



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Issuance Date: July 5, 2023
Deadline for Questions: July 14, 2023, 5:00 pm Local Time
Responses to Questions: July 21, 2023, 5:00 pm Local Time
Closing Date: September 1, 2023, 5:00 pm Local Time
Concept Note Submission Closing Dates: September 1, 2023, 5:00 pm Local Time

Subject: Annual Program Statement Number (APS)
No.: 7200AA20APS00007

Program Title: USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity
Addendum to YouthPower 2 Annual
Program Statement

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance: 98.001, Foreign Assistance for Programs Overseas

Pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, the United States Government, as represented by the [U.S. Agency for International Development \(USAID\)](#), the [Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation](#) (DDI), and USAID/Mali, are announcing the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum to the YouthPower 2 (YP2) Annual Program Statement (APS), hereafter known as the YP2 APS.

Through this USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum, USAID/Mali aims to provide a vehicle for engaging with youth-led and youth-serving organizations, among others, and systems to generate cross-sectoral, positive youth development outcomes. USAID/Mali also seeks to support partner countries' progress to self-reliance, achieve sustainable and resilient results, and catalyze more effective partnering for impact. This Addendum disseminates information to prospective Applicants so they may develop and submit Concept Notes in response and ultimately to be considered for USAID funding. This Addendum describes and provides:

- The type of activities for which Concept Notes will be considered.
- Available funding, process, and requirements for submitting Concept Notes and Full Applications.
- The Criteria for evaluating Concept Notes; and
- Refers prospective Applicants to relevant documentation and resources.

USAID/Mali anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement under this Addendum. Issuance of this Addendum does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. Government to make an award, nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a Concept Note or Application(s). The actual number of assistance awards, if any, is subject to the availability of funds, as well as the viability of eventual full Applications received.

Based on the submitted Concept Note(s), USAID/Mali will determine whether to request a Full Application from an eligible organization. To be competitive under this Addendum to the YP2 APS, Concept Notes and Full Applications must be fully responsive to all directions under the APS except when specifically noted otherwise in this Addendum.

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the entire APS and Addendum Opportunity has been downloaded from www.grants.gov and USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the APS, please contact the grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Aaron Ruble Digitally signed by Aaron Ruble
Date: 2023.07.26 13:17:09 +02'00'

Aaron Ruble
Supervisory Agreement Officer
OAA

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ANNOUNCEMENT

CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity

UNDER EXISTING

YouthPower 2 (YP2) Annual Program Statement

APS No.: 7200AA20APS00007

<p>PLEASE NOTE: This is an addendum to an existing announcement. All interested organizations should carefully review both the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity addendum AND the full announcement, which can be found here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=YP2. Important information contained in the full worldwide announcement is not repeated in the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum.</p>

This activity is authorized in accordance with Part 1 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

Through the **USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity** Addendum to the YouthPower 2 (YP2) Annual Program Statement (APS) No.: 7200AA20APS00007, USAID/Mali seeks applications from qualified and eligible organizations for a five-year, approximately \$25 million activity focused on youth. The purpose of the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity is to enable vulnerable and marginalized 15–29-year-old Malian youth to become educated, healthy, and productive citizens while building their resilience to recurrent crises.

The **USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity** Addendum seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To provide youth with the foundational skills needed to prepare them to become agile learners, able to adapt and learn new things in a rapidly changing environment.
2. To provide youth, particularly adolescent girls, and young women with disabilities, with the skills and knowledge to access sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and practice healthy behavior.
3. To provide youth with the relevant workforce readiness, vocational, and entrepreneurial skills to succeed as market actors in the agriculture and livestock value chains, vocational trades, **and sanitation** and green jobs in their communities.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/Mali anticipates supporting one new cooperative agreement of up to \$25 million over the course of five years.

