result, a process to collect data on program performance in a timely and cost-effective manner, and a system for analyzing and using this data to consistently improve program performance.

Specific life-of-program targets will be agreed upon with USAID. Milestones and benchmarks toward achieving these results will be set out. Performance monitoring will measure progress in program implementation against these benchmarks.

Measurement will focus on both output and outcome data. Analysis will demonstrate broader impact and results of program activities.

The performance plan will also highlight how data collected will show the impact and effectiveness of program approaches and methodologies employed and contribute toward enhancing understanding of best practices in the sector.

The Recipient will be strongly encouraged to collect data on those indicators that are relevant for elections and political processes activities on an annual basis.

USAID will work with the Recipient of the award to further identify indicators based on programmatic areas in order to more closely analyze trends in the field of election and political processes, such as constitutional reforms, international and domestic monitoring, etc.

The Recipient should consider to what extent a partner organization could provide independent monitoring and evaluation services within the scope of its application.

USAID requires the Recipient to cooperate with any external monitoring and evaluation activities authorized by USAID for both Leader Award activities and Associate Awards. This includes cooperation with the design of impact evaluations which may affect elements of the Recipient's annual work plan and/or Associate Awards. It also refers to evaluation activities sponsored by other USG and non-USG donors or a group of donors when endorsed by USAID.

The Recipient will submit its proposed performance management plan within 30 days of the signing on the award along with the first annual work plan and follow the same approval process.

The Recipient may request that the AOR approve modifications to the approved performance management plan, as necessary.

### **iii. Quarterly Progress Report**

The Recipient shall submit one single holistic performance report in a single document to the AOR of the Leader Award on a quarterly basis. Quarterly progress reports will be due 30 days following the end of each quarter corresponding to USAID's fiscal year from October 1 through September 30. Program Reports shall be in accordance with 2 CFR 200.328.

The reports must be submitted electronically and shall contain the following information at a minimum:

- (a) Political Context** - A single brief description of the political context and/or enabling environment where program activities are implemented. This section may include significant political developments and/or relevant events reported in the press or by local partners which affect the overall implementation environment. This section is important for establishing the overall environment for implementation and is useful for considering how changes in the environment may affect program implementation.
- (b) Progress Towards Results** - A single analytical description of overall program progress towards results that reflect and synthesize achievements of the Recipient examining progress in the context of program objectives and expected results.
- (c) Summary of Completed Activities** - A summary of activities conducted under the Leader Award by categories that will be determined based on the work plan.
- (d) Problems and Issues** - Problems encountered, reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate, and how challenges or problems will be overcome during the next reporting period.
- (e) Indicators** - Data on all indicators established in the performance management plan for the Leader activities. Data should be disaggregated by sex and other traditionally marginalized populations where relevant.
- (f) Upcoming Activities** - Priorities for programming during the next reporting period.
- (g) Budget Information** - A comparison of actual expenditures with budget estimates, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, and any other pertinent information.
- (h) Associate Award and Rapid Response Information** - Information on new Associate Awards signed and modifications to existing Associate Awards made during the reporting period. Information on the progress of Rapid Response Activities.

#### **iv. Quarterly Financial Reports**

USAID requires recipients to use the Standard Form 425 or Standard Form 425a, Federal Financial Report, or such other forms authorized for obtaining financial information as may be approved by OMB.

Quarterly Financial Reports shall be due within 30 days following the end of each quarter corresponding to USAID's fiscal year from October 1 through September 30. This report shall include a statement of Quarterly Accruals to allow USAID and the AOR to monitor the financial status of the project. Accruals should include the (a) total amount obligated; (b) total amount invoiced for, (c) total amount of expended but not yet invoiced for, and (d) remaining unexpended funds.

**v. Country-By-Country Breakdown of Expenditures**

Recipient shall list each country included in the program and the total amount expended for each country under the award for the reporting period in the "Remarks" block on the "Financial Status Report" SF 269 or SF 269A, or on a separate sheet of paper with the "Request for Advance or Reimbursement" SF 270.

**vi. Final Reports**

The Recipient shall submit two comprehensive reports. The penultimate report, pertaining only to activities conducted under the Leader Award, shall be submitted no later than 90 calendar days after the expiration of the Leader Award. The final report, pertaining to the Leader Award and all Associate Awards collectively, shall be submitted no later than 90 calendar days after the expiration of the last Associate Award. Each final performance report shall contain the following information:

- (a) Executive Summary** - An executive summary of the accomplishments and results achieved.
- (b) Achievement of Results** - An in-depth analysis of progress and results that synthesizes achievements of all organizations that contributed towards program objectives. This section should clearly describe activities, major accomplishments and results achieved, including results for all the activities under the Leader and Associate Awards. The significance of these activities for overall elections and political transitions development worldwide should be highlighted.
- (c) Sustainability** - An account of the sustainability of efforts under the award.
- (d) Indicators** - Final data, compared to baseline data, for all indicators included in the monitoring and evaluation plan for leader and Associate

Award activities. This section should include disaggregated data by sex, traditionally marginalized groups and other relevant groups identified.

- (e) **Problems and Issues** - A summary of problems/obstacles encountered during the implementation, and how those obstacles were addressed and overcome if appropriate.
- (f) **Lessons Learned and Recommendations** - Lessons learned, best practices, and other findings from each of the leader and Associate Award programs, along with recommendations for future programming under each of the program objectives.
- (g) **Budget Information** - A comparison of actual expenditures with budget estimates, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, and any other pertinent information.

USAID expects that the final performance reports will substantially update assessments of impact, sustainability, and lessons learned contained in the penultimate performance report.

#### **vii. Final Financial Report**

The Final Financial Report shall be due within 90 days following the expiration of the award. Financial Reports shall be in accordance with 2 CFR 700. USAID requires recipients to use the Standard Form 425 or Standard Form 425a, Federal Financial Report, or such other forms authorized for obtaining financial information as may be approved by OMB.

#### **IV. PROGRAM GOAL**

USAID's overarching goal in the DRG sector is to support the establishment and consolidation of inclusive and accountable democracies to advance freedom, dignity and development. The role of the Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG Center) is to provide USAID and other development practitioners with technical support, intellectual leadership, and implementing mechanisms to strengthen democratic development around the world.

Within the DRG Center, the Democratic Elections and Political Processes (DEPP) technical area supports the Agency's objective to encourage more credible and competitive political processes and transitions. DEPP implements programs, supports

USAID Missions, and conducts research all in support of Agency programs to support sustainable development.

This Democratic Elections and Political Processes (DEPP) LWA will primarily support USAID's goals and objectives under the "Governing Justly and Democratically" area of the Foreign Assistance Framework, and, more specifically, the "Political Competition and Consensus Building" program element in the framework. The resulting Leader with Associate Award will also aim to support the sustainable development in partner countries through the development of inclusive and democratic political processes that lead to responsive and effective governance.

## **V. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The challenges facing democracy assistance have evolved over time since its inception in the 1970s. Democracy promotion emerged as a more influential component of development assistance after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Optimism in the prospects for democratic development and the development of more inclusive societies was seen in many parts of the world, with a wave of democratization spreading across the globe.

USAID democracy assistance focused on the building blocks of democratic processes – civil society, institutions of democratic governance, rule of law, and competitive political processes. Countries emerging from years of autocracy had an incipient civil society, a citizenry that long had its political participation suppressed, and state institutions geared toward centralized and top-down control. Democracy assistance sought to support the dramatic social, institutional and political change underway.

Electoral assistance was a key element of democracy assistance, and targeted the many institutions, capabilities and processes that are needed for a free and fair election. Areas of assistance included election administration and the operational and strategic capability of electoral management bodies (EMBs). Legal frameworks needed to be developed and aligned with international norms and standards. Other areas of focus included strengthening civil society, civic and voter education to ensure an informed and active citizenry, support for election observation, and political party assistance.

An electoral cycle approach underpins USAID's approach to electoral processes and recognizes the many processes that occur from the lengthy pre-electoral phase, throughout the election, and into the post-electoral period. Electoral assistance focuses not only on the institutions and processes needed to ensure voting and counting of results, but also the values and incentives that underpin competition among candidates and parties. Electoral assistance seeks to develop fair 'rules of the game' and legal frameworks to enable fair

competition, and an informed and active citizenry able to engage constructively in political processes.

All these challenges remain, but the understanding of how to best address them has evolved. In the past there was a strong focus on elections and the hardware of democracy--institutional strengthening and ensuring a fair election process--but over time there has been a realization that the software of democracy--political processes, civic engagement and democratic culture--is just as important.

The focus on continual improvement of the electoral event, rather than development of local capacity, meant similar assistance was provided election after election; and this led to the recognition that the metric for evaluating assistance could not be limited to just the quality of the event, but also had to include whether the assistance provided created dependence or independence.

In addition to the existing challenges that must continue to be addressed, there are new challenges. In recent years, the world has witnessed what is being called a 'democratic recession' with some metrics pointing to a 14th year of consecutive declines in political freedom globally.

What was once believed to be a steady advance toward more democratic political systems has been called into question with the rise of resurgent authoritarianism.' This may be a leading indicator, as there is an increase in protests and social movements demanding democracy; suggesting that at least some of the increase in authoritarianism is a response to increasing demand from the public (particularly young people).

The obstacles to democratization and associated challenges facing democracy assistance have evolved over time. In the early years of democracy promotion and electoral assistance, significant focus was placed on addressing capacity constraints and supporting new institutions in countries without a history or experience with democratic governance. Currently, many of the emerging challenges have to do with political will and threats from political actors that undermine democratic processes, rather than stemming primarily from deficits of institutional capacity. This problem analysis section is derived in part from the USAID's Electoral Assessment Framework. Among the growing threats to democracy and global trends are the following:

- **Resurgent Authoritarianism and Closing Political Space:** Over the past decade, the world has witnessed the resurgence of autocratic leaders and processes that constrain political liberties and restrict the rights of citizens and civil society to free speech and association. The strategies and tactics used have increasingly become more

sophisticated and have included holding elections to provide a veneer of legitimacy but tilting the playing field in advance of election day to restrict political competition. Incumbents manipulate legislative, judicial, and electoral processes to restrict the rights and freedoms of media, civil society, political parties as well as infringe on the rights of citizens. Arguably, the primary challenges facing electoral assistance have less to do with domestic capacity gaps and institutional weaknesses, and more to do with political will.

