



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AZERBAIJAN

ISSUANCE DATE:

APRIL 21, 2021

**DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT
OF QUESTIONS:**

APRIL 30, 2021

10:00 HOURS LOCAL BAKU TIME

**CLOSING DATE AND TIME FOR
SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS:**

MAY 26, 2021

10:00 HOURS LOCAL BAKU TIME

SUBJECT:

**NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) NUMBER:
72011221RFA00001**

ACTIVITY TITLE:

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT (SES) ACTIVITY

Dear Prospective Applicants:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications for a Cooperative Agreement for funding to support a program entitled “Social Engagement Support (SES) Activity” in Azerbaijan. The authority for the NOFO is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. Please refer to the Program Description for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

USAID intends to make an award to 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, 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 processes.

If you have difficulty registering on 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 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.f. 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.

Issuance of this notice of funding opportunity 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,

/s /

Robert Claussen
Director, Regional Agreement Officer
USAID/Caucasus

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	3
SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION	15
SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION	17
SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	18
SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION	32
SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION	35
SECTION G: OTHER INFORMATION	40
ANNEX 1 - SUMMARY BUDGET TEMPLATE	41
ANNEX 2 - STANDARD PROVISIONS	42
ANNEX 3 - RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION STRATEGY	45

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.

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT (SES) ACTIVITY¹

Purpose:

USAID seeks to empower citizens, citizen groups, and civil society to engage with one another and the government with the aim of building trust, confidence, skills, and abilities. We also seek civil society and citizen engagement of the private sector to catalyze their advocacy for changes that lead to good governance associated reforms. The purpose of this activity is to strengthen local partnerships to enhance citizen participation in advancing Azerbaijan’s social and economic development while also increasing accountability and transparency in governance.

We will pilot the use of political economy analysis (PEA) both periodically and to set baselines. PEAs will contribute to the selection of target geographies (communities and governance units) with the political will, resources, and potential for successful partnerships that also line up with the Mission’s strategic objectives as outlined in the USAID/Azerbaijan Country Development and Cooperation Strategy.²

Background:

The evolving political landscape in Azerbaijan presents opportunities that allow for addressing public participation, accountability, economic governance and improved service delivery, particularly through civil society, citizen participation, and more responsive governance. USAID acknowledges that activities must proceed carefully in order to build trust and incrementally open the space wider for increased partnership with special consideration for context and security concerns. The Government of Azerbaijan’s reform agenda and appealing to the government’s own incentives (when these line up with citizens’ needs) may pose opportunities. USAID seeks to provide safe spaces for civic engagement and the acquisition and practical application of skills related to civic engagement for citizens, citizens groups, media, the private sector, and activists whenever possible. USAID recognizes the private sector as partners of civil society in the endeavor for better, more responsive governance and more government accountability, especially for market-oriented reforms. USAID prioritizes promoting gender equality, in particular, increasing the representation and participation of women and youth, including young women, in its strategic approach. Women are mostly excluded from community

¹ SES in Azerbaijani means “voice”. Hidden meaning of the project’s abbreviation would mean “raising the voice”. The program will build on the accomplishments of the USAID-funded SEDA that assisted 172 communities in 6 economic regions of Azerbaijan to increase citizen participation in addressing socio-economic needs.

² <https://www.usaid.gov/azerbaijan/cdcs>

decision-making and lack authoritative voices in government while suffering disproportionately from gaps in critical needs as well as intersecting forms of discrimination.

An engaged citizenry including a vibrant civil society is pivotal for the development of any democratic society. Since 2014, the situation in the country with civil society worsened as a result of changes to numerous laws related to NGO activities and NGO/grant/donor registration requirements. Shrinking space for civil society organizations makes it vital to continue efforts to support their voices and bring back their influence while encouraging and capacitating the engagement of Azerbaijan's citizens. Despite all of the challenges in the operating environment, civil society and citizens are already enacting some incremental positive changes for the benefit of vulnerable citizens/communities, contributing to socio-economic development of the country, and improving governance practices at the local and regional level.

Informal citizen initiatives, organizations like Community Development Councils (CDCs), are important players in supporting Azerbaijan's democratic evolution, sustainability and resilience, particularly at the local level. They should be provided the same rights and opportunities as formal CSOs and be empowered to lead local level initiatives. These efforts will support Azerbaijan's democratic evolution, stability and resilience. USAID seeks to amplify and inspire even more of this.

This new activity is a follow-on to a ten-year long investment in rural Azerbaijan, the Socio-Economic Development Activity (SEDA). SEDA was designed to enhance citizen participation in decision-making processes and in implementation of socio-economic development initiatives at the community level. The Activity contributed to increased engagement between executive/municipal authorities and citizen groups (CDCs), by building a platform for dialogue, cooperation and collaboration. The efforts led to mobilization of more than 170 communities across Azerbaijan. These efforts were an attempt to bring the voice of the general public into the decision-making processes on socio-economic issues at the grass-roots level. Despite a strong centralized government, the SEDA activity found the government open for some types of engagement with citizen groups, namely the CDCs. USAID and civil society organizations and groups active in Azerbaijan are finding more opportunities for wider engagement between citizens and government, as well as the private sector and other institutions. A SEDA final evaluation detected, among other things, the importance of developing a gender and youth strategy, outlining opportunities and approaches in these areas. The strategy should cover both organizational and programmatic aspects, undertaking a thorough analysis of barriers and opportunities for greater participation of women and youth in all civic engagements, including with CDCs, and reorienting themselves to advocate and lead by example.³ The SEDA evaluation also made observations about activities and their link to democracy and governance as well as suggestions for how to contribute to further growth of citizens along the democratic participation spectrum that are worth noting. Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the evaluation document, the link to which is available in the annex.

SES is designed to further expand and solidify those opportunities, identify new ones, and innovate towards deeper, lasting results. This activity is also intended to benefit from collaboration with an ongoing activity, the Empowering Civil Society for Transparency

³ SEDA Final Evaluation (Outcome Harvesting), p.12

(ECSOFT), which has conducted assessments and lessons learned in the sphere of good governance. Select documents prepared by ECSOFT can be shared upon request. A list of those and other documents the Mission has found useful in designing this Project Description, including an evaluation of SEDA, is available in the annex.

Objectives and Theory of Change:

This activity's goal is to strengthen formal and informal citizen groups (community-based organizations), and support and enhance their role in advancing Azerbaijan's social and economic development while introducing innovative participatory practices at the local and regional levels. The theory of change is that **if** citizens and citizens' groups are strengthened and supported to more effectively engage their government; and **if** opportunities for engagement between government, citizens, and the private sector are increased; **then** citizens can better contribute to the socio-economic development of their communities and improve governance in their areas of influence.

Objective 1: Improved capacity of citizens and groups to sustain engagement with government on shared development initiatives

Sub-objectives:

1. Enhanced civic engagement by citizens' groups, informal and formal, including but not limited to CDCs;
2. Diversified partnerships for citizens' groups across private and public sectors.