USAID encourages applicants to become aware of the prohibitions associated with Section 889 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Section (a)(1)(B) and Section (b)(1) of the law. Effective August 13, 2020, 2 CFR 200.216 for U.S. organizations and the mandatory standard provision “Prohibition on Certain Telecommunication and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment (AUGUST 2020)” for non-U.S. organizations prohibits the use of award funds, including direct and indirect costs, cost-share and program income, to procure covered telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment. Applicants should reference the [USAID Section 889 Partner website](#) for more information.

Unless otherwise stated herein, all terms and conditions of the YP2 APS apply.

SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	6
I. INTRODUCTION	6
II. BACKGROUND	8
III. PURPOSE	13
IV. PROGRAMMATIC AND GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS	14
V. APPLICATION PROCESS	19
SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION	22
I. ESTIMATE OF FUNDS AVAILABLE AND NUMBER OF AWARDS CONTEMPLATED	22
II. START DATE AND PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE FOR FEDERAL AWARD	22
III. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT	22
SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION	24
I. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION	24
II. COST SHARING OR MATCHING	24
III. OTHER	25
SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	26
I. AGENCY POINT OF CONTACT	26
II. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	26
III. APPLICATION PROCESS	26
SECTION E: INFORMATION ON THE REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS	29
I. REVIEW OF CONCEPT NOTES	29
II. MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA AND CONSIDERATIONS	29
III. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	30
SECTION F: INFORMATION ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF FEDERAL AWARDS	33
I. FEDERAL AWARD NOTICES	33
II. TYPE OF AWARD	33
III. AWARD DISCRETION	33
IV. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON AWARD ADMINISTRATION	33
SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDED AGENCY CONTACT(S)	35

SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum is to enable vulnerable and marginalized 15 - 29 years old Malian youth to become educated, healthy, and productive citizens while building their resilience to recurrent crises. The USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity should focus on basic education, workforce development, media literacy to counter disinformation, youth entrepreneurship, and reproductive health.

The USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To provide youth with the foundational skills needed to prepare them to become agile learners, able to adapt and learn new things in a rapidly changing environment.
2. To provide youth, particularly adolescent girls, and young women with disabilities, with the skills and knowledge to access sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and practice healthy behavior.
3. To provide youth with the relevant workforce readiness, vocational, and entrepreneurial skills to succeed as market actors in the agriculture and livestock value chains, vocational trades, and green jobs in their communities.

At the end of the five-year activity, USAID/Mali expects that:

1. Youth will have improved their literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills.
2. Youth will have developed the critical thinking skills to discern online disinformation.
3. Youth will have increased knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, family planning, marriage, and countering gender-based violence.
4. Youth will have reduced vulnerability to health risks of gender-based violence, early pregnancy, and marriage; and
5. Youth will have increased access to market relevant workforce and entrepreneurship skills and employment services.

Because the Activity is aligned with, and an Addendum to the YP2 APS, it will contribute to the Agency's efforts to mainstream youth in development using a Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach. The Activity should engage youth as partners and leaders, as well as integrate a holistic and cross-sectoral design approach.

USAID seeks to support an applicant with a defined plan to achieve these outcomes to be further developed through co-creation and in consultation with USAID/Mali. USAID seeks to support an implementing partner whose work plan reflects the PYD approach and who can independently identify and address new and impactful interventions with high relevance to the international development community across the spectrum of humanitarian to development contexts. USAID encourages a successful partner to address and build on the current youth demographic trends and the results and lessons learned from previous USAID-funded activities.

USAID encourages approaches that leverage the existing platforms of YouthPower and YouthLead, as well as relevant YouthPower communities of practice and other networks such as Education in Crisis

and Conflict Network (ECCN) and Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies. The USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity awardee is encouraged, when appropriate, to collaborate with other awards that fall under the YouthPower 2 APS umbrella and other USAID Washington-based and country-level mechanisms. USAID also encourages coordination and collaboration with other relevant donor-funded initiatives. The USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity shares the vision and objectives of the *USAID 2018 Education Policy*, *USAID Youth in Development Policy 2022*, the *U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality*, the *U.S. Strategy on Global Women's Economic Security*, and the *2022 Local Capacity Strengthening Policy*. The USAID Civic Education in the Digital Age Primer should be consulted.