- **Mistrust of Political Parties:** Trends also include polls that show widespread disillusionment and mistrust with political parties, with a few exceptions. Parties play a unique role in the democratic process and perform functions that no other groups perform. Political parties can bring broad groups together and translate the interests and demands of different groups and constituencies into policy. They provide a process for candidate recruitment and running for office. In practice, however, political parties are often personality based and are vehicles for the interests of a small elite. In addition, the persistence of identity-based parties and politics can polarize societies and undermine democratic compromise on policy.
- **Growing Role of Foreign Actors and Malign Interference in Elections:** In the early days of electoral assistance, the factors that shaped or determined electoral integrity were largely domestic, namely the capacity of EMBs to implement elections or the conduct of domestic political actors and their willingness to respect the rule of law. Increasingly, foreign interference in election and political processes is a significant factor that can undermine emerging democracies, sometimes through overt or covert alliances with domestic political actors. disinformation campaigns can distort citizen views and understanding of policies and issues and can polarize a society. Electoral and political process assistance needs to be based on an understanding of and address the evolving threats to electoral integrity. These threats include tactics that include “espionage and surveillance; disinformation campaigns; cyber-attacks; financing of fringe or co-opted political parties, leaders, and think tanks; coercive economic measures and energy policies; extrajudicial attacks and killings; supporting fake election observer groups; and covert and overt military actions.
- **Rise of Technology:** The adoption of technology in electoral processes is accelerating. New technologies are being used in election administration, civic education, political party communication, citizen observation and many other realms. In election administration, there is a rapid growth in the use of electronic results transmission, biometric voter registration, and SMS-based voter information with the goal of improving efficiency and reducing fraud. The use of technology is not limited to EMBs. Other electoral stakeholders including political parties, and civil society are

adopting new technologies to organize, use and process information, and enhance communications. These advances present opportunities but also can create several significant challenges to election integrity and confidence in elections by weakening security and transparency. Trust in state institutions is low in some countries, leaving voters and political parties questioning whether new technologies will deliver a fair electoral process. The use of electronic means of voting or vote counting, for example, may be opaque and less subject to observation and monitoring than paper processes. Biometric voter verification could have mechanical or other problems on election day and could disqualify otherwise eligible voters. Digital IDs and the collection of biometric data, moreover, come with privacy challenges. Other concerns and risks posed by new technologies include the potential electronic surveillance of CSOs and political actors or hacking of electronic voting and results transmission systems. In addition to concerns about mechanical breakdown, complexity of use, cost to maintain, opaqueness of process, there is the fact that in many areas, Internet or cellular connectivity may not exist.

- **Disinformation:** The deliberate spread of false information to influence public perception, cause polarization, and mislead voters is a growing phenomenon. Both domestic and international actors have weaponized information to undermine electoral integrity. The spread of disinformation has been greatly facilitated and accelerated by new technologies and the use of social media allowing false information to spread speedily and widely. It sows confusion and can undermine trust in the electoral process. Disinformation can be used tactically to discredit candidates, suppress voter turnout, and foment political and social discord. Conversely, governments can use the threat or existence of disinformation to restrict the free flow of communication. When addressing disinformation, it is essential to balance that with the rights and political freedoms of citizens and political actors to free speech.

Adaptation and flexibility in electoral assistance, and in management of the award, will be required. The emergence of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a clear example of how adaptation in approaches and management can be needed throughout the life of the award. The COVID-19 pandemic has created new and unexpected challenges for electoral processes that will likely persist for several years. Addressing the risks posed by COVID-19 may prompt lasting innovations and changes in electoral procedures and processes. With the pandemic, the immediate and primary challenge is to find ways to ensure full and inclusive participation while mitigating the serious public health risks posed by personal contact, crowds, and even shared surface areas found in polling stations. Holding elections as safely as possible will require significant adaptations in election administration, campaigning and civic education. While the COVID-19 pandemic

may eventually subside, new challenges to electoral processes may emerge from unanticipated sources, and work under this award should be prepared to adapt and innovate.

While the challenges have grown more complex, there are also several opportunities and positive developments that can be built upon in supporting credible elections. The following opportunities were outlined in the Assessment Framework:

- Consensus has emerged around global norms and standards for democratic elections, which are derived from public international law, including human rights treaties and instruments.
- In many countries, a new generation of politicians and young leaders has emerged to challenge entrenched elites, and civil society has become well-established and vibrant. Global and regional civil society networks have emerged to bolster solidarity and exchange best practices across borders.
- Voters have higher expectations that their voice should matter, that elections should reflect their will, and that their governments should be accountable.
- In many countries, election management bodies have significantly increased their professionalism and capacity.
- The open government movement has influenced the electoral arena, as there is widespread recognition of the importance of the need for greater transparency in elections (including open election data) and, as a consequence, greater accountability.
- The fields of nonpartisan international and domestic election observation have grown, evolved, and launched principles that define credible election observation.
- In addition, there is a greater recognition of commitment to, and focus on addressing barriers to participation for women and marginalized populations.

This program will seek sustainable solutions to electoral and political processes constraints. Inclusive and participatory political processes can lead to more responsive and effective governance that is able to meet the needs of citizens.

## **VI. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

- I. **Objective 1: Build capacity of stakeholders including citizens, media, civil society, political parties, and government to advance political freedoms and establish democratic political processes.** Championing local solutions for advancing political freedoms and establishing democratic political processes requires supporting citizens, civil society, the media, political parties and government actors as they all have roles to play. In a democratic political system, citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) are not the passive subjects of

political actors' attention but are drivers of progress empowered to serve as advocates and "watchdogs" advancing the public interest.

Political change is the result of profound social, political and economic forces. Political actors, including grassroots and civil society actors, are the primary drivers in shaping their country's future. Active engagement by these stakeholders is enhanced when they understand their roles, are equipped with the necessary tools and are empowered to use them. For example, civic and voter education on rights and responsibilities teach citizens not only how to participate in the political life of their communities, but also to understand its importance. Similarly, CSOs require the organizational and strategic capacity to drive, change and support their communities' engagement in political processes. Independent media must be able to continue to provide timely, impartial, and fact-based information to citizens, and cast a spotlight on government actions. In environments where authoritarian governments actively undermine citizens, CSOs, and the independent media, these stakeholders must have the support, tools and resources to work to safeguard their democracy.

The push for political freedom and democratic processes does not always come from outside of government. Democratic practices must be upheld and pursued by those in positions of power; officials in the executive branch, local government, legislators, judicial actors, and those in the security sector. Programs should seek opportunities to work with government officials throughout the state apparatus to promote democratic norms, conduct and institutional practices. Promoting democratic governance can come from constructive partnerships with state actors where appropriate, and/or from reforms in institutional structures, processes, and policies that shape incentives.

Political parties can advocate for democratic change and serve as avenues for citizen participation in democratic processes. Some countries, including those struggling to maintain their democracy, have political parties trying to develop the organizational and strategic capacities needed to become or stay viable. Technical assistance to develop their platforms, governing agendas, and communication strategies can help them better represent constituencies and bring their voices into the political arena. Finally, all these actors must understand how to work together towards the common goal of promoting and sustaining democratic institutions and processes. For example, CSOs often support civic education efforts along with government institutions, such as EMBs, during the electoral cycle.

### **Illustrative Results:**

- **Enabling legal environment for civil and political rights established and implemented.**
- **Citizens better understand their rights and responsibilities and are able to engage in political processes in an informed manner.**
- **Diverse types of civil society organizations can act as effective advocates for political rights and freedoms.**
- **Media are able to inform citizens with fact-based information and provide oversight of elected officials and government institutions.**
- **Political parties engage in democratic conduct, engage in peaceful political competition, and develop internal democracy.**
- **Government officials are able to champion and implement democratic reforms.**

**II. Objective 2: Encourage participation by all citizens and social groups in electoral and political processes by identifying and addressing social, economic, legal and political barriers to participation.** USAID promotes a nondiscriminatory, inclusive, and integrated development approach that seeks to include all people, including those who face discrimination and have limited access to a country's benefits, legal protections, or social participation. Unfortunately, many people are denied access to services or are marginalized from social, economic and political processes because of their gender, gender identity, race and ethnicity. Other marginalized groups include persons with disabilities, refugees, displaced persons, migrants, indigenous individuals and communities, youth, religious minorities, people in lower castes, and people of diverse economic class and differing political opinions. In many developing countries, ethnic divisions continue to act as a deep social and political fault line, leading to exclusionary politics and institutions.

There are two key principles when working with marginalized groups: "do no harm" and "do nothing about them without them." When making efforts to support inclusion of marginalized groups, programs under future mechanisms should 1) take measures to ensure that its efforts do not put any individual or marginalized group at increased risk of harm, and 2) consult with marginalized groups to understand their needs and priorities.

Gender equality and female empowerment are core development objectives, fundamental for the realization of human rights and key to effective and sustainable development outcomes. No society can develop successfully without providing equitable opportunities, resources, and life prospects for everyone so that they can shape their own lives and contribute to their families and communities. In democratic elections and political processes, effective gender integration is particularly critical. Focused efforts should be made under this award to identify and address the barriers to meaningful political participation of women as voters, as candidates, in political parties, in civil society and in leadership positions in government.

Similarly, promoting and protecting universally recognized human rights includes, by definition, protecting and advancing the equal rights of men, women, boys, girls, and transgender people and responding to gender-based human rights violations.

Programs under this award should also promote constructive engagement by youth in political processes. Over half of the world's population is under age 30. When youth are educated, healthy, employed and civically engaged, they can drive economic growth, democracy, and prosperity. However, when youth are not effectively engaged in social and political processes and their unique needs are not addressed, it can lead to unrest, violence, instability, and migration. The global youth bulge, rise of violent extremism, and high global youth unemployment demonstrate the urgency to invest in youth. The 1.8 billion young people in the world today is the largest youth population in history and 90 percent of youth live in developing countries. Young people's full participation in development efforts can contribute to more sustainable investments to end cycles of poverty; to build resilient, democratic societies. By working in partnership with the private sector, national governments, youth, and civil society, programs can continue to build the capacity of the next generation of leaders.

Recognizing the current marginal position of women and youth and other underrepresented categories of people in the political system, all programs should begin by identifying the social, political, economic and legal constructs that act as barriers to participation. Programs should directly support and appropriately target these groups. Programs should include initiatives to expand their participation and empowerment as critical constituencies, who combined, represent the majority of every society.

## **Illustrative Results:**

- **Laws, regulations, and practices that discriminate against or marginalize women and other traditionally disenfranchised groups are eliminated or reformed.**
- **Youth are engaged, informed, and included in all aspects of elections and political processes.**
- **Social norms are more inclusive.**
- **Barriers to women’s meaningful participation in electoral and political processes are identified and removed, enabling women to assume political party leadership positions, run for office, hold government positions, and participate fully in civil society.**
- **Barriers to LGBTI inclusion and participation in elections and political processes are identified and addressed.**
- **The interests and needs of non-citizen groups (including refugees) are brought into the policy arena.**
- **Marginalized groups are empowered through information and training, to engage in political processes.**
- **Local and national government entities establish mechanisms for citizen engagement.**

**III. Objective 3: Improve democratic governance and the quality of representation throughout the political system, including by supporting country efforts for building representative multi-party systems and legislative bodies, and improving the responsiveness of governing institutions to citizens.** At the core of a functioning democracy is the existence of representative institutions that reflect citizens' interests and act on them. In practice, this requires responsive governance by institutions and public officials. A genuinely democratic process requires continual efforts to enhance the quality of representation throughout the political system, including within political parties, legislative bodies, and government institutions. Representation must be inclusive, allowing all social, ethnic, age, gender, geographic and other groups in a society to see their interests represented in political dialogue and policy decisions.