Building from previous investments in democracy, rights, and governance programming, this objective focuses on building civic agency.⁴ Activities under this objective will build or strengthen the capacities of citizens and citizen groups to work collaboratively to address shared challenges, find solutions to problems, and create common ground. A particular focus will be on increasing women's roles in developing local solutions. USAID envisions capacitation of citizens to work with fellow citizens in informal groups, with formal CSOs, associations, private sector entities, and government agencies in the pursuit of demand-driven and shared development initiatives. These initiatives may include seeking solutions to service delivery problems including issues pertaining to water and sanitation in rural areas, support to micro-enterprises for rural livelihoods, access to early childhood education/childcare to increase women's participation in the activity and the labor market, to name a few. The SES activity will reduce barriers and increase the civic agency and capacity of women and youth to better advocate, particularly collectively, and ensure their issues are represented in decision-making processes. The activity will also engage men and boys in ensuring gender equality in access to those services. Women and youth are key demographics and critical stakeholders in this activity.

⁴ There are many definitions and permutations of civic agency. For the purposes of this design, USAID sees building civic agency as building the capacity of citizens to act cooperatively on solutions to common problems, across differences of view, by developing or enhancing habits and practices, norms and ways of life that support their ability to collectively act.

USAID envisions a technical approach that will engage the government at any level, but is primarily focused at the regional and local levels, with clear strategies for how to carry that engagement up to central level influencers and decision makers wherever and whenever possible and appropriate. Engagement will be most successful where the government is open to partnership or the PEA(s) suggest engagement could be catalytic for concrete change or reform.

Objective 2: Increased utilization of participatory governance practices for local development especially through identification of partnership opportunities with the Government

Sub-objectives:

1. Increased opportunities for engagement between government, citizens, and the private sector
2. Improved responsive participation practices/mechanisms; and
3. Enhanced feedback to citizen input.

Critical to this objective is that feedback and suggestions received through public participation and social accountability have an effect on the practices of Azerbaijan's institutions and do not become mere tokenism. PEAs can support identification of issues, localities, and other opportunities that could breed success, however incremental, rather than citizen frustration. Stemming from the 2014 Law on Public Participation, GoAZ entities have the responsibility to generate effective acceptance of citizen participation in practices and policies, transforming citizen contributions into valuable input that supports the oversight role of citizens and citizen groups. One such effort in this vein are the Public Councils. However, implementation by such entities does not have deep roots, or experience, and feedback loops are weak with little accountability built in. Contributions from participation efforts under this Objective should both build on existing entities and potentially develop new ones. This should also translate into improvements in public financial management and specifically in transparency and efficiency in the use of resources and public budgets, and this effect should be communicated back to those citizens and groups.

Key Considerations

USAID is interested in exploring the following approaches ***under Objectives 1 and 2*** and welcomes applications that include thought as to how any, all, or none of these could bear fruit as pilots or otherwise be included:

- Social entrepreneurship - ideas range from promoting citizen-government partnerships (eg. Community Pitch Competitions) that seek to specifically engage women and youth to promote the building successful businesses owned by the community, or via investments made through CDCs, that allow local communities to develop the resources they need to address their own needs. Social entrepreneurship pilot activities could complement and strengthen the role of the local community in engaging with locally-based government structures by allowing and empowering communities to bring their own resources to the table. Illustrative examples: piloting community foundation models, formation of joint citizen-government regional

development entities. Pilot activities may also include advocacy for additional regulations or legal framework to support social entrepreneurship.

- Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)- such partnerships are a way for the strengths of the private and public sectors to complement each other. Citizens, the private sector, and government can come together in the identification of priority problems, proposed solutions, and pursuit of PPPs and as such, USAID is interested in opportunities to partner with the private sector to jointly design, fund, and implement solutions to social and economic problems in Azerbaijan.
- Participatory Budgeting - For our purposes we define participatory budgeting as the process through which citizens influence and monitor how real budget funds are spent. While this is challenging in a context like Azerbaijan, participatory budgeting can encourage participation, particularly among young people. Building on SEDA and other interactions with locally-based governance entities, there are some localities where this could be piloted with the potential for creating a demonstration effect. Citizens will be also able to explore introducing gender responsive budgeting. USAID has already received interest in better understanding participatory budgeting from some local and central government officials.
- Other Citizen Watchdog/Oversight Functions, particularly related to service delivery such as citizen scorecards. Again, like with participatory budgeting, activities would need to be piloted in localities that offer the opportunity for this level of participation and engagement between citizens and their government.
- Partnerships with GoAZ agencies to better meet the needs of citizens, and with whom USAID has successfully partnered in the past, such as ASAN Xidmet, Small and Medium Business Development Agency, ABAD, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs. ASAN in particular, has a vast network of youth volunteers throughout Azerbaijan, many of whom are young women. Past USAID programming, the Women's Participation Program implemented by Counterpart International, piloted promising partnerships with ASAN Xidmet, as have other USAID and USG activities.

Objective 3: Rapid Response to Unforeseen Opportunities and Challenges

In parallel to all other efforts, supporting a more capable and engaged civil society and local government to form productive partnerships that support social and economic development may necessitate additional shorter-term activities. The Rapid Response implementation mechanism (RRIM) is meant to address unforeseen and/or unexpected opportunities and challenges in Azerbaijan's dynamic operating environment which includes potential democratic backsliding or possible breakthroughs, post-conflict recovery needs, post-pandemic recovery needs, and opportunities identified through the PEAs, to name a few. All requests must contribute to attainment of USAID/Azerbaijan's first Country Development Cooperation Strategy development objective, "Azerbaijan's society is more capable and engaged" and the two other objectives in this Project Description. Grants, technical assistance, and other forms of support are possible, depending upon the needs, windows of opportunity, and funding availability.

Any activities resulting from this implementation mechanism will be subject to substantial involvement provisions, including approval by the AOR, and will require amendments to the awardee's approved Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan. Approval will be based on a well thought out concept as well as an accompanying budget. Either the Recipient or USAID may initiate an activity request under the RRIM. If the RRIM, or a portion of the RRIM, is not utilized as described above prior to the final year of the activity, the AOR or the Recipient may request that the RRIM be realigned into the standard program funding with final approval authority with the Agreement Officer. Not all of the RRIM must be used at one time, and multiple interventions can be considered. Applicants should articulate how they would structure work under this objective irrespective of whether or not it is funded immediately as it is possible that funding for rapid response is not made available with the rest of the core budget.

Political Economy Analysis, Geographic Focus

USAID/Azerbaijan is interested in utilizing political economy analysis (PEA) to provide USAID technical managers and activity implementer staff with a systematic way of optimizing the geographies and individuals we partner with to achieve SES's targets. We require PEAs as part of the baseline assessment under SES, and would welcome discussion of utilizing periodic PEA throughout the life of the award.

PEAs can take many forms, and USAID welcomes applications that suggest ways to conduct, structure, and use PEAs and with what periodicity, in addition to the required baseline. These should include but are not limited to using PEAs to map Azerbaijani change agents, as well as influential actors in and out of government that could either enable or impede project performance against stated objectives. Baseline PEA(s) must support choosing which communities to partner with in the geographic focus areas important to USAID/Azerbaijan - namely the rural north and south of the country. Since Azerbaijan is a dynamic operating environment, it is possible that projected use of PEAs (other than the required baseline PEA) may shift between proposal and implementation, or during implementation. If that is the case, USAID and the grantee will decide, jointly, on any adjustments to areas of operation and focus and adjustments will be reflected in the corresponding annual work plans. The objective of all activity-supported assessments, especially baseline PEAs, is to provide recommendations that can be translated into action plans for realistic, high-priority interventions with the potential to tangibly produce results under each objective of SES. Therefore, baseline PEAs should precede and inform the submission of the first annual work plan, at a minimum, and further PEA(s) should inform future interventions. USAID is open to applications outlining PEA efforts, large or small, that could guide implementation, accompany any pivots, or provide a lense for programming decision making. Applicants should include their proposed baseline and any other PEA methodology/methodologies and/or types of tools intended for use as the basis of their PEA(s).

