



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Issuance Date:	29 July 2008
Deadline for Receipt of Questions:	8 August 2008 CLOSED
First Closing Date for Submission of Applications:	29 August 2008 CLOSED
Second Closing Date for Submission of Applications:	20 October 2008 16 December 2008
Final Closing Date for Submission of Applications:	16 February 2009
Closing Time for Submission of Applications:	10:00AM Washington DC Time
Submit Applications to:	William Hewitt at whewitt@usaid.gov Bruce Gelband at bgelband@usaid.gov

Subject: Annual Program Statement (APS) Number: M-OAA-GRO-LMA-08-729
International Observation of Sudan National Elections

Dear Applicants:

The United States Government, represented by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications from qualified Applicants for funding of Grants.

This Annual Program Statement (APS) covers a discretionary assistance program (grants or cooperative agreements – herein referred to as “grants”) conducted under the authority of the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act, as amended. This funding opportunity is for conducting international observation of the Sudan electoral process.

Eligible organizations interested in funding are invited to study this APS and follow the grant application guidance herein. Proposals from consortia or partnerships between eligible organizations are welcome. Submittals must be in English and must identify activities that will be carried out. Three rounds of applications will be held. To be considered, applications must be submitted before the closing date for each round, scheduled as follows:

Round 1: 29 August 2008 CLOSED
Round 2: ~~20 October 2008~~ 16 December 2008
Round 3: 16 February 2009

Awards shall be made to eligible U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations (501(c)3 NGOs) and accredited U.S. colleges and universities in accordance with 22 CFR 226 and USAID’s Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-Governmental Recipients. Awards will also be made to eligible Non-U.S. organizations, private firms, public international organizations (i.e. organizations comprised principally of governments), governmental organizations, and quasi-governmental organizations.

Pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the Award program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (22 CFR 226, OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organizations, OMB Circular A-21 for universities, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for for-profit organizations), may be paid under the Award.

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

For the purposes of this APS, the term "Grant" is synonymous with "Cooperative Agreement"; "Grantee" is synonymous with "Recipient"; and "Grant Officer" is synonymous with "Agreement Officer."

If you decide to submit an application, it must be received by one of the closing dates and times indicated at the top of this Cover Letter at the place designated below for receipt of applications. Applicants are required to submit their application electronically, via e-mail, as an e-mail attachment to whewitt@usaid.gov. bgeiband@usaid.gov. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all electronic files are successfully received by the deadlines indicated at the top of this Cover Letter.

All projects funded by USAID must conform to U.S. environmental regulations (22 CFR 216) requiring evaluation to ensure that any environmental impacts resulting from the project implementation are mitigated. Through development of the Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), 22 CFR 216 or "Reg. 216" ensures that environmental (i.e., natural resource or public health) impacts of USAID-funded activities are identified and mitigation measures proposed.

The actual number of new grants funded through this APS will depend on various factors; however USAID anticipates up to four awards may be made. The combined value of all grants is not expected to exceed \$6 million in FY 2008 funding. This is an estimate because availability and allocation of new FY 2008 funding for this purpose is not finalized. Successful applications may be eligible for follow-on awards if additional funding becomes available and if the international monitoring objectives and outcomes continue to be consistent with Mission priorities.

No grants will have an initial performance period exceeding 18 months.

Applicants should retain for their records copies of all enclosures which accompany their application.

Issuance of this APS does not constitute an Award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, the Government reserves the right to reject any or all applications received, if such action is considered to be in the best interest of the Government. In addition, final Award of any resultant Grant(s) or Cooperative Agreement(s) cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal USAID procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, Applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for an Award. Applications are submitted at the risk of the Applicant; should circumstances prevent making an Award, all preparation and submission costs are at the Applicant's expense.

This APS and any future Amendments can be downloaded from Grants.gov on the World Wide Web (www). The World Wide Web Address is: <http://www.grants.gov>. In order to use this method, an Applicant must first register on-line with Grants.gov. Click on "Search for Grant Opportunity," then click on "Browse by Agency" and choose U.S. Agency for International Development, then select the appropriate location and search for the APS. If there are problems or you have difficulty registering or accessing the APS, please contact the Grant.gov Helpdesk at: 1-800-518-4726 or electronically, via e-mail at: support@usaid.gov for technical assistance. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the application document has been received from the Grants.gov in its entirety and USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

Applicants will now need to download Adobe version 8.1.1 to their computers. This will only need to be done once. This step is required in order for Applicants to view and save the Adobe forms properly. Applicants will need to have the Adobe version 8.1.1 software on their computers as grant opportunities may appear in this format.