This work is also expected to place a strong emphasis on synthesis and dissemination of findings and results from research and learning activities. USAID encourages applicants to include channels for ongoing analysis of results that can be used by worldwide partners in planning future needs in a range of contexts. These channels may also serve to share best practices and lessons learned that will inform future youth programming.

The YP2 APS provides a vehicle for engaging with youth-led and youth-serving organizations, among others, and systems to generate cross-sectoral, positive youth development outcomes. The APS disseminates information to prospective Applicants so they may develop and submit Concept Notes in response to the Addendum and ultimately to be considered for USAID funding.

In publishing the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum, USAID/Mali is soliciting concept notes from interested organizations according to the review attributes listed below.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Mali Context

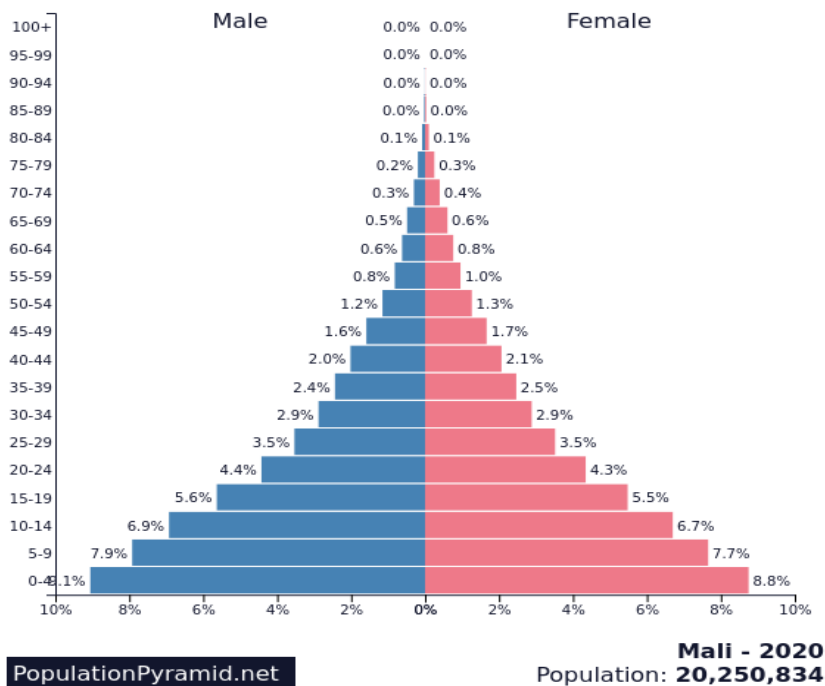
Sub-Saharan Africa's (SSA) youth population is estimated to increase from 195 million in 2015 to 284 million by 2030.¹ Mali is currently home to an estimated 21.5 million inhabitants, more than half of whom are children and youth. In Mali, the total number of youth (15-29) is 3,883,134 among whom 2,236,491 are female and 1,646,643 male². A breakdown of youth age groups between the ages of 15-29 can be found in the population pyramid below³. Despite recent economic growth, Mali remains one of the poorest countries in the world⁴. The situation continues to be aggravated by insecurity throughout the country.

¹ The World Bank. (2015). *The Spirit of Boldness: Lessons from The World Bank's Adolescent Girls Initiative*. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22986>.

² ONEF(Observatoire National de l'Emploi et de la Formation) 2021.