Government institutions, at the national and subnational level, must be oriented toward meeting the needs of their citizens, rather than serving the needs of a small elite. The development of countries is slowed or stalled by political leaders and public officials that channel state resources to a narrow elite. Even in emerging democracies, ineffective governance can fail to harness state resources to meet the

wider needs of citizens. Corruption can be pervasive, while mechanisms to enhance participation and transparency are generally absent or deeply flawed.

Activities under this award should seek to enhance the responsiveness of institutions of governance, recognizing that democratic governance requires a shift in incentives for public officials, increased channels for citizen voice, and oversight for increased accountability. To be effective, programs must recognize that constraints to effective governance are not merely capacity, financial and technical. Instead, a lack of political will due to incentives structures and existing norms can create a political economy that perpetuates a cycle of governance that is not responsive to citizen needs. Programs under this award should work to promote responsive and effective governance at all levels of government.

Representative legislative bodies are also essential, to ensure that the interests of diverse voices including minority viewpoints are brought into the legislative process and included in policy debates. Legislatures are critical to translating the voting preferences of citizens into law and policy.

Political parties play several unique and essential roles in the democratic process. Political parties are the primary structure for political competition, selecting and running candidates, and developing policy platforms to inform voter choice. Parties provide an avenue for citizens' political participation. Political parties, however, are often vehicles for individual or personal interests, and fail to engage or represent groups throughout society. Thus, activities should seek to help political parties become more democratic and inclusive in their conduct, outlook, and internal practices, which can in turn enhance respect for rule of law, strengthen democratic processes, and advance social inclusion in their societies.

#### **Illustrative Results:**

- **Local and national government bodies adopt measures to increase transparency, participation, responsive service delivery and anti-corruption.**
- **Political parties and legislatures better reflect the interests of and represent a broad range of groups throughout society, including different ethnicities, genders, geographic groups, ages, and others traditionally marginalized groups.**
- **Incentives created for public officials to establish channels for citizen voice and respond to the interests of constituents.**
- **Legislatures improve their drafting, budget and oversight capacities.**

- **Political parties engage with citizens, communities, and supporters and become more representative and responsive.**
- **Political parties increase women’s political leadership, improve policy development capacity, develop communication and survey techniques that help parties reach potential supporters and understand citizen needs.**

IV. **Objective 4: Facilitate the development of accountability and oversight mechanisms for responsive and democratic governance, both within the state and by citizens and civil society.** A government accountable to the people is a defining characteristic of a democracy. Democracy is premised on the principle that public officials and political leaders in a democracy are bound by the rule of law and should govern according to ethical standards. Checks and balances are needed to limit excesses of power by individuals and institutions. In most developing countries where USAID works, mechanisms of checks and balances and oversight are weakly developed and fail to put effective constraints on the abuse of power by public officials and political leaders or provide feedback loops on poor performance. Minority parties struggle to play the role of the ‘loyal opposition’ that holds ruling parties and executives accountable by exercising their legislative oversight functions.

This program will work to enhance state and nonstate mechanisms for oversight in the pursuit of more responsive, ethical and democratic governance. Oversight and pressure for reform often comes from non-state actors in civil society and media. Media and civil society ‘watchdogs’ increase transparency by enabling citizen access to information about government policy and actions. Civil society gives voice to citizens interests and demands, including dissent over policy, seeking to hold governments accountable where other venues have failed. In the electoral and political process sphere, civil society organizations play a vital role in monitoring all phases of the electoral process. Civil society observation has increasingly adopted more sophisticated tactics, monitoring various aspects of the process, ranging from candidate selection, voter registration, to vote tabulation and dispute resolution.

**Illustrative Results:**

- **National and sub-national government institutions adopt practices to instill greater accountability to citizens and provide venues for citizen participation.**
- **Political parties in the legislature effectively exercise meaningful oversight of the executive branch.**

- **Media and civil society enhance citizen access to information about government policy, track government actions, and pressure governments for reform.**

**V. Objective 5: Promote the appropriate use of technology in political processes while mitigating its negative consequences.** A growing trend in the electoral and political processes field is the rapid adoption of technology which has implications for election administration, political party campaigning, and civil society monitoring. The use of technology in elections can increase efficiency but often does so at the expense of privacy, security, and transparency. Technology can be costly, creating a need for development assistance to carry out elections. Introduction of technology, particularly if not adopted through a consultative process, can erode confidence of both voters and political actors, ultimately undermining trust in electoral outcomes. Technologies should be appropriate to the context, needed to solve a specific problem and be within the financial capability of the host country government to maintain.

EMBs could benefit from technical assistance to help them assess whether technological innovation will improve election integrity or create unnecessary risk. Incentives from vendors or a desire to be perceived as a modern push many EMBs to adopt electronic processes that may have a considerable failure rate and complicate rather than simplify electoral processes. Additionally, most EMBs in developing countries are ill equipped to manage the privacy and cybersecurity needs associated with advanced technology.

EMBs are rapidly adopting biometric voter registration processes linked to biometric voter verification on election day with mixed success. While this is done with the goal of reducing voter fraud, it has in many countries slowed or even stalled voting on election day as poll workers grapple with unreliable equipment and long lines. Electronic results transmission, designed to speed the transmission of results from remote polling stations, can allow for more rapid preliminary results that can ease political tensions in a country. The tradeoff is an opaque tabulation process that is less able to be monitored and tracked by political party poll watchers and election observers.

Cybersecurity risks are growing across all users of technology in the electoral process, from EMBs to candidates, parties, media and civil society. As more communication and information is transmitted online, the risk grows that hackers and malicious actors could intercept or introduce fraudulent information. Surveillance is a growing risk, primarily for opposition parties, media and civil society whose role it is to hold the government accountable. Even unsubstantiated rumors of hacking election results can significantly undermine the credibility of an

election. Decisions surrounding the adoption of new technologies need to weigh the potential for increased efficiency against these many risks.

Emerging technologies will continue to pose new challenges. The use of artificial intelligence and deep fakes deployed as part of misinformation campaigns by internal and/or external actors will be increasingly disruptive. Malign foreign efforts to affect elections have adeptly used new technologies to disrupt and undermine electoral processes. It is imperative that electoral stakeholders be aware of the rapidly developing uses of technology, its benefits but also risks, that can impact electoral processes.

**Illustrative results:**

- **Election management bodies are better able to assess and evaluate the technical needs, risks, and financial requirements of technological innovations in the electoral process.**
- **All electoral stakeholders, including CSOs, political parties and election officials improve their understanding of the need for cyber security and take appropriate measures to protect their data and information.**
- **Citizens are better equipped to identify misinformation and disinformation and aware of where to seek unbiased information.**

VI. **Objective 6: Facilitate citizen access to accurate information about policy and political processes.** The free flow of timely, unbiased, and fact-based information is an essential component of a democratic society and democratic political processes. Citizens need open access to information from media, CSOs, political parties and public institutions.

It is the responsibility of elected officials and public institutions at all levels of government to provide information to citizens on electoral and other democratic processes. Open and transparent government is essential for accountability in governance.

Civil society organizations and independent media also facilitate information flow, often stepping in to provide information to citizens when the government fails to do so. In this way they encourage government accountability. In politically restrictive environments, unbiased and fact-based information is even more critical as dialogue, policy debates and political speech may be severely limited. In these contexts, CSOs and the independent media play a more significant role in keeping citizens informed. As governments place undue restrictions on freedom of information, CSOs and independent media may seek ways to continue to operate, and activities under this award should prioritize supporting those efforts. Besides

serving as a check on elected officials and public institutions, CSOs and the media provide information to citizens during other processes including elections - such as voter and civic education - and in transition environments.

Digital technologies can increase access to information in a way that can wield insights for citizens and government stakeholders alike. New technologies and social media broaden the available channels of information, allowing for increased access by all sectors of the population. However, digital technology can create echo chambers in which dissenting views are marginalized, as well as perpetuate rumors or other unintentional falsehoods. Further, foreign actors, as well as domestic provocateurs, are manipulating new media, including buying media outlets to further control information and launching disinformation campaigns to undermine elections and broader political processes. Increasing the digital literacy of citizens is critical in this environment so that with increased access, they are also equipped with the knowledge and tools to think critically about the information they are consuming. Activities under this objective should focus on both the supply and demand sides.

#### **Illustrative Results:**

- **Governments and elected officials understand how the free flow of information is vital for transparent and accountable governance and take steps to provide information to all citizens in a digestible manner.**
- **Independent media is better able to disseminate timely, unbiased and fact-based information on and offline.**
- **Media, civil society and government develop effective strategies to counter disinformation efforts.**
- **Communities and citizens know where to access information and are equipped with digital literacy skills in order to think critically about the information they consume.**
- **CSOs and the media develop skills to safeguard against attacks on freedom of information.**
- **Political parties and candidates engage in public dialogue and provide informed debate on policy options for voters.**
- **Voter information and civic education is widely accessible to all groups.**

**VII. Objective 7: Promote electoral integrity and sound election administration in the pursuit of free, fair, and competitive electoral processes.** Electoral integrity results in elections that reflect the will of the people and that citizens see as legitimate. Electoral integrity requires many components that work together, including but not limited to a fair and effective legal framework; sound and transparent election administration; and oversight by civil society and the justice

system. An impartial legal framework is a necessary condition for credible electoral processes and representative political parties, creating a level playing field for genuine political competition. Legal reform processes need to be participatory and open to guard against reforms designed to benefit the incumbent.

Electoral management bodies need to be impartial, transparent, and with operational and communication capacity. The need for sustainability should underpin activities in this area, with improvements in financial, strategic, and operational capacity developed. Election administration requires competence in a vast array of operational and strategic tasks, including but not limited to the following: voter registration, procuring materials, designating polling sites, drawing up voters' lists, providing security, enforcing political finance rules, using computer hardware and software effectively, educating voters, tabulating votes, adjudicating complaints, and liaising with other government entities with election-related responsibilities. In addition to operational support, election management bodies can also benefit from assistance on transparency measures and strategic communications, which is particularly important during contentious pre- and post-election periods.

Election management bodies in most developing countries have increased their capacity to handle the logistics of election administration. Electoral support is less focused on helping with printing and moving ballots, training poll workers, and planning logistics. Growing challenges have to do with the independence of election management bodies from the executive, and more advanced skills of strategic planning and communications.

In many developing countries, election management bodies are often not fully independent, and under pressure from the incumbent to tilt the playing field in their favor. In these environments, direct assistance should be provided only to those electoral management bodies that are making a good faith effort to implement a fair electoral process or those that demonstrate prospects for reform.

Electoral integrity is also enhanced by oversight of the electoral process that enhances transparency and accountability. Election monitoring by domestic civil society organizations is a key tool to enhance accountability and transparency. Election monitoring has evolved from a primary focus on election day to a more comprehensive monitoring of the entire process, including voter and candidate registration, campaigning, media coverage and electoral dispute resolution. Civil society monitoring engages citizens in their political processes. International observation can complement domestic monitoring and has unique contributions to make. In places where local civil society may not feel free to be critical of the government or may not have full access to observe the entire electoral process,

international observers may have increased access to government officials and political cover to speak openly about flaws in the electoral process.