If an Award is made to a U.S. or Non-U.S. Organization, the standard format for an Award to a U.S. or Non-U.S. Organization, as prescribed in ADS 303, will be used.

Applicants must submit any questions concerning this APS electronically via email to ~~William Hewitt at whewitt@usaid.gov~~. Bruce Gelband at bgelband@usaid.gov. **All questions and/or requests for clarification/explanation must be received by the deadline stipulated on this Cover Letter.** Any communications pertaining to this APS must be through the USAID point of contact listed above.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

/s/

Bruce Gelband
Regional Agreement Officer

SECTION A

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. BACKGROUND

Sudan is the largest country in Africa, borders nine countries, and has a population estimated at 40 million. After decades of civil war, parties to Sudan's north-south civil war signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January of 2005. The CPA is comprised of six interlocking agreements related to wealth and power sharing, the establishment of the Government of National Unity (GNU) that provides southern Sudanese with representation in the national government, a resolution of conflicts in the oil-rich border regions between northern and southern Sudan (known collectively as the "Three Areas"), the creation of a southern Sudanese government and state governments with appointed leadership until national elections in 2009, and the establishment of a six-year interim period after which the citizens of southern Sudan will vote on whether to remain a part of unified Sudan or secede to create an independent state. Since the signing of the CPA, and despite the death of former SPLM leader and GNU First Vice President John Garang, the country has taken significant steps in implementation of the agreement, although progress has been slower than most had hoped and conflict in Darfur has continued. Garang's successor, Salva Mayardit Kiir, currently serves as the First Vice President of Sudan and President of Southern Sudan.

The CPA, Sudan's Interim National Constitution, and the Interim Constitution for Southern Sudan all stipulate that general elections for representatives at all levels of government must be completed by July 2009. The CPA further stipulates that international observers shall observe the elections. Given infrastructure constraints and the timing of the rainy season in southern Sudan, if elections are to be held in this timeframe, they should be held by late April 2009 to avoid potentially disenfranchising voters through lack of access to polling stations in the rainy season. The Interim National Constitution also states that the rules and procedures that will govern these elections, as well as the functions and terms and conditions of service of the National Election Commission (NEC), are to be specified in the National Electoral Law. The National Electoral Law was enacted in July 2008, but the text is not yet available. According to the CPA, the NEC is to be established within one month after adoption of the electoral law. The CPA and Interim National Constitution stipulate that seven to nine impartial representatives of the population be appointed to the Commission by the President, with the approval of the First Vice President (who also serves as President of Southern Sudan). The National Constitutional Review Commission is charged with ensuring the independence of the National Electoral Commission and creating an "impartial and representative National Electoral Commission," as well as detailing the NEC's mandate and providing for its appointment. The NEC will be charged with the organization of the elections and will also likely be the primary counterpart for international donors.

It is within this context that the first comprehensive census in Sudanese history is being conducted per the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Census enumeration was completed in May 2008. The northern and southern statistical agencies are currently launching the data capture and data processing phases of the census. Per the CPA, the power sharing percentages that determine the proportion of north and south representation in the Government of National Unity and their respective representation in the

national parliament shall be “either confirmed or adjusted on the basis of the census results.” Beyond this formal link between the census and 2009 elections, lessons learned from census enumeration may inform logistical planning for the elections and census data may inform decision-making for the delimitation of electoral districts, voter registration, and geographical placement of polling stations.

Planning and preparation needs for the national elections are extensive, including delimitation of constituencies, voter education, voter registration, political party and candidate registration, polling, counting, disseminating results, and adjudicating disputes. Election management bodies (EMBs) will initially lack the capacity to address many of these complex tasks, although substantial international assistance is envisioned. Conducting credible elections in Sudan will be a major challenge. The country has little voting history – the last elections in the South were held in 1986, and elections in the North (the last being in 2000) were not considered credible by the international community. Sudan also has limited infrastructure in the South and an extremely high rate of illiteracy – topping 80% in some parts of the South, with even higher rates among women. In this environment, the involvement of international election observers will be critical to ensuring the legitimacy of these key post-conflict elections, managing popular expectations, and mitigating the risk of election-related violence.