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan

The Applicant will submit a proposed Activity level Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL Plan) to rigorously and credibly document the Activity's effectiveness and to learn from accomplished work and results. USAID/Azerbaijan acknowledges that there could be multiple approaches to achieving the objectives outlined in this project description, and the specific indicators may vary somewhat depending upon the technical approaches proposed. It is also acknowledged that output indicators may be necessary for overall day-to-day management of the program, however, the Applicant should vest more time in developing quality outcome level indicators that have the ability to track overall achievements toward the goal and objectives. This entails identifying indicators and realistic (yet ambitious) targets that correspond to and measure the Activity's interventions at different levels of results (goal, objectives, expected outcomes, outputs) and are linked to established baselines to assess the performance of proposed interventions. It may be necessary to also consider proxy indicators with the caveat that there may be challenges to attribution. There should be at least one gender-focused indicator included.

The MEL Plan will elaborate the methods and assessment tools the Applicant will use for collecting, monitoring, analyzing, reporting and maintaining the data. The Applicant should use a mix of custom and standard indicators from the Standard Foreign Assistance Master Indicator List. All people-level indicators must be disaggregated by sex and age. The Applicant shall consider quality indicators over quantity when developing its list of performance indicators. The following are some illustrative indicators. The Applicant will provide their suggested indicators that align with outcomes flowing from their particular stated technical approach.

- NUMBER of institutionalized citizen participation mechanisms (by government)
- NUMBER of times citizens and groups are informed of how their participation impacted the government institution or process.
- In SES-targeted provinces, PERCENTAGE of citizens understand the roles and responsibilities of local leaders and their options for approaching local leaders with their concerns and understand their responsibilities towards improved local governance
- Azerbaijan improves its Open Budget Index score
- increased NUMBER of public private partnerships as a result of the activity
- increased NUMBER of social entrepreneurship enterprises or partnerships
- NUMBER of citizens who engaged in a local decision-making process for the first time
- GNDR-2 Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment)
- GNDR-8: Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations
- Increased NUMBER of women-led partnerships developed as a result of the USG assistance
- PERCENTAGE increase of women civic engagement with government institutions
- PERCENTAGE improvement from baseline of government-citizen engagement opportunities
- RATIO of enacted solutions proposed by communities

- NUMBER of beneficiaries reached through USAID-provided social infrastructure opportunities
- PERCENT of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance
- PERCENTAGE of youth who participate in civic engagement activities following soft skills/life skills training or initiatives from USG assisted programs

USAID/Azerbaijan would welcome applications that include the use of complexity-aware monitoring and evaluation methodologies.

USAID/Azerbaijan also welcomes the inclusion of pause and reflect sessions that include USAID Mission staff, at key points in the activity's annual performance implementation, identified by the grantee, to review progress, identify pivot points, and address challenges adaptively. This creates opportunities to reconfirm the assumptions from which the design is built and review that the theory of change is still valid or if adjustments to the approach are required, what those adjustments may need to be. The periodic pause and reflect workshops are particularly critical in this space due to the often fluid political environment.

In addition to data collection, performance indicators, and possible pause and reflect workshops, the MEL Plan should identify other assessments, evaluations or learning products that may be used to assess the effectiveness of activities and progress towards results as well as determine the necessary strategy shifts.

Operational Principles

Gender

Gender Equal opportunities for men and women to influence the governance of their country, have their voices heard, and needs addressed are at the heart of equitable development, social justice, and healthy representative democracy. Women and men have differing needs and views about governance, as well as distinct interests and incentives in engaging. Balanced gender representation and participation in local governance are closely tied to ensuring that men and women can exercise choices regarding political, social, and economic issues.

There is wide agreement across the international donor community on the status of women in Azerbaijan and on the beneficial actions that could be undertaken to improve their economic and social standing. However, in order to do so will require understanding and addressing some of the identified challenges, which the Applicant should consider as they design the Activity. Below are a few challenges that USAID/Azerbaijan considers relevant and should be mitigated under this Activity to increase the likelihood for success.

- Few women hold leadership or decision-making positions in the public and/or private sector, and men and women still have unequal decision-making power in the household.
- Gender stereotypes and rigid conceptions of gender roles continue to limit choices men and women make about education, employment and career paths, and family and domestic responsibilities. They also place an outsized burden of unpaid domestic labor on women.

- Gender based violence, including domestic violence and intimate partner violence, continues to be a serious problem in Azerbaijan.

USAID/Azerbaijan places considerable importance to increasing government-citizen engagement on issues affecting gender equality. Interventions under this Activity will need to respond to gender considerations and ensure that the assistance and results are equitably beneficial to women and men. A special focus will be given to supporting women's leadership and advancing more women into senior level positions, and providing opportunities for women leaders and women-run civil society organizations to engage with decision-makers and higher levels of government. Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment should be a built-in theme throughout the Activity reflected in interventions that recognize the differing needs, perspectives and approaches necessary to engage women and men meaningfully. An activity-level gender analysis will be expected for more effective integration of gender considerations into those interventions.

Youth

Life for much of the population is like that of low-income countries in Central Asia, and they experience the same rural exodus pressure with a growing youth population who lack employment opportunities. The lack of job opportunities after high school graduation drives the emigration of trained and educated youth (male and female) from Azerbaijan. Many of the best and brightest youth are abandoning rural communities and heading to either Baku or Russia for work. Between the lack of job opportunities and the under-representation of their voices in local government, formal economy, and society, many face desperate and uncertain futures. This failure to invest in rural populations creates opportunities for foreign malign influence, especially along the borders with Russia and Iran.

The inclusion of youth is critical for instilling greater appreciation for, understanding of, and sustainability of engagement in local community development and governance. To this end, the Activity will foster greater space for youth to network, dialogue, collaborate, and share youth-specific trends, challenges, and opportunities for advancing youth priorities in targeted regions. The Activity should consider key areas where youth engagement is critical to ensure that young people are recognized as change agents and rights holders and are positioned to take greater leadership roles in the decision-making process.

Interventions will focus on youth participation, leadership, and ensure the full involvement of relevant youth organizations throughout the life of Activity. The Activity will identify youth-serving and youth-led groups to elevate their participation and involvement to facilitate collaboration and to promote the development of more robust and youth-friendly priorities. Given the heterogeneous nature of the youth demographic, there should be an adaptive and dynamic approach to enhancing youth engagement. The activity will identify the most effective ways of youth outreach, be it through traditional methods, social media or other available communication technologies.

Private Sector Engagement

USAID/Azerbaijan has eagerly embraced the principles of Private Sector Engagement (PSE) and has targeted selected value chain interventions that leverage corporate capabilities and that can bring benefits to small and medium enterprises. All sectors in Azerbaijan have a vital role to play, and we can also engage the private sector to address humanitarian and development issues in our work together. We seek to diversify the partner base to include more private enterprises like U.S. vendors, providers of technical assistance, financial investors, and businesses of all sizes from across many industries.

