

## STANDARD 'CALL FOR PROPOSALS' (CFP)

**Overriding Principle:**

In the interest of fairness, transparency and integrity, the 'Call for Proposals' (CFP) is recommended as the most appropriate solicitation method for announcing available grant support under the competitive selection method.

**Objective:**

The public distribution or advertising of the CFP should be tailored to best facilitate the project's objective, and ideally result in the receipt of at least three (3) proposals.

**Primary project/program title:**

Expanding Access to Low-Cost Eyeglasses and Assistive Technology

**And/or UNOPS reference number (if applicable):**

UNOPS/CFP-2022/012/ATSCALE

### 1. General instructions for proposal submission

**How to submit?**

Interested parties are requested to submit a Grant Application before the deadline shown below. Please submit your proposal in electronic format in PDF using the Grant Application Template given in **Annex 1** of this Call for Proposals as well as the "Expression of Interest" in **Annex 3**. Please make sure you have addressed each component of the requested application.

**When to submit?**

Applications should be submitted no later than 17:00 hrs Geneva time (CET) on **10 October 2022**.

**Where to submit?**

Please submit Application by email, subject, "**Expanding Access to Low-Cost Eyeglasses and Assistive Technology**" to [Alika@unops.org](mailto:Alika@unops.org)

**Questions?**

Please submit any questions to [alika@unops.org](mailto:alika@unops.org) no later than **23 September 2022** at 17:00 hrs Geneva time (CET). Questions will be answered on a rolling basis and responses will be posted on the [UNGM](#) website by 17:00 hrs Geneva time on **27 September 2022** at the latest.

## 2. Eligibility criteria as per project agreement

### Limitations:

Only not-for-profit organisations, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and academic institutions, with demonstrated experience developing health, assistive technology and/or eyeglass programming in partnership with national governments in low- or middle-income countries are eligible to apply. Consortia may apply, but a prime organisation must be selected as part of that consortium and must be a not-for-profit organisation as described above. For-profit organisations may be included in the project through sub-agreements.

### Minimum requirements/qualifications:

- The Grantee must have adequate management, financial, administrative, and technical structure and capacity to conduct the proposed activities.
- The Grantee must propose one low- or middle-income country (LMIC) eligible for Overseas Development Assistance (<http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/dac-list.htm>) in which they intend to conduct the work and provide a justification for selecting this country, as well as evidence of political commitment of the Government (more described in Application Guidelines below).

### Other critical considerations:

- Past performance will be strongly considered when selecting the most suitable proposal.
- The project approach should indicate how lessons learned and/or relevant proven models/approaches from the vision sector or other sectors will be applied.
- Applicants who can demonstrate evidence of successful implementation of work in a similar low- or middle-income country context, integrated into national systems, will be considered favourably by the evaluation committee.
- Strong local ties to the proposed country and a clear pathway to national ownership of the work will be considered assets.
- The clarity and extent to which the work proposed will be integrated with other (national) vision, assistive technology and health services will be strongly considered by the evaluation committee.
- Applicants proposing an approach that clearly leverages partnership and resources beyond this grant will be considered favourably by the evaluation committee.
- Integrating persons with disabilities and/or users of assistive technology as part of the project team is strongly encouraged.
- Project team composition should include both men and women.

### 3. Description of scope of work

**Overall sector:**

Assistive technology, vision and vision impairment, refractive error, eyeglasses, spectacles, health

**Specific activities to be funded.**

#### Background

Globally, at least 2.2 billion people have a vision impairment or blindness, and at least one billion of these individuals have an impairment that could have been prevented or has not yet been addressed.[1] Refractive error is the most common cause of visual impairment – and at least 826 million people living with visual impairment due to uncorrected refractive error would benefit from eyeglasses. Some estimates, including milder vision loss, place this number at more than 2 billion.[2]

As vision plays a crucial role in so many aspects of our lives, the uncorrected refractive error can have a negative impact on the health, education, productivity, quality of life, and general wellbeing of individuals. Yet, correcting refractive errors with eyeglasses is a highly effective intervention. Eyeglasses are considered functioning interventions, which means they provide compensation for refractive errors, rather than eliminating them by treating their causes, to improve the functioning and independence of an individual to facilitate participation and enhance general well-being.[1]

The primary focus of this work will be on eyeglasses that are prescribed, though it is envisioned that positively strengthening systems that support the provision of prescription eyeglasses could positively impact other assistive technology systems as well. As per WHO, assistive technology is an umbrella term covering the systems and services related to the delivery of assistive products.