2. AREAS OF INTEREST

The conduct of national elections in Sudan represents a critical step in implementing the CPA. There are significant challenges to holding free and fair elections across the country, including the compressed timeline for electoral preparations, logistical challenges in much of the country, on-going insecurity in Darfur and elsewhere, and the lack of experience with elections on the part of voters and potential electoral officials alike.

As part of USAID/Sudan support for the implementation of the CPA, this APS solicits applications for holistic international observation of the Sudan electoral process. Recognizing that the conduct of free and fair polling is but one step in a free and fair electoral process, USAID/Sudan seeks observation applications covering the entirety of the electoral process, from establishment of the National Election Commission through resolution of post-polling disputes. Further, as free and fair elections depend on a multiplicity of factors, including quality of electoral preparations, nature of the campaign environment, role of media, and the general security environment, applicants are encouraged to develop joint observation applications covering multiple facets of the electoral process and enabling environment. USAID/Sudan is prepared to fund observation applications that cover several of the following aspects of electoral process:

- Appointment of the National Election Commission (NEC): The credibility and independence of an election commission is heavily influenced by its composition and the process of appointment.
- Financial and political autonomy of the NEC: Once established, the NEC must have political and financial independence to administer free and fair elections.
- Development and issuance of electoral regulations: Subsidiary regulations governing items such as voter and candidate registration, relationships between and authorities of different levels of election management bodies (e.g. National Election Commission, Southern Sudan Election High Committee, State Election High Committees), confirmation of observers, and resolution of

election disputes will have significant impact on the quality of the electoral process.

- **Constituency delimitation process:** Constituency delimitation, by its nature, has the potential to be a politically charged process. Fair representation requires that the principle of one person, one vote be maintained and that minorities are not fragmented such that they cannot achieve representation in elected bodies.
- **Voter registration process:** The voter registration methodology and its implementation must enable equal participation of citizens in the electoral process. Processes for checking voter rolls, making complaints, and addressing grievances must be timely, fair, and transparent.
- **Registration of candidates and political parties:** Regulations for candidate and party registration must enable participation of all parties and candidates meeting registration requirements; registration requirements must enable establish fair conditions for all political players.
- **Campaign period:** Political parties must have the opportunity for equal access to media and equal opportunity to conduct campaign events, such as political rallies. Voters must be able to freely participate in campaign events.
- **Polling:** Voters must be able to freely cast their ballot for the candidate of their choice in secrecy.
- **Counting and tabulation:** Development and application of fair and transparent counting procedures are essential for free and fair elections.
- **Dispute resolution:** A lack of legitimate dispute resolution processes is frequently the most divisive factor in elections. Dispute resolution processes must be impartial and accomplished in an expeditious manner. They must enjoy widespread legitimacy.
- **Participation of women, youth, IDPs, and other marginalized groups:** For elections to reflect the will of the electorate, participation must be broad-based. No group should face extraordinary obstacles to participation or be discouraged from doing so.
- **Role of media:** Balanced media coverage of all candidates during the campaign period is fundamental to creating a fair electoral environment. Further, media plays a central role in providing reliable, independent public information on the electoral process and mitigating potential violence throughout the process. However, misuse of the media by political parties, candidates and/or their supporters can create unfair advantages and exacerbate conflicts.
- **Security/violence:** Security is a critical factor in enabling widespread participation in an electoral process, from voter registration, to campaigning, to polling. State and non-state security forces need to strike a balance between maintaining order and avoiding the practice or perception of voter intimidation.

- END OF SECTION A -

SECTION B

APPLICATION PROCESS

USAID/Sudan requests interested parties to adhere to the following guidelines for the APS competition process. Applications received by the deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness to the requirements outlined in these guidelines and will be evaluated by USAID. Additional discussions with applicants may take place if applications submitted do not adequately describe the activities to be funded and/or there are points to be clarified or modified.

All submissions must be in English using a font not any smaller than Times New Roman Font 11 or a similar size typeset. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that files are complete and transmitted on time. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors or omissions of any kind.

Proposals must have an estimated value and performance period that is within the parameters described in the APS. USAID may opt to exclude from further consideration any submittal which is not within these parameters.