Innovation and Integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

There is a growing need for civil society organizations to work strategically with communities, citizens, government and the private sector in the digital sphere to explore tools, platforms, and skills that will enable and strengthen citizen engagement with decision-makers and improve responsiveness to citizens. However, any interventions to meet this need should take into consideration the significant differences in the level of readiness throughout the country to take advantage of the opportunities that ICTs may offer.

Although it is not required, where appropriate, the Applicant may want to consider ways in which to capitalize on innovative approaches and the use of ICTs to foster citizen engagement, increase public awareness, close gender digital divide in citizen groups, and strengthen transparency and accountability. This is especially important considering the recent, stunning impact of COVID-19 stay-at-home orders and the shift of industries, education, and development programming to online platforms.

Sustainability and Legacy

The Applicant's approach to sustainability of the goals and objectives is a key consideration for USAID/Azerbaijan. The Activity is expected to build the institutional capacity of targeted communities, CSOs, and state entities, to foster partnerships, and to introduce tools and mechanisms in a manner that these will continue to develop beyond the timeframe and life of the Activity.

The Activity strives to strengthen democratic institutions and processes to promote greater transparency, accountability, and overall responsiveness to citizens by the government. While full sustainability of these efforts as explicitly implemented may be too ambitious or unrealistic, the key to long-term success is to ensure that interventions support a process by which the ideals espoused under the Activity goals/objectives are internalized and take root. It is expected that stakeholders and communities have full buy-in of the Activity purpose and are empowered by the efforts initiated and/or strengthened processes to the point that the ideals will be integrated and specific interventions will evolve as appropriate in each community in order to continue to reinforce the overarching Activity purpose. To this end, the Applicant is required to integrate sustainability measures both in design and implementation and determine appropriate indicators to track progress towards sustainability as defined.

USAID/Azerbaijan will support interventions that build on existing opportunities and support target entities that are committed to investing in and receiving tailored assistance to improve their technical, organizational, as well as partnership and alliance-building skills to engage in inclusive development and ensure stakeholders become more effective change agents in the long run. To further sustain the outcomes of this Activity and foster local ownership, interventions should not only focus on building and strengthening the capacity of local citizens, partner CSOs, and target government officials, but also fostering the motivation to utilize the new knowledge, skills, and the benefits of broader collaboration and coordination.

Much of the success of reaching the overall Activity's purpose and objectives will depend on building and incentivizing Azerbaijani citizens to engage with their government and seek solutions to priority problems. Achieving this will require visible results, which will help citizens to feel empowered and motivated to remain engaged. Additionally, the Applicant will be required to consider working with local partners to understand their legal parameters and maximizing the resources available to them through networking to continue and build on the interventions beyond the Activity. The private sector could play a role in this space.

Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA)

USAID/Azerbaijan has put time and effort into building a culture of CLA into Mission operations. It is expected that the grantee also models a CLA culture and integrates that culture into internal processes and in the implementation of activities. A collaborative working relationship between the grantee and relevant USAID staff is required. Where applicable and appropriate, the grantee should collaborate with the Mission's implementing partners, interagency colleagues, and/or the host country government. Specific coordination activities, in addition to the above, shall be identified. Activity generated products, briefings, and facilitated events should have a learning component integrated. In addition, all products, briefings, and facilitated events should focus on providing recommendations for how the Mission can use that data to make evidence-based decisions and adapt programming as necessary.

Managing Risk

Since early 2013, the government has used a range of measures to crack down on international and local NGOs and their activities. Notably, the government controls NGO and grant registration to restrict some NGOs from being able to access grant funding through financial institutions. Many USAID awards have come under intense scrutiny and have experienced tax penalties, raids that have confiscated equipment, and even criminal charges filed against individual staff. While the context has improved to some degree, applicants should be aware of these issues and have measures in place to mitigate potential risks the award may face over the life of performance.

Persons with disabilities

Throughout all programmatic interventions, USAID pursues inclusivity and supports meaningful participation for persons with disabilities in our programming and their communities. People with disabilities in Azerbaijan report challenges in meeting their basic needs and accessing services. The grantee will ensure participation of people with disabilities in the civic agency, and other activities under this award. It is critical that the activity creates favorable conditions under which persons with disabilities will be able to articulate their needs and advocate for more inclusive agendas and policies with the government. Applications should reflect how to empower organizations led by and benefitting persons with disabilities, and engage them as civil society and civic leaders.

- END OF SECTION A -

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID intends to award one (1) Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide \$15,000,000/00 in total USAID funding over a five (5) year period.

2. Expected Performance Indicators, Targets, Baseline Data, and Data Collection

The applicants should refer to Section A.

3. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The period of performance anticipated herein is five years, starting from actual date to be filled in at the time of award, estimated on or about October 1, 2021.

4. Substantial Involvement

- a. The Agency's approval of the recipient's implementation plans during performance. USAID generally only requires approval of implementation plans annually; however, where changed contexts or new information require a pivot in the activity, USAID may consider changes to an implementation plan.
- b. The Agency's review and approval of substantive provisions of proposed subawards or contracts (see definitions in 2 CFR 200).
- c. The Agency's involvement in the selection of key recipient personnel.
- d. The Agency and recipient collaboration or joint participation, such as when the recipient's successful accomplishment of program objectives would benefit from USAID's technical knowledge.
- e. Agency monitoring to permit specific kinds of direction or redirection of the work because of the interrelationships with other projects or activities. All such direction or redirection must be within the program description budget, and other terms and conditions of the award.

5. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for the procurement of commodities and services under this program is 937.

6. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the Social Engagement Support (SES) Activity which is authorized by Federal statute. The successful Recipient 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 Recipient 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.

7. Selection of Instrument

Democracy and Governance (DG) programming in Azerbaijan historically is implemented through assistance mechanisms. These mechanisms have proven their efficiency and effectiveness given the operational and political environment. This work has been done effectively through assistance mechanisms for the past 10 years. It is still the intention of USAID to create a relationship through this agreement to assist a recipient in providing its services to others through a transfer by USAID of Federal financial assistance to carry out a public purpose of support. The intent is not to purchase goods or services for USAID's benefit or use. Unlike acquisition mechanisms, assistance, Cooperative Agreements in particular, provides a needed level of flexibility, opportunity to involve domestic civil society organization, and better engagement with the national authorities for successful achievement of goals and objectives of programs and activities. Assistance awards also provide a layer of separation between the implementer and USAID in terms of program ownership. This is particularly beneficial for DG activities in order to mitigate against perceptions of U.S. government interference in domestic issues as the activity is owned by the implementer and not the U.S. government.

- END OF SECTION B -

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility for this NOFO is not restricted.