Many factors contribute to the low uptake of eyeglasses, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where the unmet need is concentrated. These are multi-fold and require a series of targeted, coordinated interventions to overcome them both in the private and public sectors. The World Health Organization's 2019 [World Report on Vision](#), Eye Care in Health Systems 2022, Package of Eye Care Interventions 2022, and the World Health Organization's 2022 [Global Report on Assistive Technology](#) articulates the current global situation, as well as overarching recommendations to support countries, including integrating eye care into national health plans and health service delivery to support the integration of eye care into fundamental health system planning and included across all appropriate service delivery platforms. Addressing eye care can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly SDG 3, in addition to addressing Universal Health Coverage targets. Further, beyond healthcare, the WHO highlights integrating eye care with other sectors such as education is also key to delivering high-quality, cost-effective interventions such as school eye health programs. [1]

Improving access to appropriate, affordable eyeglasses and related services will require innovative and ambitious efforts from multiple perspectives to achieve national scale. The current market landscape and relevant strategic objectives are described in the [Product Narrative: Eyeglasses](#), published in 2020 by ATscale, the Global Partnership for Assistive Technology, together with the AT2030 Programme. This document provides a foundation for ATscale's investment to improve access to eyeglasses globally.

In addition, the [Case for Investing in Assistive Technology](#), published in 2021 by ATscale, lays out a compelling argument that access to assistive products provides a 9:1 return on investment, with eyeglasses comprising a large

percentage of that gain. Economic, health, and social benefits for individuals and their families contribute to this return on investment. The recently published [Global Report on Assistive Technology](#) (GReAT) estimates that more than 2.5 billion people would benefit from one or more assistive products. The unmet needs are significantly higher in low-income and middle-income countries.

### Supporting Partners

USAID, through the Inclusive Development Hub in the Bureau for Development, Democracy and Innovation, has been investing in improving access to assistive technology and rehabilitation services for over 30 years. Congress now mandates specific funds to improve access to low-cost eyeglasses. USAID is investing these funds in partnership with ATscale and its partners to implement the strategy outlined within the [Product Narrative: Eyeglasses](#) with the ambitious goal to develop national programs that meet the needs of all of its citizens.

[ATscale, the Global Partnership for Assistive Technology](#), is a cross-sector partnership with the goal of reaching 500 million additional people with life-changing assistive technology by 2030.

ATscale has two primary strategic objectives driving its initial work including (1) developing an enabling ecosystem for increased access to assistive technology by galvanising political will, mobilising investment, driving policy reform, and strengthening targeted, cross-product systems, particularly at the country level; and, (2) building and shaping markets for priority products and their related services by identifying and investing in interventions to overcome specific supply and demand-side market barriers. This market-shaping work is initially focused on five priority products: wheelchairs, hearing aids, prostheses, eyeglasses, and assistive digital devices and software.

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) is an operational arm of the United Nations, supporting the successful implementation of its partners' peacebuilding, humanitarian, and development projects around the world. Mandated as a central resource of the United Nations, UNOPS provides sustainable project management, procurement, and infrastructure services to a wide range of governments, donors, and United Nations organisations. In light of this, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has entered into an agreement with UNOPS to support the management of awards aimed at improving access to assistive technology worldwide.

### Project description

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is funding one three-year grant for up to USD \$2.5 million in partnership with ATscale, the Global Partnership for Assistive Technology, with the purpose of expanding low-cost eyeglass provision and supporting strategic AT activities in an identified country.

These specific funds are intended to catalyse the scale-up of promising, holistic approaches to increasing the provision of eyeglasses in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) (excluding Cambodia and Kenya), building a foundation for wider AT sector development and translating them into integrated, system-based, sustainable national programs. Of note, USAID and ATscale aim to facilitate the donation of eyeglasses through the Vision Catalyst Fund if there is an opportunity to leverage the donation to expand government systems. The facilitation of these donations will only be possible if the service delivery is provided through national health and education systems and there is a clear path to national ownership of both services and product procurement in the future. Further, AT strategic activities aim to build a conducive environment for broader AT investments in the country that may range from conducting national assessments, to addressing policy gaps, raising awareness for AT and/or developing a national strategic plan for assistive technology.