Eligible organizations interested in applying for a grant in response to this APS are invited to submit applications via e-mail to William Hewitt in the Office of Acquisition and Assistance at whewitt@usaid.gov. The application must consist of two (2) electronic files, labeled "ORGANIZATION NAME-TECHNICAL-OBSERVATION APS-08" and "ORGANIZATION NAME-BUDGET-OBSERVATION APS-08." Printed hardcopies are not requested nor required. (Hard copies and/or supplemental information with original signatures may be requested thereafter by the Agreement Officer.)

This APS is the official source document for applications. Oral explanations given before submission of the application will not be evaluated; only the written application will be evaluated. Applicants should retain for their records a copy of the application and all attachments/enclosures which accompany their application.

The submission must consider all information provided with this APS and include the following:

1. TECHNICAL APPLICATION

Technical applications must be kept as concise and succinct as possible. They must not exceed 17 single spaced typed pages (excluding Financial Plan) using a font not any smaller than Times New Roman Font 11. Technical applications submitted must be in the following format:

a. Cover Page (separate page, not more than one (1) page)

The Cover Page must include the solicitation number, names of the organizations or institutions involved (with the name of the lead or primary Applicant clearly identified if applicable), title of the application, and the USAID Mission to which the application is being submitted (USAID/Sudan). Any proposed sub-grantees must also be listed.

In addition, the Cover Page must provide a contact person for the primary Applicant, including the

individual's name, title or position within the organization or institution, mailing address, email address, telephone and fax numbers. Applicants must also clearly state whether the identified contact person has the authority to negotiate on behalf of the Applicant, and, if not, the contact information for the appropriate person with authority to negotiate must also be listed.

b. Executive Summary (separate page, not more than one (1) page)

The application Executive Summary must summarize the key elements of the technical application. NO COST FIGURES other than the TOTAL amount of USAID funds requested must be provided.

c. Technical Narrative

The technical narrative will be evaluated in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria set forth in Section 3 below. Each must be addressed in order.

i. Program Objective(s)

The Program Objective(s) must succinctly state what the proposed program will achieve.

ii. Context Analysis

This section must contain a succinct narrative that demonstrates the applicant's familiarity with Sudan's political challenges, international election best practices, and the key issues to be addressed by the proposed observation effort. The analysis section describes in detail the problem(s) that will be addressed and introduces the context in which the technical approach being proposed makes sense.

iii. Activities and Outcomes

The applicant must describe how the proposed Program Objective(s) respond to the issues identified in the context analysis. For each Program Objective, the applicant must discuss the activities that will be implemented to achieve the Objective and the expected Outcome for each activity. The applicant must specify the tangible benefits to be derived from the proposed program, including areas to be observed, reports to be produced, and the results to be achieved. As applicable, the applicants must:

- Cite adaptations of previous election observation experience to the Sudanese context;
- Outline geographical allocations of resources across Sudan;
- Articulate the proposed approach for training and briefing of international election observers;
- Describe mechanisms for sharing information with other international observer delegations and domestic monitoring organizations; and
- Outline the process of developing and publicizing observer statements before, during, and after the elections.

d. Implementation Plan

i. Management and Staffing Plan (including consortium or partnership arrangements, as applicable)

Applicants must furnish a detailed management and staffing plan and identify each key person. The management structure for the program must be detailed. If the application is from a consortium or partnership with more than one organization, the management plan must detail the formal relationships, roles and responsibilities of each member or partner organization. The staffing plan must detail roles and responsibilities of both management and observation personnel (paid and unpaid, as applicable).

Proposed composition of observation delegations must be described, including number of observers, team members' areas of expertise, and responsibilities for collecting, analyzing, and reporting observation

findings.

ii. Implementation Timeline

The applicant must present a succinct timeline, including initial mobilization, each major activity, and production of each major report. If need be, activity timing may be linked to an appropriate phase of the Sudan electoral process, e.g. timing for arrival of voter registration observation teams may be stated as 1 week prior to voter registration launch date.

iii. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The monitoring and evaluation plan must include the following:

- Indicators and targets for each major expected outcome and impact; and
- A data collection plan indicating how indicator data will be collected, by whom, and when. This must clearly states the method for collecting data, timeline for data collection, and personnel responsible for data collection.