Each applicant must be found to be a responsible entity before receiving an award. The Agreement Officer (AO) may determine that a pre-award survey is required in accordance with ADS 303.3.9.1 to determine whether the applicant has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with established U.S. Government standards, laws, and regulations. Applicants who do not currently meet all USAID requirements for systems and controls may still be eligible under special award considerations and should not be discouraged from applying. USAID welcomes applications from organizations that have not previously received financial assistance from USAID. The prime recipient is encouraged to promote involvement of “underutilized” partners and local organizations in the implementation of this activity.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

USAID has established a suggested minimum recipient cost share of 3% for the award. Such funds may be provided directly by the recipient; other multilateral, bilateral, and foundation donors; host governments; and local organizations, communities and private businesses that contribute financially and in-kind to implementation of activities at the country level. This may include contribution of staff level of effort, office space or other facilities or equipment which may be used for the program, provided by the recipient. For guidance on cost sharing in grants and cooperative agreements see 2 CFR 200.306 .

However, cost share is only a recommendation intended to strengthen the overall success of the design. Should the applicant choose to include a cost share, the methodology for calculating cost share and the specific percentage of cost share will be determined at the sole discretion of the applicant. The applicants not proposing cost share will not be disadvantaged in the selection process, since the cost share will not serve as an evaluation criteria for the application.

- END OF SECTION C -

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency Point of Contact

Only the Agreement Officer is authorized to make commitments on behalf of USAID. The Agreement Officer is listed below:

Mr. [Robert Claussen](#)
Regional Agreement Officer
USAID/Caucasus
29 Georgian-American Friendship Ave, Tbilisi, Georgia
rclaussen@usaid.gov

The point of contact for information about this NOFO is:

Ms. Kenul Salimova
Acquisition and Assistance Specialist
USAID/Azerbaijan
111, Azadlig avenue
Baku, Azerbaijan
ksalimova@usaid.gov

2. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this NOFO should be submitted to Ms. Kenul Salimova at ksalimova@usaid.gov, with a copy to Mr. Robert Claussen at rclaussen@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 the alternate contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address);
- Program name
- Notice of Funding Opportunity number
- Name of any proposed sub-recipients 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 initialed 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.

Applicants may choose to submit a cover letter in addition to the cover pages, but it will serve only as a transmittal letter to the Agreement Officer. The cover letter will not be reviewed as part of the merit review criteria.

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, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1" margins, left justification and headers and/or footers on each page including consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and applicant's name.
- 10 point font can 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, except budget files which must be submitted in Microsoft Excel.
- The estimated start date identified in Section B of this NOFO must be used in the cost application.
- The technical application must be a searchable and editable Word or PDF format as appropriate.
- The Cost Schedule must include an Excel spreadsheet 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.

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.

Excluding the cover page, table of contents, past performance, budget and annexes, the Technical Application must not exceed 25 pages.

4. Application Submission Procedures

Applications in response to this NOFO must be submitted by email to points of contact stated in Section D.1 before the respective due dates and times on the cover page. Applicants must ensure that the applications are received at USAID/Azerbaijan in their entirety. No additions or modifications to submitted applications will be accepted after the closing date and time. Late applications will be considered only if the Agreement Officer determines it is in the Government's interest. Each email submission may not exceed 15 MB in size.

USAID's preference is that the technical application and the cost application each be submitted as consolidated email attachments, e.g. that you consolidate the various parts of a technical application into a single document before sending it. If this is not possible, please provide instructions on how to collate the attachments. USAID will not be responsible for errors in compiling electronic applications if no instructions are provided or are unclear.

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 or indicate in the file name if submitted via grants.gov that it is a "corrected" submission. Do not send the same email more than once unless there has been a change, and if so, please note that it is a "corrected" email.

Applicants are reminded that e-mail 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.

Hard copies, whether hand delivered or by postal mail, will not be accepted.

If you do not receive an email confirmation for receipt of applications, please contact the point of contact at the email address noted above.

5. Technical Application Format

The technical application should be specific, complete, and presented concisely. The application must demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this program. The application should take into account the requirements of the program and merit review criteria found in this NOFO.

Technical applications shall be organized by the technical evaluation criteria listed in Section E. The technical application is limited to 25 pages, as clarified below. Any pages beyond these twenty-five (25) will NOT be evaluated. However, required Annexes specified below will not be counted towards the page limit.

Required Order of the Technical Application:

1. Cover page: The cover page must not exceed one page and must contain information as specified in Section D.3 for cover page of Technical and Business (Cost) Applications. (not included in the 25-page limit)
2. Table of Contents (not included in the 25-page limit)
3. Abbreviation list (not included in the 25-page limit)
4. Executive summary (not included in the 25-page limit)
5. Technical Approach (15-page limit)
6. Staffing Approach and Key Personnel (5-page limit)
7. Activity Level Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (5-page limit). See page 9 for instructions
8. Required Annexes (not included in the 25-page limit)
 - a. Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan
 - b. Staffing Pattern
 - c. Résumés for Key Personnel (CVs/Resumes may not exceed 3 pages each)
 - d. Letters of Commitment for Key Personnel (exclusive commitments are not recommended)
 - e. History of Performance
9. Other annexes, as applicable:
 - e. Commitment letters from sub-partners (exclusive commitments are not recommended)

(a) Cover Page

(b) Table of Contents

Include major sections and page numbering to easily cross-reference and identify merit review criteria.

c) Executive Summary (One page)

The Executive Summary must provide a high-level overview of key elements of the Technical Application.

d) Key personnel

The Applicant should describe technical qualifications, experience and position descriptions for key personnel. The Applicant should propose the staffing pattern most appropriate for its proposed interventions for which individuals, working under the project, are expected to possess

adequate expertise for successful implementation. Please note that the current administration recently released an [Executive Order](#) to address diversity, equity and inclusion within the federal government. As USAID values diversity, equity and inclusion expressed in the executive order within its own operations, applicants are also encouraged to reflect similar values in its proposed staffing structure.

Proposed Key Personnel should at the very least include the following: Chief of Party (COP), Deputy Chief of Party or Technical Director, Private Sector Engagement (PSE) Specialist, Capacity Development (CD) Specialist.

Ideally, applications will present a team that demonstrates experience across all components. Applicants may propose and justify different titles for those proposed key personnel or others, up to a total of five, for USAID's consideration.

1. Chief of Party (COP)

The COP should serve as the primary point of contact with USAID/Azerbaijan with regard to day-to-day implementation and management matters relating to the agreement. The COP should have overall responsibility for ensuring quality control, the appropriateness and overall responsiveness of all assistance provided under the agreement, whether by short- or long-term advisors, sub-grantee partners or others. This position also entails: monitoring, evaluating and documenting progress toward project objectives; evaluating activities through consultative meetings, site visits and reporting requirements; implementing solutions to keep activities on track; and providing overall guidance and direction focusing the activity team on achieving agreed targets and long-term strategic objectives. Given the additional focus on creating more opportunities for women and youth, experience applying a gender and youth lens in programming will be necessary. Minimum qualifications include:

- 10 years of progressively responsible international development experience in project management in complex environments with multiple sub-grantees.
- 7 years of progressively responsible experience in the fields of community development, civic education and engagement, private sector engagement, civil society capacity development, democratic governance, or other comparable sectors within the social sciences field
- 5 years of progressively responsible experience in overseeing financial management operations
- Demonstrable experience in conflict resolution
- Bachelor's degree in relevant field; Masters degree is preferred
- English proficiency required (oral and written)
- References for the last three (3) years of work experience are required and will be verified.

2. Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) or Technical Director

The DCOP or Technical Director should serve as the lead technical advisor to the COP responsible for ensuring the proposed approach/methodology will likely lead to sustainable programmatic success. The incumbent should also have a strong comprehension and command of monitoring and evaluation tools in order to utilize it to both track progress against indicators as well as recommend necessary changes to implementation. In this regard, experience in applied political economy analyses will be valuable as it will be a critical tool under this program to determine the targeted regions for operations and identify thematic priorities areas of focus based on the likelihood for success. Given the additional focus on creating more opportunities for women and youth, experience applying a gender and youth lens in programming will be necessary. Minimum qualifications include:

- 10 years of progressively responsible experience in the fields of community development, civic education and engagement, private sector engagement, civil society capacity development, democratic governance, political economy analyses or other comparable sectors within the social sciences field
- 7 years of progressively responsible experience in project management in complex environments with multiple sub-grantees.
- 5 years of progressively responsible experience in managing and applying monitoring and evaluation tools
- Demonstrated experience incorporating a gender and youth lens in programming
- Bachelor's degree in relevant field; Masters degree is preferred
- English proficiency required (oral and written)
- Azerbaijani proficiency desirable.
- References for the last three (3) years of work experience are required and will be verified.

3. Private Sector Engagement (PSE) Specialist

The PSE Specialist should serve as the lead technical advisor to the COP and DCOP/Technical Director with respect to identifying and establishing linkages with the private sector as outlined in the design framework. The incumbent should have applied knowledge on leveraging social entrepreneurs and local/regional/international businesses to promote greater community development and civic engagement, particularly as a means to address various service delivery challenges faced by communities. Given the additional focus on creating more opportunities for women and youth, experience applying a gender and youth lens in programming will be necessary. Minimum qualifications include:

- 5 years of progressively responsible experience in the field of economic growth/development, livelihood development, business (MSMEs) development public-private partnerships, social entrepreneurship or other comparable sectors

- 3 years of progressively responsible experience in project management in complex environments with multiple sub-grantees.
- Demonstrated experience incorporating a gender and youth lens in programming
- Bachelor's degree in relevant field; Masters degree is preferred
- Azerbaijani proficiency required (oral and written)
- English proficiency desirable (oral and written)
- References for the last three (3) years of work experience are required and will be verified.

4. Capacity Development (CD) Specialist

The CD Specialist should serve as the lead technical advisor to the COP and DCOP/Technical Director with respect to developing, refining, and implementing various curricula focused on developing the skillsets of both civil society organizations and community stakeholders and citizens to effectively engage with government and exercise their rights under the law. Given the additional focus on creating more opportunities for women and youth to be active participants in their communities, experience applying a gender and youth lens in programming will be necessary. Minimum qualifications include:

- 7 years of progressively responsible experience in the field of organizational capacity development, civic engagement, curriculum development, or other comparable sectors
- 5 years of progressively responsible experience in project management in complex environments with multiple sub-grantees.
- Demonstrated experience incorporating a gender and youth lens in programming
- Bachelor's degree in relevant field; Masters degree is preferred
- Azerbaijani proficiency required (oral and written)
- English proficiency desirable (oral and written)
- References for the last three (3) years of work experience are required and will be verified.

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 to assess the applicant's risk in accordance with 2 CFR 200.206. Applicants should not submit any additional information with their initial application.

The Cost Application must contain the following sections (which are further elaborated below this listing with the letters for each requirement):

a) COVER PAGE

b) SF 424 FORM(S)

The applicant must sign and submit the cost application using the SF-424 series. Standard Forms can be accessed electronically at www.grants.gov or using the following links:

Instructions for SF-424	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424-instructions.html
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html
Instructions for SF-424A	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424a-instructions.html
Budget Information (SF-424A)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html
Instructions for SF-424B	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424b-instructions.html
Assurances (SF-424B)	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 :

- (1) “Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient” ADS 303mav document found at <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mav.pdf>
- (2) Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
- (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 Budget must be submitted as one unprotected Excel file (MS Office 2000 or later versions) with visible formulas and references and must be broken out by project year, including itemization of the federal and 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 award, and may result in a rejection of the cost application. 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 Section F, 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 must 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 and by year for activities implemented by the applicant and any potential sub-applicants for the entire period of the program. See Annex 1 for Summary Budget Template
- 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 sub-recipient, 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 must contain the following budget categories and information, at a minimum:

1) Salaries and Allowances – Must be proposed consistent with 2 CFR 200.430 Compensation - Personal Services. The applicant's budget must include 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 rate and provide evidence of its approval. If an applicant does not have a fringe benefit rate approved, the applicant must propose

a rate and explain how the applicant determined the rate. In this case, the Budget Narrative must include a detailed breakdown of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., superannuation, gratuity, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in U.S. dollars and as a percentage of salaries.

3) Travel and Transportation – Provide details to explain the purpose of the 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) Procurement or Rental of Goods (Equipment & Supplies), Services, and Real Property – Must include information on estimated types of equipment, models, supplies and the cost per unit and quantity. The Budget Narrative must include the purpose of the equipment and supplies and the basis for the estimates. The Budget Narrative must support the necessity of any rental costs and reasonableness in light of such factors 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.

5) Subawards – Specify the budget for the portion of the program to be passed through to any subrecipients. See 2 CFR 200 for assistance in determining whether the sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor. The subrecipient budgets must align with the same requirements as the applicant's budget, including those related to fringe and indirect costs.

6) Other Direct Costs – This may include other costs not elsewhere specified, such as report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams and inoculations, as well as any other miscellaneous costs which directly benefit the program proposed by the applicant. The applicant should indicate the subject, venue and duration of any proposed conferences and seminars, and their relationship to the objectives of the program, along with estimates of costs. Otherwise, the narrative should be minimal.

7) Indirect Costs – Applicants must indicate whether they are proposing indirect costs or will charge all costs directly. In order to better understand indirect costs please see Subpart E of 2 CFR 200. The application must identify which approach they are requesting and provide the applicable supporting information. Below are the most commonly used Indirect Cost Rate methods:

8) Cost Sharing – 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:

1. Name of organization
2. DUNS Number
3. Confirmation that the subrecipient does not appear on the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) list
4. Confirmation that the subrecipient does not have active exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM)
5. Confirmation that the subrecipient is not listed in the United Nations Security designation list
6. Confirmation that the subrecipient is not suspended or debarred
7. Confirmation that the applicant has completed a risk assessment of the subrecipient, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.332(b)
8. 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-recipients;
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.beta.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.

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

SAM registration: <http://www.beta.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.beta.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 cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs, not to exceed 5, as follows:

- Name of the Awarding Organization;
- Award Number;
- Activity Title;
- A brief description of the activity;
- Period of Performance;
- Award Amount;
- Reports and findings from any audits performed in the last 5 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.

j) BRANDING STRATEGY & MARKING PLAN

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.

i) FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients under this award. See 2 CFR 200.331 for assistance in determining whether a sub-tier entity is a subrecipient 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 AO, 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 (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 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 recipient employee.

2. The applicant must provide conflict of interest disclosures when it submits the applications. 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 nonpublic 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 SECTION D -

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

The review and selection process will be managed by a selection committee (SC) composed of USAID Direct Hire personnel from USAID/Azerbaijan and USAID/Caucasus. The SC will review each application received based on the criteria described below and applying adjectival ratings accordingly. The SC will recommend one singular application as the intended Awardee to the Agreement Officer (AO) for his consideration for further negotiations. The final award decision is determined by the AO.