## Project objectives and elements

There are two key objectives for this project:

1. **Expansion of screening, refractive services, and eyeglasses provision:** The project intends to support the effective expansion of screening, refractive services, and eyeglasses provision and integration of these approaches into government-led programs. It is essential that solutions proposed are government-owned, based on proven models, and are integrated into public health and education systems and leverage the strengths of both the public and private sectors. While it is not anticipated that national scale will be achieved within this three-year award, the activities proposed should identify a clear pathway to achieve national scale in the medium term..
2. **Creating a favourable environment for long-term AT investments:** The project also aims to build a conducive environment in the country for long-term AT investments. It is important that in-country stakeholders from inter-sectoral ministries, NGOs, OPDs and private sector are engaged in assessment, needs establishment, raising awareness, and shaping policy, strategy plans etc. on AT provision. Initiatives should be proposed in LMICs where there is already a good foundation for the work, including strong political will. Given the scope and duration of funding, it is envisioned that this grant will be utilised to catalyse important foundational structures required for a comprehensive national approach to address refractive error and the wider AT sector. Foundation-building interventions aim to provide a strategic direction to the government and inform interested development partners for future investments in the country. USAID and ATscale are, therefore, interested in identifying countries where the government engagement in eyeglasses can be leveraged to build national programs to improve access to other assistive products, including hearing aids, wheelchairs, prosthetics, and digital assistive products.

**For eyeglass provision**, it is anticipated that the activities proposed will lead to a comprehensive approach to human resource development, service delivery, procurement, financing and governance, and coordination with the private sector. Interventions should be evidence-based and reflective of the recommendations in relevant guiding documents such as WHO's World Report on Vision, the subsequent package of evidence-based interventions, and the Eyeglasses Product Narrative, and should cover the following areas, at a minimum:

- **Human resource development:** To effectively provide quality, low-cost eyeglasses, it is necessary to define, develop, and empower the workforce to screen, prescribe and provide eyeglasses safely and effectively. The activities proposed related to human resources should address plans to develop an appropriately sized workforce with special recognition of the common lack of workforce outside of urban areas. It is integral that clear pathways to become recognized with the minimum skills and competency needed to screen and provide eyeglasses appropriately are defined.
- **Service delivery:** Service delivery models proposed within the grant should have demonstrated success in similar contexts and should include a clear pathway for scale-up. The service delivery model(s) must address the necessary points of screening, prescription, and delivery of eyeglasses. Further, it must be clear how these models are or will be integrated into government-led health, education, or other national systems.
- **Procurement:** Procurement of eyeglasses may be achieved through multiple channels, but it is imperative that eyeglasses meet International Organization for Standardisation quality standards or their equivalent. There must also be a comprehensive procurement plan, which articulates the standards and specifications required and also indicates how longer-term procurement of eyeglasses will be managed and financed. As part of this agreement, USAID and ATscale will aim to leverage a partnership with Vision Catalyst Fund (for EssilorLuxottica donations). EssilorLuxottica aims to donate globally up to 200 million pairs of lenses by 2030 and, in partnership with Vision Catalytic Fund, will provide successful partners with donations of reading glasses (ready with frames and lenses), finished single vision lenses (FSV lenses), and Ready2Clip (frames and lenses). These donations are

intended to catalyse government ownership and financial investment and the activities proposed must show that the donation will support this goal rather than inhibit government policy and investment. Activities should describe how the government will be engaged in procuring donated eyeglasses (if the implementer elects to utilise the donation) and how government procurement systems will be utilised in the future to ensure the effective procurement of eyeglasses. There is no ceiling to the donation volume, so countries are encouraged to be ambitious while ensuring responsible service delivery and the development of a sustainable system.

- **Financing and governance:** Applicants should provide a clear plan for integrating human resource development, service delivery, and procurement into costed national plans. Financing may include integration into existing health plans or other models for sustainable financing. While a portion of the population can be served through the private sector, it is clear a demographic will need subsidised models. This section must include confirmation of the government's leadership and ownership.
- **Coordination with the private sector:** To successfully reach an entire population with appropriate screening and refractive services and provision of eyeglasses, varied approaches and partnerships are critical. The private sector plays an important role in improving access to eyeglasses globally. Synergies between the public and private sectors must be identified, partnerships are implemented, and these approaches are brought together under clear national strategies and costed plans. The role the private sector will play in the context of national scale-up in the proposed country should be specified.