All successful applicants will be required to report on the number of international observers deployed with US Government assistance and must incorporate this indicator into the proposed monitoring and evaluation plan.

e. Institutional Capabilities and Past Performance (of applicant and key partner organizations, as applicable)

For purposes of past performance evaluation, Applicants shall furnish award numbers and other details with contact information for each project funded over the past three (3) years by USAID, or any other government entity, or third party source. The details shall include the following: name of the organization or agency which funded the program(s); award number; point of contact's name, mailing address, email address and phone number; and the overall dollar value of the program. Newer organizations, or Applicants with no related prior grant awards, are encouraged to apply and remain eligible for consideration.

2. COST APPLICATION FORMAT

Applicants shall submit the Cost Application under separate cover from the Technical Application. There is no page limit for the Cost Application. It shall include required forms and whatever schedules and other information necessary to support and/or explain the proposed cost estimates. Applicants estimating process must be as clear and concise as possible, but still provide the necessary detail. Also, financial data and information must be fully supported and organized in a manner that facilitates review.

Provide the name, address, telephone and facsimile numbers, and e-mail address of the individual in the Applicant's organization to be contacted, if necessary, during the evaluation of the application. Also, provide the name(s) of the person(s) who wrote your application, i.e., the Technical Application and the Cost Application.

Certain documents are to be submitted by an Applicant in order for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility. However, it is USAID policy not to burden Applicants with undue reporting requirements if that information is readily available through other sources.

The following describes the documentation that Applicants for Assistance Award must submit to USAID in response to this APS.

a. Budget

Applicants must provide a detailed budget in a Microsoft Excel readable format.

A budget with an accompanying budget narrative that provides in detail the total costs for implementation of the program your organization is proposing. The budget shall also be submitted using Standard Form (SF) 424, 424A and 424B which can be downloaded from USAID web site, http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aapproved_standard_forms.jsp, or at Federal Offices. The following forms must be completed and included in the Cost Application submitted in response to this APS:

- SF 424 - Application;
- SF 424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs;
- SF 424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs;
- Additionally, in support of the Applicant's information on the SF 424A on
- separate sheets the Applicant shall provide detailed data to support each Cost Element (Object Class Categories) as shown below;
- SF 424C, Budget Information - Construction Programs (if applicable);
- SF 424D - Assurances - Construction Programs (if applicable); and
- Current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), if your organization has one or Proposal for Indirect Cost Rate, if your organization does not have a NICRA.

i. Personnel

- (1) Identify, by title and name, each position to be supported under the proposed Award.
- (2) State the amounts of time, such as months and percent of time that will be expended by each position, their base pay rate and total direct compensation under this program, e.g., Position/Person Time XX Rate = \$XXXX.
- (3) Provide rate verification documentation.

ii. Fringe Benefits

- (1) Indicate the rate(s) used and the base of application for each rate.
- (2) Provide a copy of any Government approval of your indirect cost rates.

iii. Travel

- (1) Identify total foreign and domestic travel as separate items.
- (2) Indicate the estimated number of trips, number of travelers, position of travelers, number of days per trip, point of origin, destination and purpose of travel.
- (3) For each trip, itemize the estimate of transportation and/or subsistence costs, including airfare and per diem.

iv. Allowances

Identify and itemize for each eligible or policy-covered employee/position.

v. Equipment, Materials and Supplies

- (1) Itemize the equipment, materials and supplies and briefly justify the need for the items to be

purchased as they apply to the Program Description.

- (2) Indicate the estimated unit cost and number of units for each item to be purchased.
- (3) Provide the basis for the cost estimates, e.g., pro forma invoice, published price lists, etc.

vi. Contractual

- (1) For each proposed sub-award provide a Statement of Work (SOW) or Program Description (PD) and Cost Application.
- (2) Provide complete details of costs that may be incurred.

vii. Construction

Identify the proposed construction costs.

viii. Other Direct Costs

- (1) Identify other costs and briefly justify the need for each cost item proposed relative to the Program Description.
- (2) Indicate the estimated unit cost and number of units for each item proposed.
- (3) Provide the basis for the cost estimates, e.g., pro forma invoice, etc.

ix. Indirect Costs

- (1) State the percentages and amounts used for the calculation of indirect costs.
- (2) Provide a copy of your latest Government-approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA).
- (3) If indirect costs have not been approved by a Federal agency, state the basis for the proposed indirect cost rates, if any.
- (4) Applicants who do not currently have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from their cognizant agency shall also submit the following information:
 - (a) Copies of the Applicant's financial reports for the previous 3-year period, which have been audited by a certified public accountant or other auditor satisfactory to USAID;
 - (b) Projected budget, cash flow and organizational chart; and
 - (c) A copy of the organization's accounting manual.

x. Non-Federal Contributions (if any)

Provide a breakdown of the financial (cash) and in-kind contributions (services, property, donated supplies and equipment, unrecovered indirect costs, etc.) of all organizations (prime Applicant, participant number 1, participant number 2, etc.) that would be involved in implementing the proposed Award.