The Application will be evaluated using an adjectival rating system described below.

Exceptional	An Exceptional application has the following characteristics: • A comprehensive and thorough application of exceptional merit. • Application meets and fully exceeds the Government expectations or exceeds NFO objectives and presents very low risk or no overall degree of risk of unsuccessful performance. • Strengths significantly outweigh any weaknesses that may exist.
Very Good	A Very Good application has the following characteristics: • An application demonstrating a strong grasp of the objectives. • Application meets NFO objectives and presents a low overall degree of risk of unsuccessful project performance. • Strengths significantly outweigh any weaknesses that exist.
Satisfactory	A Satisfactory application has the following characteristics: • An application demonstrating a reasonably sound response and a good grasp of the objectives. • Application meets NFO objectives and presents a moderate overall degree of risk of unsuccessful project performance. • Strengths outweigh weaknesses.
Marginal	A Marginal application has the following characteristics: • The application shows a limited understanding of the objectives. • Application meets some or most of the NFO objectives, but presents a significant overall degree of risk of unsuccessful project performance. • Weaknesses equal or outweigh any strength that exists.

Unsatisfactory	An Unsatisfactory application has the following characteristics: • The Application does not meet the NOFO objectives or requires a major rewrite of the application. • Presents an unacceptable degree of risk of unsuccessful project performance. • Weaknesses demonstrate a lack of understanding of the Government's needs. • Weaknesses significantly outweigh any strength that exists.
----------------	--

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 scored by a Selection Committee (SC) using the criteria described in this section.

The criteria set forth below will be used by the selection committee to evaluate the Application submitted in response to the NOFO. The criteria are shown in descending order of importance.

Evaluation Criteria 1 :Technical Approach and Methodology: Extent to which the application effectively outlines a theory of change, corresponding technical approach/methodology that reflects the key considerations and operating principles, and allows for the greatest flexibility to respond to the fluid political environment. The proposed approach/methodology should reflect the context of the opportunities and challenges presented in light of the shifting geopolitical landscape of the South Caucasus region and the recently returned regions to Azerbaijan authority. The technical approach should also demonstrate a clear strategy for incorporating meaningful gender and youth engagement within the targeted communities.

Evaluation Criteria 2: Organizational Capability, Experience and Implementation Team: Appropriateness of the composition and organizational structure of the proposed implementation team (including key personnel), adequate delineation between the roles and responsibilities of sub-grantees, if any. Demonstrated successful track record of implementing similar complex programs supported by measurable or verifiable evidence. Comprehensive risk mitigation strategy that includes robust anti-fraud features as part of the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan reflecting measures to minimize opportunities for fraud and actions to be taken is presented. If the past experience is outside Azerbaijan, the Applicant must explain why and how that past experience is indicative for success in Azerbaijan.

Evaluation Criteria 3: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan: Extent to which the illustrative MEL plan accurately reflects the Applicant's technical approach, and includes specific, appropriate, comprehensive, and meaningful indicators and, if possible, targets (including sex and age disaggregation), a plan for collecting base-line and follow-on data, as well as effective mechanisms for continuous learning and adapting. Adequately provides a combination of output and outcome level indicators coupled with strategies to support an iterative review of implementation to allow for appropriate course corrections in order to reflect and respond to the fluid geo-political environment.

2. Business Review

The Agency will review the cost application of the applicant(s) under consideration for an award as a result of the merit criteria review to determine whether the costs are allowable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E.

The Agency will also consider (1) the extent of the applicant's understanding of the financial aspects of the program and the applicant's ability to perform the activities within the amount requested; (2) whether the applicant's plans will achieve the program objectives with reasonable economy and efficiency; and (3) whether any special conditions relating to costs should be included in the award.

Proposed cost share, if provided, will be reviewed for compliance with the standards set forth in 2 CFR 200.306, 2 CFR 700.10, and the Standard Provision "Cost Sharing (Matching)" for U.S. entities, or the Standard Provision "Cost Share" for non-U.S. entities.

The AO will perform a risk assessment (2 CFR 200.206). The AO may determine that a pre-award survey is required to inform the risk assessment in determining whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organizational, experience, accounting and operational controls, financial resources, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award. Depending on the result of the risk assessment, the AO will decide to execute the award, not execute the award, or award with “specific conditions” (2 CFR 200.208).

- END OF SECTION E -

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.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE & NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

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

For US organizations: [ADS 303](#), [2 CFR 700](#), [2 CFR 200](#), and [Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental organizations](#).

For Non US organizations: [Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations](#).

3. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Program Reports shall be in accordance with applicable USAID Standard Provisions.

All written documentation must be submitted in professional-level English. The reports listed below are the initial reports required by the recipient. Based on the evolving nature of the agreement, USAID may provide modified reporting requirements.

Note: USAID's fiscal year starts on October 1 and ends on September 30. Four fiscal quarterly periods begin on **October 1, January 1, April 1, and July 1.**

· **Financial Reporting:**

Financial Reports shall be in accordance with applicable USAID Standard Provisions.

Quarterly Financial Report: 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.

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.

Performance Reporting

Quarterly Performance Report - The Recipient will submit quarterly performance reports to reflect progress, the activities of the preceding three months and lessons learned. The report must describe the tasks completed in the last three months relative to what was anticipated in the approved work plan, and will assess the overall activity impact to date relative to the performance indicator targets and results defined in the activity theory of change. More details on the format of the quarterly performance reports will be provided after award.

Annual Work Plan - The annual work plan details how the Recipient will use the work plan year effectively to achieve the activity objectives and strategic approaches. The work plan serves as a guide to program implementation and, once approved, represents an agreement as to the objectives and timing of specific tasks and interventions. The work plan is intended to be an annual roadmap for USAID and the Recipient. It should be closely aligned to the theory of change agreed upon during the start-up workshop, and clearly explain how the actions and outputs will lead to the expected outcomes identified in the theory of change. More details on the format of the work plan will be provided after award.

Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (MEL) - The Recipient is required to have an Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL) capable of tracking and documenting progress against the Activity strategic approaches and results. The MEL plan should be framed by, and closely aligned with, the agreed-upon activity theory of change. The MEL reflects the award progress over the life of the Activity and is a critical tool for planning, managing, documenting, evaluating performance and learning. Findings from the MEL should be reviewed and validated in annual pause-and reflect-sessions with USAID staff, and revised when appropriate in consultation with the AOR. More details on the format of the MEL plan will be provided after award.

Annual Performance Report - Annual performance reports will summarize actions, progress and results during the year in relation to the approved work plan and the activity theory of change it supports. The report should include lessons learned, proposed adaptive management shifts, and proposed updates to the theory of change. The annual performance report will be used by USAID to assess the status of activity implementation. Each annual performance report will include an assessment as to whether the activity strategic approaches and actions are leading to the activity objectives. The annual performance report will cover all of the items included in the quarterly performance report, with a focus on the Activity results over the entire year. More details on the format of the annual performance report will be provided after award.

Final Report - The Final Report must discuss all strategic approaches and results from the start of the award through its completion. More details on the format of the final report will be provided after award.