**Illustrative Results:**

- **Election management bodies become more independent and make sustainable improvements in financial, strategic, and operational capacity.**
- **Domestic civil society organizations are capable of effectively monitoring the entire electoral process, including the pre-electoral period, election day voting and counting processes, and electoral dispute resolution.**
- **International observer missions appropriately complement the work of domestic election observers and use their observations to pressure governments for reforms to enhance election integrity.**
- **Electoral dispute resolution mechanisms, including judicial processes, are more independent, transparent and timely.**
- **Legal frameworks, enforcement mechanisms, monitoring, and increased cybersecurity create effective barriers to malign foreign interference in electoral processes.**

**VIII. Objective 8: Facilitate the development and implementation of consensus building processes and legal frameworks, including peace processes, constitutional reform and support during political transitions and democratic breakthroughs.** Electoral integrity and inclusive political processes require legal frameworks that create impartial, clear, and transparent rules. Legal frameworks at multiple levels govern elections and political processes. Constitutions provide the foundation for civil and political rights and provide the framework for representation and political competition. The electoral legal framework is supplemented by laws and regulations that specify electoral systems and processes, political party regulations and requirements, as well as those that affect media and civil rights. However, legal reform processes can be misused to revise laws for the benefit of political actors or to restrict political rights. This program should support inclusive and transparent legal reform processes that lead to a level playing field and democratic processes across a broad range of country types. Where there is political will to make positive improvements, support may include drafting, technical support, and access to model legislation. In more challenging environments, engagement on electoral reform should try to stave off attempts to tilt the playing field for political advantage.

In countries undergoing rapid and significant political transition, this objective aims to develop processes for promoting peaceful agreement for democratic reform and governance structures. Early and rapid engagement in countries in transition can work to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that build legitimacy and reduce the risk of conflict. National agreement and consensus on laws, norms, institutions and structures for governing need to be negotiated through broad-based dialogue. Processes supported during political transitions may include the development of a new constitution, a constituent assembly, national dialogue processes, or a peace agreement.

New or transforming institutions may also need assistance to develop capacity to govern democratically. Support for political transitions where there is rapid political change and institutional restructuring may aim to improve or stand-up institutions and governance capacity, strengthen civil society, and ensure a more informed citizenry. Building a foundation for sustainable development should be a primary tenet of support during political transitions.

#### **Illustrative Results:**

- **Countries undergoing political transitions are able to establish venues and inclusive processes to seek national agreement on democratic reform and governance structures.**
- **State institutions across all branches of government in countries in transition develop capacity to govern democratically, focusing on transparency and citizen-responsive governance.**
- **Civil society organizations have the legal, technical and strategic skills needed to engage in advocacy on legal reform and participate in other consensus building fora.**
- **Electoral legal reform processes are transparent and widely inclusive of stakeholders and constituencies.**
- **An enabling legal framework for free, fair and open electoral processes is developed and implemented.**

**IX. Objective 9: Encourage peaceful political processes and prevent and mitigate electoral violence.** A democratic political system provides rules and venues for political competition that encourage peaceful contestation of power. In countries where democratic norms, processes, and institutions are not fully developed, competition may spill over into violence. This objective seeks to develop consensus on the ‘rules of the game’ that posit that elections are the legal and legitimate means to compete and select political leaders.

Election-related violence takes many forms. Violence may erupt spontaneously after a triggering incident but is equally likely to be planned and coordinated by political actors who mobilize their supporters into using violence. Governments and ruling parties may act to repress political activity through intimidation and human rights abuses using the tools of the state. An emerging issue is intimidation online designed to shame or threaten individuals or groups to deter them from political participation.

Political violence often includes a gender-based violence component. Growing evidence points to a strong gender dimension to electoral violence. Women may be specifically targeted or may feel uniquely threatened, both in online fora and in person political events. Female political candidates are often harassed in ways tied to their gender with the goal of damaging their political prospects.

Programs to prevent and mitigate electoral violence can take many forms, from increasing cross party communication and dialogue, to improving transparency in the electoral process.

**Illustrative results include:**

- **Transparent and trusted electoral processes defuse the mistrust that may trigger violent reactions.**
- **Violence and harassment against women candidates prevented, monitored and perpetrators held accountable.**
- **Cross-party dialogue at national and community levels lead to reduced political tensions.**
- **Political parties and candidates publicly commit to peaceful participation and acceptance of election results and use of legal processes to dispute results.**
- **Legal frameworks and codes of conduct create clear expectations of conduct and hold perpetrators accountable.**
- **Host country government partners improved preparedness for safety and security around electoral processes and enhance respect for human rights**
- **Community-based initiatives address the grievances that fuel political violence.**
- **Broad-based awareness and understanding grows of the need for non-violent political participation and rejection of electoral violence.**
- **Local actors are capable of effectively implementing early warning and early response initiatives.**



## **SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

### **1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated**

USAID intends to award one (1) Leader with Associates pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide \$35,000,000.00 in total USAID funding over a five (5) year period. Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are not eligible to compete with applications for new Federal awards.

### **2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards**

The anticipated period of performance is five (5) years. The estimated start date will be October 04, 2021. The actual start date will be determined at the time of award.

### **3. Substantial Involvement**

USAID has determined that substantial involvement is necessary during the performance of any award made as a result of this NOFO. The following areas of substantial involvement are anticipated:

- a. Approval of the Awardee's Implementation Plans.
- b. Approval of the Awardee's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan.
- c. Approval of Specified Key Personnel.

The Implementation Plan and MEL Plan will be submitted post-award. Further details about these plans will be determined at the time of award.

### **4. Authorized Geographic Code**

The geographic code for the procurement of commodities and services under this program is **937** – the United States, the Awardee country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source.

### **5. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Awardee**

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Awardee and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support. The successful Awardee will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives and the efficient and effective administration of the award through the application of sound management practices. The Awardee will assume responsibility for administering Federal funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreements, program objectives, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award.

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## **SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **1. Eligible Applicants**

Eligibility for this NOFO is not restricted.

U.S. and non-U.S. non-governmental organizations are eligible to apply.

Public International Organizations (PIOs) may not apply for funding under this opportunity. Please refer to ADS Chapter 308 for USAID policy on defining PIOs: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/308>.

USAID welcomes applications from organizations that have not previously received financial assistance from USAID.

### **2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

*Cost sharing or matching* means the portion of project costs not paid by Federal (USG) funds. Cost share may include project costs incurred by the Awardee from its own funds, or project costs financed with cash, services, or property contributed or donated to the Awardee from other non-USG sources, including sub-Awardees. Cost share becomes a condition of an award when it is part of the approved award budget. Cost sharing is not required for applicants to be eligible to receive USAID funding under this NOFO. Applicants may voluntarily propose cost share if it will contribute to the sustainability of the activity. For Awardee contributions to qualify as cost share, the cost share must be verifiable from the Awardee's records. Cost share can be audited. For U.S. entities, cost share is subject to the requirements of 2 CFR 200.306, 2 CFR 700.10, and the Standard Provision, "Cost Sharing (Matching)"; for non-U.S. entities it is subject to the Standard Provision, "Cost Share." Refer to Section F of this NOFO for links to these regulations and policies.

### **3. Other**

Applicants may submit only one application as the prime applicant under this NOFO.

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## SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### 1. Agency Point of Contact

Mr. G. Serapis Irby  
Acquisition & Assistance Officer  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
500 D Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20547  
Email: [girby@usaid.gov](mailto:girby@usaid.gov)

### 2. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this NOFO must be submitted in writing via e-mail to [girby@usaid.gov](mailto:girby@usaid.gov) no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment to this NOFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicant.

### 3. General Content and Form of Application

Preparation of Applications:

Each applicant must furnish the information required by this NOFO. Applications must be submitted in two separate parts: The Technical Application and the Business (Cost) Application. This subsection addresses general content requirements applying to the full application. Please see subsections 5 and 6, below, for information on the content specific to the Technical and Business (Cost) applications. The Technical application must address technical aspects only while the Business (Cost) Application must present the costs, and address risk and other related issues.

Both the Technical and Business (Cost) Applications must include a **cover page** containing the following information:

- Name of the organization(s) submitting the application;
- Identification and signature of the primary contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address) and the identification of an alternate contact person, if any (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address);
- Program name
- Notice of Funding Opportunity number
- Name of any proposed sub-Awardees or partnerships (identify if any of the organizations are local organizations, per USAID's definition of 'local entity' under ADS 303).

Any erasures or other changes to the application must be initiated by the person signing the application. Applications signed by an agent on behalf of the applicant must be accompanied by

evidence of that agent's authority, unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

Applications must comply with the following:

- USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections. Please ensure that applications comply with the page limitations.
- Written in English.
- Use standard 8 ½" x 11", single sided, single-spaced, no smaller than 12-point Times New Roman font, 1" margins, and consecutive page numbering.
- 10-point font may be used for graphs and charts. Tables, however, must comply with the 12-point Times New Roman requirement.
- Submitted via Microsoft Word or PDF formats (with Optical Character Recognition), except budget files which must be submitted in Microsoft Excel with all cells unlocked and no hidden formulas or sheets. A PDF version of the Excel spreadsheet may be submitted in addition to the Excel version at the applicant's discretion, however, the official cost application submission is the unlocked Excel version. Signature pages may be scanned PDF.
- The estimated start date identified in Section B of this NOFO should be used in the cost application.

Applicants must review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to do so may be considered as being non-responsive and may be evaluated accordingly. Applicants should retain a copy of the application and all enclosures for their records.

#### **4. Application Submission Procedures**

Applications in response to this NOFO must be received no later than the closing date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Late applications will not be reviewed nor considered. Applicants must retain proof of timely delivery in the form of system generated documentation of delivery receipt date and time or confirmation from the receiving office.

Applications must be submitted electronically by email to [girby@usaid.gov](mailto:girby@usaid.gov). Email submissions must include the NOFO number and applicant's name in the subject line heading. In addition, for an application sent by multiple emails, the subject line must also indicate whether the email relates to the technical or cost application, and the desired sequence of the emails and their attachments (e.g., "No. 1 of 4", etc.). For example, if your cost application is being sent in two emails, the first email should have a subject line that states: "[NOFO number], [organization name], Cost Application, Part 1 of 2".

After submitting an application electronically, applicants should immediately check their own email to confirm that the attachments were indeed sent. If an applicant discovers an error in transmission, please send the material again and note in the subject line of the email that it is a "corrected" submission. Do not submit more than once unless there has been a change, and if so, please note that it is a "corrected" submission.

Applicants are reminded that email is NOT instantaneous, and in some cases delays of several hours occur from transmission to receipt. Therefore, applicants are requested to send the application in sufficient time ahead of the deadline. For this NOFO, the initial point of entry to the government infrastructure is the USAID mail server.

There may be a problem with the receipt of \*.zip files due to anti-virus software. Therefore, applicants are discouraged from sending files in this format as USAID cannot guarantee their acceptance by the internet server. File size must not exceed 50MB.

USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes associated with electronic submissions.