The budget narrative must clearly identify the basis of all costs, such as market surveys, price quotations, current salaries historical experience etc.

b. Evidence of Responsibility

Applicants must submit any additional evidence of responsibility deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility. The information submitted must substantiate that the

Applicant:

- i. Has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain subject resources as required during the performance of the Award.
- ii. Has the ability to comply with Award conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the Applicant, Non-Governmental and Governmental.
- iii. Has a satisfactory record of performance. Past relevant unsatisfactory performance is ordinarily sufficient to justify a finding of non-responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance.
- iv. Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics; and
- v. Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive an Award under applicable laws and regulations (e.g., Equal Employment Opportunity).
- vi. Applicants that have never received a Grant, Cooperative Agreement or Contract from the U.S. Government are required to submit a copy of their accounting manual. If a copy has already been submitted to the U.S. Government, the Applicant must advise which Federal Office has a copy.

An Award shall be made only when the Agreement Officer makes a positive determination that the Applicant possesses, or has the ability to obtain the necessary management competency in planning and carrying out assistance programs and that it will practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided by USAID.

For the organizations that are new to USAID or organizations with outstanding audit findings, it may be necessary to perform a pre-award survey.

3. SELECTION CRITERIA

The criteria presented below have been tailored to the requirements of this particular APS. Applicants must note that these criteria serve to:

- (a) identify the significant matters which Applicants address in their applications, and
- (b) set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated.

To facilitate the review of applications, Applicants shall organize the narrative sections of their applications in the same order as the Selection Criteria.

The Technical Applications will be evaluated in accordance with the Technical Evaluation Criteria set forth below. The Cost Application of all Applicants submitting a technically acceptable application will be opened and costs will be evaluated for general reasonableness, allowability, and allocability. To the extent that they are necessary, negotiations will then be conducted with all Applicants whose application has a reasonable chance of being selected for Award. Awards will be made to responsible Applicants whose applications offer the greatest value, cost, and other factors considered.

To the extent necessary, if Awards are not made based upon the initial applications, USAID may request clarification and supplemental materials from Applicants whose applications have a reasonable chance of being selected for Award. Entering into discussions with USAID is a part of the evaluation process, so discussions must not be interpreted as an indication of USAID's intent to make an Award.

Technical Evaluation Criteria

The Technical Applications will be evaluated in accordance with the Technical Evaluation Criteria set forth below. The relative importance of each criterion is indicated by approximate weight by points, of which a total of 100 points are possible. The Technical Application will account for 100% of the total technical score.

(1) Technical Approach (40 Points)

- The extent to which the proposed technical approach is clear, logical, well-conceived, technically sound, outlines an approach that will feasibly lead to accomplishment of the objectives described in the Technical Narrative, and reflects an appreciation for the likely problems to be encountered and how they will be addressed/mitigated.

(2) Implementation Plan (40 Points)

- The extent to which the management and staffing plan, including key personnel, demonstrates the Applicant's ability to effectively achieve program objectives in the stated timeframe. (25 points)
- The extent to which applications convincingly demonstrate the prompt and efficient launching of program activities. (5 Points)
- The extent to which applications convincingly demonstrate the organization's ability to appropriately monitor and evaluate program progress and accomplishments. (10 points)

(3) Past Performance and Experience (20 Points)

- The extent to which the applicant demonstrates experience in international election observation and the application of lessons-learned in the Sudan context. (10 points)
- The extent to which the Applicant (and proposed consortium members or partners, as applicable) demonstrates the successful implementation of programs similar in magnitude, complexity and objectives. (10 points)

Cost Evaluation Criteria

An analysis of cost realism will be conducted on the most highly ranked Technical Applications. Cost has not been assigned a weight but will be evaluated for general reasonableness, realism, appropriateness, cost-effectiveness (including cost-share – see below), allowability, and allocability. The cost realism

analysis is intended to:

- (1) Verify the Applicant's understanding of the requirements;
- (2) Assess the degree to which Costs reflect the *approaches* in the Technical Application; and
- (3) Assess the degree to which Costs accurately represent the *work effort* included in the Technical Application.