**Under strategic AT activities support**, the activities proposed should be context-specific, coordinated with the government, and lead to developing a road map for broader policy actions. Country capacity in assistive products procurement, specifications and service standards, production, supply chain management including maintenance and follow-ups, skilled HR, service delivery models, and financing mechanisms play a crucial role in ensuring the sustainable provision of appropriate AT. The foundational interventions should provide a clear road map to the countries for integration and sustained provision of AT in national strategies and programs. A range of interventions can be proposed depending on context and consultations with the government:

- a) **Assessing the needs and system barriers:** Working with public and private stakeholders to assess the AT needs, services, gaps, etc. This can include support for situation assessments such as the WHO ATA-C and rATA. Assessments should clearly reflect the existing systems across various domains (mobility, vision, hearing, speech, cognitive, and self-care), prevailing policy gaps and barriers, stakeholder coordination, service delivery systems, and unmet needs.
- b) **Raising awareness:** Engagement with national and sub-national public authorities, organisations of people living with disabilities, and other relevant stakeholders to raise awareness around the need for and value of AT, including disseminating findings from situation assessments.
- c) **Building the foundations:** Foundational policy and planning-related support is key to creating a conducive environment for more substantial support. This could include review and/or development of key policy related to access to AT; developing or updating of the Assistive Products List (APL); developing a national strategy or national action plan,; etc. The proposed work must help guide the longer-term investments by governments and partners. The depth of progress to be achieved within this project will be greatly influenced by the context, but it is anticipated that the proposed activities will prepare the country to launch an expansive AT program as a follow on activity within the three year program or immediately after.

### Application guidelines (maximum 22 pages plus appendices)

The Application should describe the current national context, the specific activities proposed to be funded, the other elements critical to a comprehensive, integrated national program, and the applicant's existing technical and organisational capacity. It should be concise, specific, and holistic in its perspective and should demonstrate a clear understanding of the national context as well as the objectives of the project.

#### Cover page (~1 page)

Include the name of the organisation submitting the Application, project title, country where the proposed project will be implemented, proposed project dates (estimated timeframe for implementation available is **December 2022 – November 2025**), requested amount (in USD) of USAID funding, and name, office address, phone and email of the primary individual responsible for the Application (as well as one alternate).

#### Executive Summary (~1.5 pages)

The Executive Summary should provide an overview of critical features of the proposed project, including the national context, program activities, and expected results.

#### Situational Analysis and National Commitment (~2.5 pages + appendices)

The Situational Analysis should present a comprehensive understanding of the current context related to the provision of eyeglasses and assistive technology in the specific country being proposed and a clear justification for why the country was selected. Countries proposed must be eligible to receive [Overseas Development Assistance](#). In the selection of countries, applicants should first consider the likelihood of sustainable success by evaluating factors such as government ownership, the status of the health sector overall, the estimated number of individuals in need of eyeglasses, the existence of partners on the ground, and unmet needs of AT.

The situational analysis should create a sound basis for the proposed interventions, including an understanding of what exists, as well as where there are gaps, in the policy landscape, capacities and services, procurement capabilities, funding, human resources, and management related to the provision of eyeglasses. This section should establish that the applicant has a sufficient understanding of the current and evolving situation in which the project would be implemented and that the country has the appropriate environment for implementation.

As highlighted previously, comprehensive, integrated national approaches to the provision of eyeglasses and AT more widely (i.e. wheelchairs, prosthetics, hearing aids, digital devices, etc.) can only be achieved with leadership, ownership, and support from the national government. Provide evidence of national commitment in a form that clearly articulates the government's awareness and support of the proposed activities. Evidence can be provided in the form of a letter of support from the relevant Ministry or any other form in which the applicant is able to demonstrate commitment. Evidence may be incorporated into an appendix.

#### Project Approach (~8 pages)

The Project Approach should describe the specific activities that are being proposed to be supported through this grant. It is expected that the proposed activities will include those that will be the most catalytic in moving the country from the existing situation towards achieving the desired national scale, incorporated within a national program. Describe in detail the proposed activities and why these are the most critical to implement, as evidenced by the past implementation. Within the Program Approach, the key elements of human resource development, service delivery, procurement, financing and governance, and coordination with the private sector should each be addressed.

If any of the key elements for success are not addressed, it should be clear from the following section how these needs are proposed to be met.

### Roadmap to National Program (~3 pages)

Given that the grant can only support a portion of what is needed to bring screening, refractive services, and provision of eyeglasses and other ATs to a national scale, applicants must describe in this section the Roadmap of how the proposed country will achieve a comprehensive and sustainable program to address the provision of eyeglasses more specifically and other ATs (hearing aids, wheelchairs, and prosthetics, etc.) in general within the national system. This plan is not confined to the specific elements of the proposed project, but it should encompass a more thorough description of how the country will evolve from the existing context, as described in the Situational Analysis, to a system that provides access to eyeglasses and AT for the majority of the population.