## **5. Technical Application Format**

The technical application shall not exceed **70 pages** (excluding the authorized annexes). The application shall be written in English, using Microsoft Word, Times New Roman, 12-point font on standard 8 1/2" x 11" paper (210 mm by 297mm paper), single spaced, each page numbered consecutively, and no less than 1" margins on all sides. Footnotes, charts, and tables will be included in the page limit requirement.

The Application must include the following, in the order presented below:

### **A. Cover Sheet**

- Name and contact information of the primary applicant
- Name of all organizations that are members of the consortium
- DUNS and EIN number for primary applicant
- Approval signatures by appropriate officials of the primary applicant

### **B. Table of Contents**

### **C. Executive Summary**

- This section must be a succinct summary of the program and contain information that the applicant believes best represents a summary of the proposed program activities.

### **D. Technical Approach (25 page maximum)**

- The technical approach must demonstrate an in-depth understanding of Democratic Elections and Political Processes needs on a global scale, outline specific activities that aim to build individual and organizational-level capacity in Democratic Elections and Political Processes, and explain how the proposed activities would help achieve the activity objectives.
- The technical approach must clearly address the factors outlined in the evaluation criteria of this solicitation.
- Technical approach must address the following:

The application must provide evidence of technical knowledge and understanding of relevant issues currently facing developing countries and regions, and specifically the role of elections and political transitions in democratization. This section must demonstrate

how the Applicant intends to use a variety of programmatic techniques to address the Program Objectives and how it would extend that work through future associate awards. The Technical Approach section must clearly describe:

i. the applicant's technical understanding of the current state of the field of Democratic Elections and Political Processes, including thorough knowledge of fundamental principles, awareness of key issues, familiarity with current practices (including both positive and negative examples), and identification of emerging trends.

ii. the applicant's proposed approach to different global, regional, and country-specific political contexts, and the viability of the proposed Democratic Elections and Political Process assistance strategies in those contexts (e.g. closed societies, authoritarian states, transitioning countries, post-conflict settings, early democracies, established democracies, etc.).

iii. the applicant's understanding of the relationship between the subsector of Democratic Elections and Political Process and outcomes in other subsectors of the broader democracy, human rights and governance field and to other areas of development important to USAID.

iv. the applicant's proposed priorities for first year activities under the Pilot and Technical Leadership element of the Leader Award

#### **E. Technical Capabilities (10 page maximum)**

The application must provide evidence of the applicant's capability to conduct the variety of activities described in the Program Description. This section must address the modalities of the Leader Award program elements in Program Description in Section I as

well as the distinctive work likely under associate awards. The Technical Capabilities section must clearly describe:

1. The applicant's institutional capability to provide technical leadership as a "public good" for the broader democracy, human rights and governance community in general and the community of international and local practitioners in elections and political transitions.
2. The applicant's ability to rapidly respond to unanticipated programming needs – including the capability to mobilize qualified personnel on a short-term and a long-term basis; assess political contexts and identify opportunities; and logistically support all necessary activities – on a global scale, especially in crisis and post-conflict situations in flux.
3. The applicant's strategy for synthesizing experiences and transmitting best practices between activities conducted under the Leader Award and activities conducted under associate awards and incorporating them into ongoing and future programmatic approaches.

#### **F. Management and Staffing Approach (5 page maximum)**

- The Applicant must describe an appropriate management structure to achieve intended results. The submission must include an organizational chart as well as a description of the proposed regional office structure, if applicable.
- The applicant must propose Key Personnel, its staffing plan, and management plan with clear communication and reporting lines. Applicants must include a summary organizational chart for the DEPP activity which shows the total number of positions proposed as well as interstaff relationships and lines of communication.
- The Applicant should propose candidates for each position designated as Key Personnel [Chief of Party (COP), ect...]:
  - For each Key Personnel position, the Applicant must submit the following:
    - 1) Brief justification for the proposed Key Personnel position including a description of the roles and responsibilities
    - 2) List of minimum requirements consistent with the proposed technical approach and how they meet or exceed the minimum requirements; and
    - 3) Resume with three references including telephone numbers and email addresses;

#### **G. Award Management Plan (10 page maximum)**

The application must provide evidence of applicant's ability to conduct activities and operations consistent with established parameters and to progressively accrue results towards reaching program goals. The Award Management Plan must clearly describe:

1. The applicant's cost-effective, results-oriented monitoring and evaluation system that will provide USAID and the successful applicant itself information to track progress, highlight achievement of results, improve performance and effectiveness, as well as to inform planning and management decisions. The plan shall clearly illustrate benchmarks, how data will be disaggregated, and how results will be documented in a cost-effective and timely fashion, on a regular basis. The plan should clearly state the applicant's safeguards for maintaining the accuracy, consistency and objectivity of data. The application should highlight the analytical approaches, policy orientation, and methodologies for achieving sustainable solutions, improving performance, effectiveness, and articulating an understanding of best practices and lessons learned to date in this sector.
2. The applicant's sample performance monitoring plan with potential methodologies for setting baselines. The plan should clearly describe data collection methods, the frequency of data collection and analysis, and approaches to disaggregating data by sex, age, and other relevant factors.
3. The applicant's communications plan must include processes for producing public communications in specific countries and globally about program activities, opportunities and results; strategies for sharing with USAID, other donors, the democracy, human rights and governance community generally and the public specialized knowledge and products produced under this award; and methods and media that will be used.
4. The applicant's strategy for ensuring the sustainability of activities and results beyond the end of activities and the end of the award.

#### **H. Associate Award Program Description (10 page maximum)**

The application must provide evidence of the applicant's ability to respond to USAID Mission requests for associate awards. The vast majority of USAID funding obligated through the resulting Leader with Associate award is expected to be obligated through associate awards. It is therefore highly relevant to consider the applicant's ability to respond to Program Descriptions for country-specific programs with the same level of expertise and competency as required for activities under the Leader Award.

## **I. Past Performance (10 page maximum)**

An applicant's history of performance can serve as an indicator of the quality of its future performance. Applicants shall describe their experience that clearly demonstrates their history of quality past performance in conducting elections and political processes programming in democratic change. Such experience must demonstrate their institutional capabilities and expertise in democracy, elections, and quick response to political crises; and worldwide geographic reach including in non-permissive environments.

Applicants must provide a list of all its cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs during the past three years. The reference information for these awards must include the performance location, award number (if available), a brief description of the work performed, and a point of contact list with current telephone numbers.

The application must also demonstrate the applicant's experience in forming meaningful partnerships with local and regional organizations, including host country government units, to achieve results consistent with the Program Description's themes contained in the Program Objectives described in Section I as well as the distinctive work likely under associate awards. This should include describing:

1. The applicant's experience with a variety of different traditional and nontraditional partnering methods including both those with and without a financial relationship and both short and long term collaboration (and intermittent or noncontiguous reoccurring collaboration).
2. Specific examples of the applicant's ability to achieve sustainability of efforts and results through partnerships with local and regional organizations, including host country government units, and transfer of ownership of reform efforts to these actors.
3. Specific examples of the applicant's ability to assist local and/or regional organizations with their organizational and management capacity including financial management systems, internal governance structures, financial self-sufficiency, inclusivity, and financial viability specifically referencing organizational self-sufficiency and ability to contend for awards from international donors including USAID.

## **J. Annexes (not included in -page limit)**

The following three annexes to the Technical Application are authorized. No additional annexes and other supporting documentation will be reviewed and evaluated.

### **Annex 1 – Key Personnel Resume(s) (maximum three (3) pages per resume)**

Refer to Section A of this NOFO for the position description and minimum qualifications. This Annex must include a current and complete resume for the individual proposed as Chief of Party that clearly details the individual's requisite qualifications and experience demonstrating how the individual meets the minimum qualifications. The resume must also include a minimum of three (3) professional references within the last ten (10) years, with current contact information including email addresses and telephone numbers. USAID may contact other references than those provided in the application. Further, USAID may designate alternative positions as Key Personnel at the time of award should the management and staffing plans warrant this.

### **Annex 2 – Organizational Chart / Organogram (maximum two (2) pages)**

Applicants must submit an organizational chart(s) or organogram(s) as an Annex.

### **Annex 3 - List of Relevant Projects (maximum one page) (optional)**

Applicants may submit a list of projects demonstrating their relevant experience as it pertains to Institutional Capability. Suggested details may include years of performance, funding level, donor, place(s) of performance. Submission of this annex is optional.

## **6. Business (Cost) Application Format**

The Business (Cost) Application must be submitted separately from the Technical Application. While no page limit exists for the full cost application, applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible while still providing the necessary details. The business (cost) application must illustrate the entire period of performance, using the budget format shown in the SF-424A.

Prior to award, applicants may be required to submit additional documentation deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer (AO) to assess the applicant's risk in accordance with 2 CFR 200.205. Applicants should not submit any additional information with their initial application.

The Cost Application must contain the following sections, unless otherwise noted for submission or completion at a later time:

**(a) Cover Page** (See Section D.3 above for requirements)

**(b) SF 424 Form(s)**

The applicant must sign and submit the cost application using the SF-424 series, which includes the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) and Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A). Standard Forms and form instructions can be accessed electronically at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or using the following link:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>

Failure to accurately complete these forms could result in the rejection of the application.

### **(c) Required Certifications and Assurances**

The applicant must complete the following documents and submit a signed copy with their application:

- (1) “Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Awardee” document found at <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mav.pdf>
- (2) Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B), which can be accessed electronically at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or using the following link: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>
- (3) Certificate of Compliance: Please submit a copy of your Certificate of Compliance if your organization's systems have been certified by USAID/Washington's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA).

### **(d) Budget and Budget Narrative**

The applicant must submit a Budget and Budget Narrative. The Budget must be submitted as one unprotected Microsoft Excel file with visible formulas and references and must be broken out by project year, including itemization of the federal and any non-federal (cost share) amount. Files must not contain any hidden or otherwise inaccessible cells. Budgets with hidden cells lengthen the cost analysis time required to make an award and may result in a rejection of the cost application. Proposed costs must be in U.S. dollars. The Budget Narrative must contain sufficient detail to allow USAID to understand the proposed costs. The applicant must ensure the budgeted costs address any additional requirements identified in the NOFO, such as Branding and Marking. The Budget Narrative must be thorough, including sources for costs to support USAID’s determination that the proposed costs are fair and reasonable.

The Budget should include the following worksheets or tabs, and contents, at a minimum:

- Summary Budget, inclusive of all program costs (federal and non-federal), broken out by major budget category per the SF-424A and by year for activities implemented by the applicant and any potential subawardees for the entire period of the program. Please see Annex 1 for a Summary Budget Template that applicants may use.
- Detailed Budget, including a breakdown by year, sufficient to allow the Agency to determine that the costs represent a realistic and efficient use of funding to implement the applicant’s program and are allowable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E.
- Detailed Budgets for each proposed subawardee (if any), for all federal funding and cost share, broken out by budget category and by year, for the entire implementation period of the project.