³ <https://www.populationpyramid.net/mali/2020/>

⁴ <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2021-22overviewpdf.pdf>



The hard reality of Mali's population pyramid compels a focus on youth. Thus, USAID/Mali's objectives center on helping youth overcome personal, social, and economic barriers to support PYD and improve socioeconomic development. Barriers include lack of contextually relevant soft skills, a culture of early marriage and pregnancy⁵, a 50% literacy rate⁶, and a lack of means to initiate goals. "Another key feature of Mali's labor force is that 70.4% of workers were either entrepreneurs or independent workers with the remaining 29.6% either being salaried employees, apprentices, or family assistants. For entrepreneurs and independent workers, 43.1% were in the agricultural sector."⁷ Though there is a high percentage of entrepreneurs, there is low technical capacity and entrepreneurial education and culture except among the youth and second-generation entrepreneurs. There is a need for training to develop a culture of entrepreneurship and enhance training. Mali ranked 118 out of 137 countries ranked in the 2018 Global Entrepreneurial Index."⁸

B. Barriers to Economic Empowerment

According to Mali's *Observatoire National de l'Emploi et la Formation* (ONEF), in 2021 the total number of youth in the 15-29 year age range in the target regions was 1,675,960 with an employment rate of 54.4 percent (911,722 employed and 764,237 unemployed). The table below illustrates details by region:

⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8241519/>

⁶ <https://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ml>

⁷ On the functioning of agricultural markets in Mali: Strategies for Development, USAID & CrossBoundary, 2018.

⁸ <https://thegedi.org/global-entrepreneurship-and-development-index/>

	# male	# female	% male employed	% female employed	total %
Ségou	290,258	325,465	76.78	34.46	54.41
Mopti	195,612	248,519	68.77	35.66	50.24
Bamako	235,377	380,729	44.84	32.42	37.17

The job market in Mali includes a modern sector and an unstructured informal sector. Most of the jobs are in the informal agriculture sector where they are being created through small enterprises and self-employment, including both the subsistence and the small commercial farming sectors. Many youths are involved both in family agriculture and small-scale livelihood activities within the informal economy, in rural areas and small towns, and increasingly, in the larger cities such as Bamako. After the farming season, youth tend to migrate to urban areas in search of ‘quick cash.’ Rural youth report being marginalized by their urban peers and report that given the opportunity they would much rather earn viable livelihoods in their home villages.⁹

Global evidence from workforce development activities shows that skills development, including technical and soft skills, have positive impacts on youth employment and earnings.¹⁰ In particular, research has shown the specific importance of soft skills for employment and other positive outcomes for youth.¹¹ An emerging point of agreement is that skills training alone is not sufficient to secure jobs or self-employment for youth. Youth must develop a range of employability skills, capacities, attitudes, and social networks to enable them to transition successfully to self- or salaried employment and technical skills training. According to the USAID Paje Nieta Ex-Post Evaluation, participants selected basic education, entrepreneurial training, and income-generating kits as the most essential components of their livelihoods.¹²

Mali’s development is hindered by low levels of education. Indeed, while access to school globally has increased dramatically in the past 15 years, Mali’s children, and youth face numerous challenges, including poor instruction, low retention rates, and lack of learning materials. As of 2018, the average literacy rate in Mali for people aged 15 and older was 35%¹³ and the total literacy rate of youth 15-24 in Mali is 50.1 percent.¹⁴ Despite a steady increase in primary school enrollment over the last decade, maintaining regular retention remains a major challenge and transition to secondary school remains low. According to UNICEF, 1700 schools were closed as of April 2023 due to conflict in the country¹⁵.

⁹ https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadz230.pdf

¹⁰ Namita Datta, Angela Elzir Assy, Johanne Buba, Sara Johansson de Silva, Samantha Watson, et al. 2018. “Integrated Youth Employment Programs. A Stocktake of Evidence on What Works in Youth Employment programs”. World Bank, Washington, DC.