### Organisational Capacity, Management, Implementation and Staffing (~2 pages)

Provide an overview of the applicant organisation's prior experience demonstrating its capacity to implement the proposed project effectively. Given the scope of the activities, consortiums, partnerships, and joint proposals are strongly encouraged. For any proposed consortium or sub-agreements, the primary applicants must identify those organisations, provide a brief justification for their selection, and demonstrate their organisational capacity to fulfil the defined role.

Identify a minimum of two key personnel (whether applying individually or in the consortium) for this project. Briefly describe their areas of responsibility and how the proposed project will be managed.

### Data and monitoring (~2 pages)

The application should include a concise overview of the timeline for the major stages of the proposed project's initiation and implementation. The applicant should propose a clear performance matrix for what can be achieved and should highlight a robust monitoring system not only in the context of this grant but also for longer-term implementation at a national level. Wherever possible, country data and monitoring systems should be used to report the success of the program. Further, the applicant should make an effort to align monitoring and evaluation plans with global indicators and targets, such as those the World Health Organisation is establishing for monitoring the coverage of the correction of refractive error globally [1] and other ATs

### Summary Budget (~1 page plus appendices)

The funding available for this grant is up to USD 2.5 million, of which approximately two-thirds should be allocated to eyeglasses provision and the remaining third to strategic AT-related activities. Applicants should provide a high-level summary budget, including a breakdown of key personnel, operating costs, direct and indirect costs, etc., as further articulated in the Grant Application Template (**Financial proposal a & b**)

### Risks (~1 page)

Identify and list any major risk factors that could result in the grant activities not producing the expected results. These should include both internal factors (for example, the technology involved fails to work as projected) and external factors (for example, significant currency fluctuations resulting into changes in the economics of the grant project).

## Grant Implementation

### Grant Management

UNOPS will be responsible for the grant's day-to-day financial and contract management. USAID and ATscale will be accountable for programmatic guidance.



### Management and Operational Capacity

The Grantee is expected to hold regular check-in meetings with USAID and ATscale to align on the workplan, progress updates, project risks, and other considerations, as necessary.

Integrating persons with disabilities and/or users of assistive technology as part of the project team is strongly encouraged.

### Timing

The expected start date for the work is **1 December 2022**, and the anticipated ending date is before **30 November 2025**. The closing date is constrained by existing contracts.

### Project Deliverables

- An updated situational analysis highlighting progress in the country relative to the country's overall ability to provide quality eyeglasses.
- A clear indication of the increase in the number of people reached with quality screening, refractive services, and eyeglasses.
- Clear articulation of the AT strategic activities and intended outcomes throughout the period
- Demonstration of the achievements and improvement in the elements of the roadmap strengthened specifically by the project activities.

Please note that more details regarding deliverables should be discussed and jointly confirmed during the contracting period based on the activities of the successful proposal.

### References

[1] World Health Organisation, *World Report on Vision*, (2019), accessible at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/world-report-on-vision>

[2] Essilor, *Eliminating Poor Vision in a Generation*, (2019), accessible at <https://www.essilorseechange.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Eliminating-Poor-Vision-in-a-Generation-Report.pdf>

## 4. Evaluation process

In line with UNOPS evaluation principles of fairness, transparency and integrity, an independent Grant Evaluation and Selection Committee will be responsible for the review of proposals and the Grantee selection. The review is based on the criteria outlined in the 'Call for Proposals' (CFP) and includes an assessment of the grant proposal's formal, technical, and financial aspects. The review should usually include at least two (2) substantially compliant proposals and result in the selection of the most substantially compliant proposal. Any non-compliant proposal may automatically be eliminated from the evaluation process.

## 5. UNOPS Grant Support Agreement

The UNOPS Standard Grant Support Agreement (GSA) containing UNOPS General Conditions for Grant Support Agreements (Annex D of the UNOPS Grant Support Agreement template) is herewith attached as **Annex 2**. The GSA constitutes an integral part of this CFP, as it is mandatory to accept this agreement with its conditions before submitting a proposal.

## 6. Grant Application template

If your organisation is interested in submitting a grant proposal in response to this CFP, please complete the Grant Application template (herewith attached as **Annex 1**) and submit via email with subject, "**Expanding Access to Low-Cost Eyeglasses and Assistive Technology**" to [alika@unops.org](mailto:alika@unops.org) by **10 October 2022 17:00 hrs Geneva time (CET)**. Please follow all application guidelines when preparing the Grant Application, including not exceeding 22 pages + appendices.