The Detailed Budget should contain the following budget categories and information, as applicable:

- 1) **Personnel** – Salaries must be proposed consistent with 2 CFR 200.430 Compensation - Personal Services. Provide the position title, salary rate, level of effort, and salary escalation factors for each position. Allowances, when proposed, must be broken down by specific type and by position. Applicants must explain all assumptions in the Budget Narrative. The Budget Narrative must demonstrate that the proposed compensation is reasonable for the services rendered and consistent with what is paid for similar work in other activities of the applicant. Applicants must provide their established written policies on personnel compensation. If the applicant's written policies do not address a specific element of compensation that is being proposed, the Budget Narrative must describe the rationale used and supporting market research.
- 2) **Fringe Benefits** (if applicable) – If the applicant has a fringe benefit rate approved by an agency of the U.S. Government, the applicant, must use such a rate and provide evidence of its approval. If an applicant does not have a fringe benefit rate approved, the applicant may propose a rate and explain how the applicant determined the rate. In this case, the Budget Narrative must include a detailed breakdown, comprised of all items of fringe benefits and the costs of each, expressed in U.S. dollars and as a percentage of salaries.
- 3) **Travel** – Provide details to explain the purpose of proposed trips, the number of trips, the origin and destination, the number of individuals traveling, and the duration of the trips. Per Diem and associated travel costs must be based on the applicant's normal travel policies. When appropriate please provide supporting documentation as an attachment, such as company travel policy, and explain assumptions in the Budget Narrative.
- 4) **Equipment** - Provide details on the proposed procurement of any equipment and the type/model and the cost per unit and quantity. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.33, equipment means tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. Indicate in the Budget Narrative the capitalization level established by the applicant organization. The Budget Narrative must include the purpose of the equipment and basis for the estimate.
- 5) **Supplies** - Provide details on the procurement of any proposed supplies and the cost per unit and quantity. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.94, supplies means all tangible personal property other than those described in §200.33 Equipment. A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes or \$5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. The Budget Narrative must include the purpose of the supplies and the basis for the estimates.
- 6) **Contractual** – In this category, include subcategories to distinguish between subawardees and contractors. See 2 CFR 200.330 for assistance in determining whether the sub-tier entity is a subawardee or contractor. Provide a breakdown and accompanying narrative for subawardee budgets which must use the same format as the applicant's budget. The Budget Narrative must support the necessity and purpose of any proposed subawardee or contractor.

- 7) **Construction** – Note that construction activities will not be financed under the award.
- 8) **Other Direct Costs** – This may include other direct costs not elsewhere specified. For any proposed training, conference, seminar, or workshop cost, the applicant should indicate the subject, venue, estimated number of participants, and duration and the relationship to the objectives of the program, along with estimates of costs. For proposed rental costs, the Budget Narrative must support the necessity of any rental costs and reasonableness in light of factors such as: rental costs of comparable property, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased.
- 9) **Indirect Charges** – Applicants must indicate whether they are proposing indirect costs or will charge all costs directly. In order to better understand indirect costs please see 2 CFR 200 Subpart E, specifically 2 CFR 200.414. The applicant must identify which approach they are requesting and provide the applicable supporting information. Below are the most commonly used Indirect Cost Rate methods:

Method 1 - Direct Charge Only

Eligibility: Any applicant

Initial Application Requirements: See above on direct costs

Method 2 - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)

Eligibility: Any applicant with a NICRA issued by a USG Agency must use that NICRA

Initial Application Requirements: If the applicant has a current NICRA, submit your approved NICRA and the associated disclosed practices. If your NICRA was issued by an Agency other than USAID, provide the contact information for the approving Agency. Additionally, at the Agency's discretion, a provisional rate may be set forth in the award subject to audit and finalization. See [USAID's Indirect Cost Rate Guide for Non Profit Organizations](#) for further guidance.

Method 3 - De minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC)

Eligibility: Any applicant that has never received a NICRA

Initial Application Requirements: Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate an indirect rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. The applicant must describe which cost elements it charges indirectly vs. directly. See 2 CFR 200.414(f) for further information.

Method 4 - Indirect Costs Charged As A Fixed Amount

Eligibility: Non-U.S. non-profit organizations without a NICRA may request, but approval is at the discretion of the AO

Initial Application Requirements: Provide the proposed fixed amount and a worksheet that includes the following:

- Total costs incurred by the organization for the previous fiscal year and estimates for the current year.

- Indirect costs (common costs that benefit the day-to-day operations of the organization, including categories such as salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting, or that benefit and are identifiable to more than one program or activity, such as depreciation, rental costs, operations and maintenance of facilities, and telephone expenses) for the previous fiscal year and estimates for the current year
- Proposed method for prorating the indirect costs equitably and consistently across all programs and activities of using a base that measures the benefits of that particular cost to each program or activity to which the cost applies.

If the applicant does not have an approved NICRA and does not elect to utilize the 10% de minimis rate, the Agreement Officer will provide further instructions and may request additional supporting information, including financial statements and audits, should the application still be under consideration after the merit review. USAID is under no obligation to approve the applicant's requested method.

**10) Cost Sharing (voluntary)** – If proposing any cost share, the applicant should estimate the amount of cost-sharing resources to be provided over the life of the agreement and specify the sources of such resources, and the basis of calculation in the budget narrative. Applicants should also provide a breakdown of the cost share (financial and in-kind contributions) of all organizations involved in implementing the resulting award.

**(e) Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407**

Inclusion of an item of cost in the detailed application budget does not satisfy any requirements for prior approval by the Agency. If the applicant would like the award to reflect approval of any cost elements for which prior written approval is specifically required for allowability, the applicant must specify and justify that cost. See 2 CFR 200.407 for information regarding which cost elements require prior written approval.

**(f) Approval of Subawards**

The applicant must submit information for all subawards that it wishes to have approved at the time of award. For each proposed subaward the applicant must provide the following:

- Name of organization
- Confirmation that the subawardee does not appear on the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) list
- Confirmation that the subawardee does not have active exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM)
- Confirmation that the subawardee is not listed in the United Nations Security designation list
- Confirmation that the subawardee is not suspended or debarred
- Confirmation that the applicant has completed a risk assessment of the subawardee, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.331(b)

- Any negative findings as a result of the risk assessment and the applicant’s plan for mitigation.

**(g) Dun and Bradstreet and SAM Requirements**

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier (DUNS number) and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements. Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is exempted from requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

1. Provide a valid DUNS number for the applicant and all proposed sub-Awardees;
2. Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. SAM is streamlining processes, eliminating the need to enter the same data multiple times, and consolidating hosting to make the process of doing business with the government more efficient ([www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)).
3. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin the process early. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements above by the time USAID is ready to make an award, USAID may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant. Any work to be done by proposed sub-partners which do not meet the above requirements at the time of submission, will be tentative until requirements are completed.

DUNS number: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

SAM registration: <http://www.sam.gov>

Non-U.S. applicants can find additional resources for registering in SAM, including a Quick Start Guide and a video on how to obtain an NCAGE code, on [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov), navigate to Help, then to International Registrants.

**(h) History of Performance**

The applicant must provide information regarding its recent history of performance for all its contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs, not to exceed five (5) awards that ended no more than ten (10) years ago, as follows:

- Name of the Awarding Organization;
- Award Number;
- Activity Title;
- Performance Location;
- A brief description of the activity;
- Period of Performance;
- Award Amount;

- Reports and findings from any audits performed in the last two years; and
- Name of at least two (2) updated professional contacts who most directly observed the work at the organization for which the service was performed with complete current contact information including telephone number, and e-mail address for each proposed individual.

If the applicant encountered problems on any of the referenced Awards, it may provide a short explanation and the corrective action taken. The applicant should not provide general information on its performance. USAID reserves the right to obtain relevant information concerning an applicant's history of performance from any sources and may consider such information in its review of the applicant's risk. The Agency may request additional information and conduct a pre-award survey if it determines that it is necessary to inform the risk assessment.

**(i) Branding Strategy & Marking Plan (to be submitted later upon request of the AO)**

The apparently successful applicant will be asked to provide a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan to be evaluated and approved by the Agreement Officer and incorporated into any resulting award.

**1) Branding Strategy – Assistance (June 2012)**

- a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Branding Strategy," describing how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, and how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and host country citizens.
- b. The request for a Branding Strategy, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.
- c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Branding Strategy within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.
- d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.
- e. The Branding Strategy must include, at a minimum, all of the following:
  - (1) All estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth.
  - (2) The intended name of the program, project, or activity.
    - (i) USAID requires the applicant to use the "USAID Identity," comprised of the USAID logo and brand mark, with the tagline "from the American people" as

found on the USAID Web site at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding>, unless Section VI of the RFA or APS states that the USAID Administrator has approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.

- (ii) USAID prefers local language translations of the phrase “made possible by (or with) the generous support of the American People” next to the USAID Identity when acknowledging contributions.
  - (iii) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.
  - (iv) If branding in the above manner is inappropriate or not possible, the applicant must explain how USAID's involvement will be showcased during publicity for the program or project.
  - (v) USAID prefers to fund projects that do not have a separate logo or identity that competes with the USAID Identity. If there is a plan to develop a separate logo to consistently identify this program, the applicant must attach a copy of the proposed logos. Section VI of the RFA or APS will state if an Administrator approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.
- (3) The intended primary and secondary audiences for this project or program, including direct beneficiaries and any special target segments.
- (4) Planned communication or program materials used to explain or market the program to beneficiaries.
- (i) Describe the main program message.
  - (ii) Provide plans for training materials, posters, pamphlets, public service announcements, billboards, Web sites, and so forth, as appropriate.
  - (iii) Provide any plans to announce and promote publicly this program or project to host country citizens, such as media releases, press conferences, public events, and so forth. Applicants must incorporate the USAID Identity and the message, “USAID is from the American People.”
  - (iv) Provide any additional ideas to increase awareness that the American people support this project or program.
- (5) Information on any direct involvement from the host-country government or ministry, including any planned acknowledgement of the host-country government.
- (6) Any other groups whose logo or identity the applicant will use on program materials and related materials. Indicate if they are a donor or why they will be visibly acknowledged, and if they will receive the same prominence as USAID.