4. PROGRAM INCOME

If Program Income earned under the resultant award will be added to the Total Estimated Amount in accordance with 2 CFR 200.307(e)(2).

5. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

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) Chapters 201 and 204 (<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/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.

In addition, the recipient 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.

No activity funded under the awarded 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.")

As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the recipient, 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 grant/CA to be awarded to determine if they are within the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.

If the recipient 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.

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

Section 660 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA) prohibits assistance to police and prisons, with certain exceptions. However, Section 119(b) of the FAA provides specific notwithstanding authority to fund assistance to law enforcement entities for the purposes of “protecting and maintaining wildlife habitats and in developing sound wildlife management and plant conservation programs.” It also states that “special efforts should be made... to enact and enforce anti-poaching measures.” Relying on this notwithstanding authority, the activities contemplated under this award may include assistance to law enforcement entities. By way of policy, however, the Agency has taken the position that it will not rely on FAA Sec. 119(b) authority to support actual law enforcement operations. By way of definition, “law enforcement” is interpreted by the Agency as any entity that has authority to carry out some or all of the functions normally exercised by a law enforcement force, including the authority to carry weapons, make arrests, conduct searches, interrogate, supervise confinement or initiate prosecutions; and “law enforcement operations” includes activities such as participation in field investigations, covert operations, raids and arrests that have a potential risk to the physical safety of USAID partners and USG staff. The USAID Legal Officer, through the AOR, must be consulted and authorize any activities that might be considered “law enforcement operations.”

An additional legal requirement related to work with law enforcement is that assistance to the security forces of any country is prohibited when there is credible information that such forces have committed gross human rights violations (FAA Sec. 620M). Therefore, beneficiaries of the activities who are considered “security forces” must be successfully vetted per “Leahy Vetting” guidelines prior to their receiving assistance.

7. SUBMISSION OF DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCE DOCUMENTATION

USAID recipients must submit one electronic copy of development experience documentation to the Development Experience Clearinghouse. Development experience documentation may be submitted online: <http://dec.usaid.gov> . Or by mail (for pouch delivery):

USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse

M/CIO/ITSD/KM/DEC

RRB M.01-010

Washington, DC 20523-6100

Phone: (202) 712-0579

Email: docsubmit@usaid.gov

In addition, the recipient must submit one electronic copy of development experience documentation to the AOR for the award.

- END OF SECTION F -

SECTION G: 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 disclosed 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.”

- END OF SECTION G -

ANNEX 1 - SUMMARY BUDGET TEMPLATE

Line Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total Amount (USD)
Personnel						
Fringe Benefits						
Travel and Transportation						
Equipment						
Supplies						
Contractual						
Other Direct Costs						
Subawards						
Total Direct Charges						
Indirect Charges (if any)						
Cost share						
Total Costs						

- END OF ANNEX 1 -

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:

Please note that the resulting award will include all standard provisions (both mandatory and required as applicable) in full text.

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

Required	Standard Provision	
	RAA1. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATES - PREDETERMINED (NOVEMBER 2020)	
	RAA2. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATES - PROVISIONAL (Nonprofit) (NOVEMBER 2020)	
	RAA3. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE - PROVISIONAL (Profit) (DECEMBER 2014)	
	RAA4. INDIRECT COSTS – DE MINIMIS RATE (NOVEMBER 2020)	
	RAA10. COST SHARING (MATCHING) (FEBRUARY 2012)	
	RAA13. REPORTING HOST GOVERNMENT TAXES (DECEMBER 2014)	

	RAA18. USAID DISABILITY POLICY - ASSISTANCE (DECEMBER 2004)
	RAA22. PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS TO PROMOTE, SUPPORT, OR ADVOCATE FOR THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
	RAA23. UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (NOVEMBER 2020)
	RAA27. CONTRACT PROVISION FOR DBA INSURANCE UNDER RECIPIENT PROCUREMENTS (DECEMBER 2014)
	RAA28. AWARD TERM AND CONDITION FOR RECIPIENT INTEGRITY AND PERFORMANCE MATTERS (April 2016)
	RAA29. RESERVED
	RAA30. PROGRAM INCOME (AUGUST 2020)

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

Required	Standard Provision
As need	RAA1. ADVANCE PAYMENT AND REFUNDS (NOVEMBER 2020)
	RAA2. REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENT AND REFUNDS (DECEMBER 2014)

As needed	RAA3. INDIRECT COSTS – NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA) (NOVEMBER 2020)
	RAA4. INDIRECT COSTS – CHARGED AS A FIXED AMOUNT (NONPROFIT) (JUNE 2012)
	RAA5. INDIRECT COSTS – DE MINIMIS RATE (NOVEMBER 2020)
	RAA6. UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM OF AWARD MANAGEMENT (NOVEMBER 2020)
	RAA7. REPORTING SUBAWARDS AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION (NOVEMBER 2020)
	RAA8. SUBAWARDS (DECEMBER 2014)
	RAA9. TRAVEL AND INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORTATION (DECEMBER 2014)
	RAA11. REPORTING HOST GOVERNMENT TAXES (JUNE 2012)
	RAA 15. COST SHARE (JUNE 2012)
	RAA29. CONTRACT AWARD TERM AND CONDITION FOR RECIPIENT INTEGRITY AND PERFORMANCE MATTERS (April 2016)
	RAA30. PROTECTING LIFE IN GLOBAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE (NOVEMBER 2020)

- END OF ANNEX 2 -

ANNEX 3

RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION STRATEGY

ASSESSMENT

In recent years, U.S. implementing partners have experienced difficulties receiving approval to register themselves and their awards with the government of Azerbaijan (GOAJ) stemming from new legislation issued in November 2014 stipulating that foreign donors require authorization from the Ministry of Finance to provide grants within Azerbaijan. The impact is cumbersome and delayed organization and grant registrations for international and local organizations alike. It is particularly challenging for Democracy and Governance activities, especially when the Recipients of those grants/contracts are new to the country.. Accordingly, Applicants should be aware that significant effort and time could be needed to accomplish the organization and grant registrations.

Other potential risks include but are not limited to: challenges securing permission to travel and operate in rural areas of Azerbaijan, further obstacles as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and/or widescale interruption of internet service as was seen during the recent resumption of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

MITIGATION STRATEGY

The Risk Mitigation Plan will demonstrate that the applicant has a comprehensive understanding of the potential risks that will be faced during activity implementation. The Plan should document the processes, tools and procedures that will be used to manage and control those risks that could have a negative impact on the activity, and/or what strategies will be used to proactively avoid or mitigate those risks. Applicants must ensure that effective Anti-Fraud features are woven into the Risk Mitigation Plan as part of managing risks. The features should consider both prevention and response to ensure systems are safeguarded against waste, fraud and abuse at all levels of operations and are prepared to enact the necessary steps to address any allegations of fraud that may arise.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PREPARATION

Applicant is requested to provide a Risk Mitigation Plan as part of the Application. The Risk Mitigation Plan will total no more than five pages and must include the following :

- An analysis of the Country operating environment for local and international development organizations, including an overview of the risks and problems that might be encountered during implementation;

- Detailed guidance for how the organization will mitigate the identified risk;
- Risk Mitigation and/or Contingency Planning options:
- Anti-fraud features.

- **END OF ANNEX 3** -