¹¹ Gates, S., Lippman, L., Shadowen, N., Burke, H., Diener, O., and Malkin, M. (2016). “Key Soft Skills for Cross-sectoral Youth Outcomes.” Accessed at: www.youthpower.org/resources/key-soft-skills-cross-sectoral-youth-outcomes

¹² Final Report: Ex-Post Evaluation of the USAID/Mali Out of School Youth Project (PAJE-NIETA), ix, 2022.

¹³ <https://www.borgenmagazine.com/education-to-children-in-mali/#:~:text=As%20of%202018%2C%20the%20average,students%20enroll ed%20in%20secondary%20education.>

¹⁴ <https://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ml>

¹⁵ UN Education Cluster, Mali, April 2023

Children with disabilities do not often receive an education and opportunities according to a study conducted in Segou.¹⁶ Girls with disabilities often experience heightened discrimination on account of gender and disability, placing them at higher risk of being out of school or dropping out. In the war-torn northern region, children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable and often have no or limited access to education or social protection programs. Unable to overcome these disadvantages and barriers preventing their entry to school and denying their opportunity to learn, this population faces elevated risks of poorer health, lower earnings, and a lifetime of poverty.

Gender inequality in education is also very present in Mali. In 2018, only 43.4 percent of females ages 15-24 were literate¹⁷ and 86 percent of married girls have received no education, compared to 62 percent of unmarried girls¹⁸ which limits their wage-earning opportunities. Girls with higher levels of schooling are less likely to marry as children.¹⁹ Women are also more likely to benefit from soft skills training which can lead to improved equity across multiple outcomes (increased income, business ownership, and employment rates) that can have positive intergenerational spillover effects.²⁰

C. Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) and Harmful Traditions

Young people face challenges accessing SRH services due to physical and structural barriers, including lack of education, poverty, early sexual initiation, provider bias, distance to facilities, misinformation, lack of contraceptive information, lack of youth friendly facilities, prohibitive cost of services and transportation, lack of privacy and confidentiality, and retrogressive practices that include early marriage and gender-based violence (GBV).

In Mali, 16.1 percent of females marry before age 15, and 48.9 percent marry before age 18.²¹ Mali has the fifth highest prevalence of child marriage globally.²² Within Mali, there is some geographic variation: child marriage is mostly concentrated in the rural south-western parts of the country, with the highest proportions of women 18-22 reporting marriage in Kayes (74 percent) and Sikasso (63 percent).²³ In Segou, the proportion of women 20–24 reporting marriage by age 18 is 52.8 percent.²⁴ According to the World Bank, child marriage is associated with restrictive social norms, lower wealth, and lower education levels.²⁵

Barriers to care and information contribute to high fertility rates. In 2020, the fertility rate was 6 children per woman²⁶ and there is a marked disparity in fertility between urban areas and rural areas.²⁷ Moreover, 39 percent of adolescents are already sexually active and 30 percent have had at least one

¹⁶ SIDA, Disability Rights in Mali, 2007, <https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2021/05/07125815/rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-mali.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ml>

¹⁸ <https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/briefingsheets/MALI.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://www.icrw.org/child-marriage-facts-and-figures/>

²⁰ Soft Skills and Youth Workforce Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Study Brief, Dexis Consulting Group, September 2021

²¹ https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS5/West%20and%20Central%20Africa/Mali/2015/Key%20findings/Mali%202015%20MICS%20Key%20Findings%20Report_French.pdf

²² <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-atlas/atlas/>

²³ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/487631467995444023/pdf/106403-BRI-ADD-SERIES-PUBLIC-HNP-Brief-Mali-Profile-CM.pdf>

²⁴ (INSTAT CPS/SS-DS-PF and ICF 2019)

²⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2017/08/22/educating-girls-ending-child-marriage>

²⁶ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?locations=ML>

²⁷ https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/portal-document/DP.FPA_CPD_MLI_8.ENG_.pdf

child.²⁸ Pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death among adolescent girls aged 15-19,²⁹ and child brides face a higher risk of contracting HIV because they often marry an older man with more sexual experience.³⁰

Data from the 2018 Mali Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) highlights the large disparities that exist in the country between men and women. Gender-based violence (GBV) is prevalent, with 49 percent of married women reporting having experienced sexual or physical violence by their spouse. Adolescent female pregnancy rates remain high in Mali especially in the southern region.³¹

Data from the 2018 Mali Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) highlights the large disparities that exist in the country between men and women. Gender-based violence (GBV) is prevalent, with 49 percent of married women reporting having experienced sexual or physical violence by their spouse. Adolescent female pregnancy rates remain high in Mali especially in the southern region.