- f. The Agreement Officer will review the Branding Strategy to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.
- g. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Branding Strategy will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement

(END OF PRE-AWARD TERM)

## **2) Marking Plan – Assistance (June 2012)**

- a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a “Marking Plan,” detailing the public communications, commodities, and program materials, and other items that will visibly bear the “USAID Identity,” which comprises of the USAID logo and brand mark, with the tagline “from the American people.” The USAID Identity is the official marking for the Agency and is found on the USAID Web site at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding>. Section VI of the RFA or APS will state if an Administrator approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.
- b. The request for a Marking Plan, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.
- c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Marking Plan within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.
- d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.
- e. The Marking Plan must include all of the following:
  - (1) A description of the public communications, commodities, and program materials that the applicant plans to produce, and which will bear the USAID Identity as part of the award, including:
    - (i) Program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects or other sites physical in nature;
    - (ii) Technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audio-visual productions, public service announcements, Web sites/Internet activities, promotional, informational, media, or communications products funded by USAID;

- (iii) Commodities, equipment, supplies, and other materials funded by USAID, including commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs; and
  - (iv) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.
  - (v) Events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences and other public activities. If the USAID Identity cannot be displayed, the Awardee is encouraged to otherwise acknowledge USAID and the support of the American people.
- (2) A table on the program deliverables with the following details:
- (i) The program deliverables that the applicant plans to mark with the USAID Identity;
  - (ii) The type of marking and what materials the applicant will use to mark the program deliverables;
  - (iii) When in the performance period the applicant will mark the program deliverables, and where the applicant will place the marking;
  - (iv) What program deliverables the applicant does not plan to mark with the USAID Identity , and
  - (v) The rationale for not marking program deliverables.
- (3) Any requests for an exemption from USAID marking requirements, and an explanation of why the exemption would apply. The applicant may request an exemption if USAID marking requirements would:
- (i) Compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program or materials where independence or neutrality is an inherent aspect of the program and materials. The applicant must identify the USAID Development Objective, Interim Result, or program goal furthered by an appearance of neutrality, or state why an aspect of the award is presumptively neutral. Identify by category or deliverable item, examples of material for which an exemption is sought.
  - (ii) Diminish the credibility of audits, reports, analyses, studies, or policy recommendations whose data or findings must be seen as independent. The applicant must explain why each particular deliverable must be seen as credible.
  - (iii) Undercut host-country government “ownership” of constitutions, laws, regulations, policies, studies, assessments, reports, publications, surveys or

audits, public service announcements, or other communications. The applicant must explain why each particular item or product is better positioned as host-country government item or product.

- (iv) Impair the functionality of an item. The applicant must explain how marking the item or commodity would impair its functionality.
- (v) Incur substantial costs or be impractical. The applicant must explain why marking would not be cost beneficial or practical.
- (vi) Offend local cultural or social norms or be considered inappropriate. The applicant must identify the relevant norm and explain why marking would violate that norm or otherwise be inappropriate.
- (vii) Conflict with international law. The applicant must identify the applicable international law violated by the marking.

- f. The Agreement Officer will consider the Marking Plan's adequacy and reasonableness and will approve or disapprove any exemption requests. The Marking Plan will be reviewed to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.
- g. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Marking Plan, including any approved exemptions, will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement, and will apply for the term of the award unless provided otherwise.

(END OF PRE-AWARD TERM)

#### **(j) Funding Restrictions**

Profit is not allowable for Awardees or subawardees under this award. See 2 CFR 200.330 for assistance in determining whether a sub-tier entity is a subawardee or contractor.

Construction will not be authorized under this award.

USAID will not allow the reimbursement of pre-award costs under this award without the explicit written approval of the Agreement Officer.

Except as may be specifically approved in advance by the Agreement Officer, all commodities and services that will be reimbursed by USAID under this award must be from the authorized geographic code specified in Section B.4 of this NOFO and must meet the source and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR 228.

#### **(k) Conflict of Interest Pre-Award Term**

### **1) CONFLICT OF INTEREST PRE-AWARD TERM (August 2018)**

**a. Personal Conflict of Interest**

1. An actual or appearance of a conflict of interest exists when an applicant organization or an employee of the organization has a relationship with an Agency official involved in the competitive award decision-making process that could affect that Agency official's impartiality. The term "conflict of interest" includes situations in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, the obligations and duties of a USAID employee or Awardee employee.

2. The applicant must provide conflict of interest disclosures when it submits an SF-424. Should the applicant discover a previously undisclosed conflict of interest after submitting the application, the applicant must disclose the conflict of interest to the AO no later than ten (10) calendar days following discovery.

**b. Organizational Conflict of Interest**

The applicant must notify USAID of any actual or potential conflict of interest that they are aware of that may provide the applicant with an unfair competitive advantage in competing for this financial assistance award. Examples of an unfair competitive advantage include but are not limited to situations in which an applicant or the applicant's employee gained access to non-public information regarding a federal assistance funding opportunity, or an applicant or applicant's employee was substantially involved in the preparation of a federal assistance funding opportunity. USAID will promptly take appropriate action upon receiving any such notification from the applicant.

(END OF PRE-AWARD TERM)

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## **SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **1. Criteria**

The merit review criteria prescribed here are tailored to the requirements of this particular NOFO. Applicants should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant matters which the applicants should address in their applications, and (b) set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated.

Technical and other factors will be evaluated relative to each other, as described here and prescribed by the Technical Application Format. The Technical Application will be evaluated by a Selection Committee (SC) using the criteria described in this section.

### **2. Review and Selection Process**

#### **a) Merit Review**

USAID will conduct a merit review of all applications received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the following criteria and relative importance:

#### **Criterion #1: Technical Approach (Most Important)**

Technical Approach will be evaluated based on the extent to which the application demonstrates the following:

- Reflects a clear and sound understanding of the overall program description in Section A, including the objectives, activities and tools involved, and demonstrates an ability to apply evidence-based best practices and techniques to reach clearly defined and feasible results.
- Clear articulation of program design, to include: theory of change; intended results (outputs and outcomes); monitoring and evaluation; and collaborating, learning, and adapting.
- Thoroughness in incorporating cross-cutting priorities, including gender and the inclusion of marginalized groups and local partners.
- Clear articulation of a realistic strategy for the sustainability of efforts.

#### **Criterion #2: Management and Staffing Approach (Second Most Important):**

Management and Staffing Approach will be evaluated based on the extent to which the application demonstrates the following:

- An efficient and logical management and staffing structure for effective project implementation, including clearly defined internal management plans; organizational structures; lines of communication and authority (especially between headquarters and field staff); staff technical expertise, levels of effort, and proportionate in-country presence

that facilitates the proposed technical and operational strategies to meet program objectives.

- Clear articulation and effective integration of a flexible management approach to allow the program to strategically adjust and respond to, as needed, unforeseen circumstances and/or developments, including a capacity for rapid deployments.

**Criterion #3: Key Personnel (Equally Third Most Important)**

The proposed Chief of Party and all other Key Personnel will be evaluated based on the extent to which the individuals possess the requisite qualifications for the position as described in Section A and corroborated by references.

**Criterion #4: Institutional Capability (Equally Third Most Important):**

Institutional Capability will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant demonstrates the following:

- Demonstrated applied technical capacity related to elections and political processes programming .
- Demonstrated experience working with marginalized groups and integrating relevant considerations into programmatic approaches.
- Demonstrated experience adapting programming and managing change in dynamic situations.

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## SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

### 1. Federal Award Notices

Award of the agreement contemplated by this NOFO cannot be made until funds have been appropriated, allocated and committed through internal USAID procedures. While USAID anticipates that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award.

The Cooperative Agreement signed by the Agreement Officer is the authorizing document, which shall be transmitted electronically to the Awardee for countersignature by the authorized agent of the successful organization. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Agreement may be incurred before receipt of either an executed Agreement or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

Notification will be made electronically to unsuccessful applicants pursuant to ADS 303.3.7.1.b.

### 2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

The resulting award from this NOFO will be administered in accordance with the following policies and regulations.

For U.S. organizations:

- ADS 303: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303>
- 2 CFR 200:  
<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=1b472774f0a1e84d725c7ca14618e8ac&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5>
- 2 CFR 700:  
<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=a5489109509be4f2b9bd6335059465b2&node=pt2.1.700&rgn=div5>
- Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations:  
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303maa>

For Non-U.S. organizations:

- Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations:  
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>

See Annex 2, for a list of the Standard Provisions that will be applicable to any awards resulting from this NOFO.

### 3. Reporting Requirements

#### a) Financial Reporting:

Financial reporting requirements will be in accordance with 2 CFR 200.327. Standard Form 425 (SF-425) and SF-425A (available online at: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html>) are used to report accrued expenditures. Quarterly reports are due not later than 30 days after the end of each quarter:

- January 1 - March 31 (due date: April 30)
- April 1 – June 30 (due date: July 30)
- July 1 – September 30 (due date: October 30)
- October 1 – December 31 (due date: January 30)

Submission of an SF-425 is required for each quarter regardless of the performance start date or the estimated completion date of the Agreement's period of performance. The final financial report is due not later than 90 days after the estimated completion date of the Agreement. Electronic submission of financial reports is required. One copy of the financial reports must be submitted to the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR), to the appropriate USAID payment office, and to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (if advance payments are made to the Awardee by Letter of Credit).

#### **b) Performance Reporting**

Performance reporting requirements will be in accordance with 2 CFR 200.328.

- **Quarterly Program Performance Reports:**

- (1) The Awardee shall submit one copy of a concise quarterly program report, not to exceed 20 pages excluding annexes, to the AOR. Electronic submissions by email are preferred over hard copy.
- (2) Quarterly reports are due no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the reporting period. Reporting periods are calendar quarters:

January 1 - March 31 (due date: April 30)  
April 1 - June 30 (due date: July 30)  
July 1 - September 30 (due date: October 30)  
October 1 - December 31 (due date: January 30)

The Awardee must provide a report for the reporting period in which the award begins, unless the performance start date is within 30 days of the end of the reporting period. In that event, any activities undertaken during the period in which the award commences must be included in the report covering the subsequent reporting period. The Awardee is not required to submit a quarterly report for the final reporting period of the award. Instead, results from the final period must be included in the Final Results Report.

- (3) At a minimum, the quarterly reports shall include the following:

- a) A comparison of actual accomplishments, both for the reporting period and cumulatively, with the established goals and objectives, and expected results. Data (both qualitative and quantitative) must be presented using established baseline data and indicators and be supported by a brief narrative. Whenever appropriate and the output of programs or projects can be readily quantified, such quantitative data should be related to cost data for computation of unit costs. Quantitative data should include:
  - Number of beneficiaries targeted, by objective.
  - Number of beneficiaries reached, by objective.
  - Cumulative number of beneficiaries targeted.
  - Cumulative number of beneficiaries reached.
- b) Reasons why established goals were not met (if applicable), the impact on the program objective(s), and how the impact has been/will be addressed; and
- c) Other pertinent information including, context of the operating environment; when appropriate, success stories which illustrate the direct positive effects of the program; how unforeseen circumstances affected overall performance compared to original assumptions (if applicable); how activities were accordingly adjusted or re-targeted; and analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs.

- **Final Results Report:**

- (1) The Awardee shall submit one copy of a final results report, not to exceed 30 pages excluding annexes, to the AOR. Electronic submissions are preferred over hard copy. This report shall cover the entire period of performance.
- (2) The Final Results Report is due no later than 90 calendar days after the period of performance end date.
- (3) The final results report shall emphasize quantitative as well as qualitative data that reflect results, shall measure impact using the baseline data and indicators established for the program, and shall at a minimum, include the following:
  - (a) Success stories and an explanation of successes achieved, constraints encountered, and adjustments made for achieving program objectives;
  - (b) A discussion of the overall performance of the program, including details of any discrepancies between expected and actual results and any recommendations for improving the design of the program;
  - (c) Overall cost effectiveness, with particular attention paid to cost savings and/or cost overruns, and other significant cost impacts such as major exchange rate fluctuations or other types of inflation shall be detailed;

(d) A comparison of actual accomplishments, both for the reporting period and cumulatively with the established goals and objectives, and expected results; the findings of the investigator; or both. Data (both qualitative and quantitative must be presented using established baseline data and indicators and be supported by a brief narrative. Whenever appropriate and the output of programs or projects can be readily quantified, such quantitative data should be related to cost data for computation of unit costs. Quantitative data should include:

- Number of beneficiaries targeted, by objective.
- Number of beneficiaries reached, by objective.
- Cumulative number of beneficiaries targeted.
- Cumulative number of beneficiaries reached.