4. NEGOTIATION AND AGREEMENT OF GRANT TERMS

If USAID's review of the full application results in the a recommendation for funding, then the organization and USAID will enter final discussions to ensure all pre-award requirements are met and significant grant terms are negotiated and agreed. The exact details of this phase will vary according to the circumstances pertaining to each application; however, the following are common areas that require discussion and agreement prior to award:

- (1) Branding Strategy and Marking Plan. The organization will be exempted from USAID branding requirements as per CFR 226.91 section (h) Presumptive exceptions: (1) "The above marking requirements in § 226.91 (a)–(e) may not apply if marking would: (i) Compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program or materials where independence or neutrality is an inherent aspect of the program and materials, such as election monitoring or ballots, and voter information literature; political party support or public policy advocacy or reform; independent media, such as television and radio broadcasts, newspaper articles and editorials; public service announcements or public opinion polls and surveys."
- (2) Payment terms.
- (3) Procedures concerning administrative reporting and logistical requirements for program including training components.
- (4) Cost sharing terms.
- (5) USAID-desired involvement during the implementation of the award. If it is substantial, a 'cooperative agreement' form of grant may be awarded which will contain the details of USAID's involvement.
- (6) Other award terms including audit, special provisions and/or special award conditions.

USAID recognizes that procedures for accrediting or confirming international observers have not yet been developed by the Sudanese government. Any awards made prior to issuance of accreditation or confirmation requirements and procedures will be partially funded to enable mobilization and launching of observation activities pending issuance of accreditation/confirmation regulations. Full funding will be contingent on successful accreditation/confirmation by the responsible Sudanese government body.

5. USAID EVALUATION AND FUNDING DECISION

a. General

A decision to grant funding to an organization requires a positive determination in three principal areas:

- USAID completes all necessary planning requirements which are generally required in order to authorize an activity and obligate funding.
- The application (i.e. the proposed program and budget) is complete, acceptable and is recommended for funding by the sponsoring office.
- The applicant is determined to have adequate capacity to conduct its program and comply with the terms of a USAID grant.

USAID planning requirements include, among other things, consideration of how environmental soundness and compliance in design and implementation will be ensured when required by USAID regulation concerning environmental matters: 22 CFR 216. Issues identified in this area during the evaluation process are an example of standard USAID activity planning and design matters which may arise and which may require discussion and resolution with the grant applicant before a grant could be awarded.

A grant application will not be viewed as more desirable over another simply because it has a higher budget. Programs with modest scope and budget that are viewed as having a strong potential for positive results are preferred over more expensive, less-effective projects.

There are numerous firms or organizations that offer to provide assistance in preparing concept papers and applications. The utilization of such services is at the sole discretion of the grant applicant. USAID does not endorse any of these or require their use with respect to this APS. Further, any costs incurred for such services would not be reimbursable by USAID, in the event a grant is issued.

It is possible that a proposal recommended for funding does not actually result in a grant award, due to insufficient availability of funding, or because an the organization is deemed not sufficiently capable of managing a USAID grant, or for other reason(s) which will be provided to the applicant.

A decision not to fund may occur at any phase of the evaluation process. No program expenditures will be paid by USAID/Sudan, except those covered in a grant signed by the USAID Agreement Officer. This APS represents a discretionary grant program and USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the proposals received.

b. Cost Sharing

USAID policy on cost sharing of discretionary grant programs can be found in USAID Automated Directive System (ADS) 303.3.10 on our agency website: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>.

Applications that identify and use funds from other than USAID or other US Government funding to leverage program costs, preferably at least 10% of the total program, will be given priority consideration. Additional cost share (in cash or in-kind), that is above that level may also be offered and will be considered as part of the cost effectiveness of an application. Cost sharing includes contributions, both cash and in-kind, which are necessary and reasonable to achieve program objectives and which are verifiable from the recipient's records. Cost sharing contributions may include volunteer services provided by professional and technical personnel and un-recovered indirect costs. Additional information

may be found in 22 CFR 226.23 “Cost sharing and matching” and the USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) 303.3.10; both documents are available online at:
<http://www.usaid.gov/business/regulations/>.

- END OF SECTION B -