D. Susceptibilities to disinformation

Malicious and sophisticated actors coordinate online disinformation campaigns to sow discord and create distrust. Disinformation tactics are destructive because they manipulate actors to influence others, stir them to action, and cause harm.³²

Multiple publicly accessible sources describe accelerating rates of mal/mis/disinformation (*hereafter referred to as disinformation*) in Mali's information ecosystem that influence public discussion and threaten to further destabilize the country. Without further attention and action, Malians will continue to be exposed to the ever-increasing flow of disinformation online and offline, which inevitably increases political tensions and possibly threatens progress toward a democratic transition. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the responsible consumption of information by Malian citizens, through programming that supports engagement with citizens to enable them to discern the quality of content they consume and to discourage them from sharing disinformation.

While USAID/Mali has previously supported activities that address many of these challenges, this addendum offers a new, holistic, and cross-sectoral opportunity to address the challenging context faced by Malian youth.

III. PURPOSE

The purpose of the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity is to enable vulnerable and marginalized 15–29-year-old Malian youth to become educated, healthy, and productive citizens while building their resilience to recurrent crises. The USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity should focus on an integrated program that includes basic education, workforce development, media literacy to counter

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/data-stories/adolescent-fertility/>

³⁰ https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/portal-document/DP.FPA_CPD_MLI_8.ENG.pdf

³¹ <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/SR261/SR261.E.pdf>

³² https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/tactics-of-disinformation_508.pdf

disinformation, youth entrepreneurship, and reproductive health. A phased exit plan should be forecasted, and a sustainability strategy developed with activity partners.

This approach could include activities focused on: access to alternative education options, soft skills, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and adolescent pregnancy prevention skills, countering gender-based violence (GBV), media literacy and countering disinformation, and workforce development training to prepare youth for economic opportunities to improve their quality of life.

PYD should be applied throughout to find out the needs, aspirations and challenges facing youth and identify successful, contextually relevant, and scalable soft skills and workforce development models to inform this intervention. The aim is to give marginalized youth the tools, knowledge, and attitudes that provide a basic education, respond to the needs and changes of the Malian economy, and for youth to be involved in developing the interventions. Interventions should incorporate confidence building, self-efficacy, resilience, leadership, decision making, and conflict management skills across a spectrum of possibilities to support and nurture youth. The Activity should enable youth to become educated and productive citizens while improving their employability and integrating positive information and communication technology practices while instilling a sense of responsibility to their community.

The applicant should propose the Theory of Change linked to the Results Framework for the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity.

PROPOSED RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Purpose: Enable vulnerable and marginalized 15–29 years old Malian youth to become educated, healthy, and productive citizens while building their resilience to recurrent crises.

Objective 1: To provide youth with the foundational skills needed to prepare them to become agile learners, able to discern disinformation, and adapt and learn new things in a rapidly changing environment.	Objective 2: To provide youth, particularly adolescent girls and young women with disabilities, with the skills and knowledge to access sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and practice healthy behaviors.	Objective 3: To provide youth with the relevant workforce readiness, vocational, and entrepreneurial skills to succeed as market actors in the agriculture and livestock value chains, vocational trades, and sanitation and green jobs in their communities.
--	--	--