(e) Reasons why established goals were not met (if applicable), the impact on the program objective (s), and how the impact has been/will be addressed; and

(f) Other pertinent information including, context of the operating environment when appropriate; success stories which illustrate the direct positive effects of the program; how unforeseen circumstances affected overall performance compared to original assumptions (if applicable), how activities were accordingly adjusted or re-targeted; and analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs.

● **Notifications of Significant Developments:**

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates that have significant impact upon the supported activity. The Awardee must submit, in writing via email, one (1) copy to the AOR, and one (1) copy to the Agreement Officer of notifications, as follows:

- (1) Problems, delays, or adverse conditions which materially impair the ability to meet the objectives of the award. This notification must include a statement of the action taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the problem.
- (2) Favorable developments which enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

**4. Program Income**

a) Non-profit organizations:

Any Program Income earned under the Agreement shall be additive to the USAID and other contributions provided thereunder. U.S. organizations shall account for Program Income in accordance with 2 CFR 200.307, and non-U.S. organizations shall account for Program Income in accordance with the Standard Provision “Program Income.”

b) For-profit organizations:

Any Program Income earned under the Agreement shall be deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the U.S. Government share of costs is based. U.S. organizations shall account for Program Income in accordance with 2 CFR 200.307, and non-U.S. organizations shall account for Program Income in accordance with the Standard Provision “Program Income.”

## **5. Environmental Compliance**

- a) The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID’s activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID’s Automated Directives System (ADS) Parts 201 and 204 (<https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/agency-policy/series-200>), which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities. Awardee environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this NOFO.
- b) In addition, the Awardee must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter shall govern.
- c) No activity funded under the Cooperative Agreement will be implemented unless an environmental threshold determination, as defined by 22 CFR 216, has been reached for that activity, as documented in a Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE), Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), or Environmental Assessment (EA) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO). (Hereinafter, such documents are described as “approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.”) In accordance with 22 CFR 216, USAID/DCHA/DRG developed an umbrella IEE for its projects and activities. Since the GIF activity will primarily consist of capacity-building and technical assistance, communications and knowledge management, events, and research and evaluation, the activity is covered by a categorical exclusion, per the IEE. The IEE also includes a Climate Risk Analysis that covers the activities to be implemented under GIF and finds them to be low risk.
- d) As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the Awardee, in collaboration with the USAID Agreement Officer’s Representative and Mission Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing and planned activities under the Cooperative Agreement to determine if they are within the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.
- e) If the Awardee plans any new activities outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation, it shall prepare an amendment to the documentation for USAID review and approval. No such new activities shall be undertaken prior to receiving

written USAID approval of environmental documentation amendments.

- f) Any ongoing activities found to be outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation shall be halted until an amendment to the documentation is submitted and written approval is received from USAID.

## **6. Other Requirements**

Implementation in certain locations may require additional administrative requirements such as partner vetting or may necessitate additional safety and security or risk mitigation measures. These requirements will be determined at the time of award or when such locations are identified during performance. USAID may require the Awardee to include or address a location-specific Safety and Security Plan or Risk Mitigation Plan as part of the implementation plan.

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**SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)**

Please refer to Section D of this NOFO for the Agency point of contact.

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## **SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION**

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. Any award and subsequent incremental funding will be subject to the availability of funds and continued relevance to Agency programming.

### Applications with Proprietary Data

Applicants who include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation purpose, should mark the cover page with the following:

“This application includes data that must not be duplicated, used, or disclosed – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, an award is made as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government will have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting award. This restriction does not limit the U.S. Government’s right to use information contained in this data if it is obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in sheets {insert sheet numbers}.”

Additionally, the applicant must mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following:

“Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application.”

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**ANNEX 1 - SUMMARY BUDGET TEMPLATE**

Applicants may use the following format for the summary budget:

	<b>Cost Categories</b>	<b>Year 1 - USAI D</b>	<b>Year 1 - Cost Share*</b>	<b>Year 1 Total</b>	<b>Year 2 - USAI D</b>	<b>Year 2 - Cost Share*</b>	<b>Year 2 Total</b>	<b>Year 3 - USAI D</b>	<b>Year 3 - Cost Share *</b>	<b>Year 3 Total</b>	<b>Total USAID Amount</b>	<b>Total Cost Share*</b>	<b>Total Program Amount</b>
1	Personnel												
2	Fringe Benefits												
3	Travel												
4	Equipment												
5	Supplies												
6	Contractual												
7	Construction												
8	Other Direct Costs												
	Total Direct Charges												
9	Indirect Charges												
	<b>TOTAL</b>												

\*If cost share is proposed. Cost sharing is not required for applicants to be eligible to receive USAID funding under this NOFO.

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## ANNEX 2 - STANDARD PROVISIONS

(Note: the full text of these provisions may be found at: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303maa> and <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>). The actual Standard Provisions included in the award will be dependent on the organization that is selected. The award will include the latest Mandatory Provisions for either U.S. or non-U.S. Nongovernmental organizations. The award will also contain the following “required as applicable” Standard Provisions:

### REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS FOR U.S. NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Required	Not Required	Standard Provision
TBD		RAA1. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATES - PREDETERMINED (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA2. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATES - PROVISIONAL (Nonprofit) (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA3. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE - PROVISIONAL (Profit) (DECEMBER 2014)
TBD		RAA4. EXCHANGE VISITORS AND PARTICIPANT TRAINING (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA5. VOLUNTARY POPULATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES – SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIREMENTS (JANUARY 2009)
TBD		RAA6. PROTECTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT (APRIL 1998)
	X	RAA7. CARE OF LABORATORY ANIMALS (MARCH 2004)
TBD		RAA8. TITLE TO AND CARE OF PROPERTY (COOPERATING COUNTRY TITLE) (NOVEMBER 1985)
TBD		RAA9. COST SHARING (MATCHING) (FEBRUARY 2012)
TBD		RAA10. PROHIBITION OF ASSISTANCE TO DRUG TRAFFICKERS (JUNE 1999)
TBD		RAA11. INVESTMENT PROMOTION (NOVEMBER 2003)
X		RAA12. REPORTING HOST GOVERNMENT TAXES (DECEMBER 2014)
TBD		RAA13. FOREIGN GOVERNMENT DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES (JUNE 2012)

	X	RAA14. CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IMPLEMENTATION (ASSISTANCE) (FEBRUARY 2012)
	X	RAA15. CONDOMS (ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA16. PROHIBITION ON THE PROMOTION OR ADVOCACY OF THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION OR SEX TRAFFICKING (ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
X		RAA17. USAID DISABILITY POLICY - ASSISTANCE (DECEMBER 2004)
	X	RAA18. STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED IN USAID ASSISTANCE AWARDS INVOLVING CONSTRUCTION (SEPTEMBER 2004)
	X	RAA19. STATEMENT FOR IMPLEMENTERS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES ON LACK OF SUPPORT FOR PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA20. ELIGIBILITY OF Subawardees OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA21. PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS TO PROMOTE, SUPPORT, OR ADVOCATE FOR THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
TBD		RAA22. UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM OF AWARD MANAGEMENT (July 2015)
TBD		RAA23. REPORTING SUBAWARDS AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION (DECEMBER 2014)
TBD		RAA24. PATENT REPORTING PROCEDURES (DECEMBER 2014)
TBD		RAA25. ACCESS TO USAID FACILITIES AND USAID'S INFORMATION SYSTEMS (AUGUST 2013)
TBD		RAA26. CONTRACT PROVISION FOR DBA INSURANCE UNDER Awardee PROCUREMENTS (DECEMBER 2014)
X		RAA27. AWARD TERM AND CONDITION FOR Awardee INTEGRITY AND PERFORMANCE MATTERS (April 2016)
	X	RAA28. PROTECTING LIFE IN GLOBAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE (MAY 2019)

**REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS FOR NON-U.S. NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

<b>Required</b>	<b>Not Required</b>	<b>Standard Provision</b>
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TBD		RAA1. ADVANCE PAYMENT AND REFUNDS (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA2. REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENT AND REFUNDS (DECEMBER 2014)
TBD		RAA3. INDIRECT COSTS – NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA) (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA4. INDIRECT COSTS – CHARGED AS A FIXED AMOUNT (NONPROFIT) (JUNE 2012)
TBD		RAA5. UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM OF AWARD MANAGEMENT (July 2015)
TBD		RAA6. REPORTING SUBAWARDS AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION (DECEMBER 2014)
TBD		RAA7. SUBAWARDS (DECEMBER 2014)
TBD		RAA8. TRAVEL AND INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORTATION (DECEMBER 2014)
TBD		RAA9. OCEAN SHIPMENT OF GOODS (JUNE 2012)
X		RAA10. REPORTING HOST GOVERNMENT TAXES (JUNE 2012)
TBD		RAA11. PATENT RIGHTS (JUNE 2012)
TBD		RAA12. EXCHANGE VISITORS AND PARTICIPANT TRAINING (JUNE 2012)
TBD		RAA13. INVESTMENT PROMOTION (NOVEMBER 2003)
TBD		RAA 14. COST SHARE (JUNE 2012)
X		RAA15. PROGRAM INCOME (DECEMBER 2014)
TBD		RAA16. FOREIGN GOVERNMENT DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA17. STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED IN USAID ASSISTANCE AWARDS INVOLVING CONSTRUCTION (SEPTEMBER 2004)
TBD		RAA18. PROTECTION OF HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECTS (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA19. STATEMENT FOR IMPLEMENTERS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES ON LACK OF SUPPORT FOR PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA20. ELIGIBILITY OF Subawardees OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA21. PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS TO PROMOTE, SUPPORT, OR ADVOCATE FOR THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)

	X	RAA22. VOLUNTARY POPULATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES – SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIREMENTS (JANUARY 2009)
	X	RAA23. CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IMPLEMENTATION (ASSISTANCE) (FEBRUARY 2012)
	X	RAA24. CONDOMS (ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA25. PROHIBITION ON THE PROMOTION OR ADVOCACY OF THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION OR SEX TRAFFICKING(ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA26. LIMITATION ON SUBAWARDS TO NON-LOCAL ENTITIES (JULY 2014)
	TBD	RAA27. CONTRACT PROVISION FOR DBA INSURANCE UNDER Awardee PROCUREMENTS (DECEMBER 2014)
X		RAA28. CONTRACT AWARD TERM AND CONDITION FOR Awardee INTEGRITY AND PERFORMANCE MATTERS (April 2016)
	X	RAA29. PROTECTING LIFE IN GLOBAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE (MAY 2019)

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