IV. PROGRAMMATIC AND GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Geographic Priority

Geographic overlap is the basis for selecting the locations for implementation, with consideration for synergy and complementarity with other USAID-funded activities and priorities. The activity will focus where other technical sectors are currently implementing activities: Bamako, Mopti, and Segou. Bamako has the highest youth unemployment rate among 15-29 years old standing at 32 percent (12 percent nationally).³³

Programmatic Focus: Youth

The USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity will be implemented through an Addendum to the YP2 APS and will contribute to the Agency's efforts to involve youth in positive, sustainable avenues to address their individual needs and increase their resilience. The Activity should engage youth as partners and leaders, as well as integrate a holistic and cross-sectoral design approach intended to support programming that reflects the following priorities:

- Harnessing youth talents and engaging with youth as partners and leads, providing opportunities to further develop their assets and agency and to contribute positively to their communities.
- Cross-sectoral approach addressing youth needs in multiple sectors (education, reproductive health, economic growth, democracy)
- Capitalize on gains achieved through previous USAID interventions by using lessons learned that proved successful over the past ten years.
- Revive private sector engagement for a more active role in expanding youth employment opportunities.
- Ensure youth are involved in the design approach and undertaking of the Activity.
- Identify local youth-serving and youth-led organizations as sub-partners.

All approaches should be innovative, cost effective, demonstrate how interventions will be sustained after implementation, and address the specific needs of Malian youth. The Activity should consider youths' multi-sectoral needs and seek to address these by implementing interventions across a variety of systems and sectors to promote efficiency and creative synergies that go beyond what any one sector might achieve working in isolation.

Positive Youth Development (PYD)

PYD, as an approach, emphasizes providing support and opportunities for young people in developing a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and empowerment. It transitions away from problem-focused responses toward proactively building skills, fostering healthy relationships, transforming systems, and making youth active partners in development efforts.

³³ILO/APEJ 2021

PYD interventions develop prosocial youth competencies and behaviors, clear and positive personal identities, and positive beliefs in the future. In addition, PYD encourages youth leadership and experiential learning, as well as utilizing adult support and mentorship. Services and opportunities are designed to support young people in developing a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and empowerment.

For youth who have experienced conflict-affected trauma, “positive youth development services, opportunities, and supports are essential in counteracting the effects of trauma to promote healthy brain and social development in adolescence³⁴.” Concept notes should include concrete and practical approaches that will not only address the challenges that youth face to accomplish the activity results but will also involve and support young people in the decision-making, management, and leadership of this activity.

Gender and Inclusive Development

USAID defines inclusive development as “the concept that every person, regardless of their identity, is instrumental in transforming their societies.³⁵” Inequalities between women and men in the Malian society, as in many others, are based on socially constructed roles, influenced by cultures and tradition, and enforced by male-dominant political institutions. While the transitional Government of Mali has made progress in combating discrimination against women in relation to their access to basic social services, in both rural and urban areas and to reduce social inequalities, inequality and discrimination remains a concern. According to the World Disability Report, disabled people constitute 15.5% of Mali's population. Due to social and cultural prejudices, people with disabilities do not have equal access to education, protection, employment, training, and procreation.³⁶

USAID/Mali does not intend to be prescriptive in determining what type of gender or inclusion strategies should be implemented, but it is looking for concept notes that demonstrate a serious commitment to this issue and understand the importance that the U.S. Government places on concretely and visibly supporting inclusive development.

Objective 1: To provide youth with the foundational skills needed to prepare them to become agile learners, discern disinformation, and adapt and learn new things in a rapidly changing environment.

Literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional skills are a necessary foundation to further build upon; however, unfortunately many Malian youth have had to leave school at an early age or have had a low-quality education. This is particularly salient for young women and youth with disabilities. As a result, youth lack basic education as the foundation to further succeed and acquire skills that employers want in their employees, skills necessary to sustain profitable businesses. According to the USAID Paje Nieta Ex-Post Evaluation, participants selected basic education as the most essential component of their livelihoods.³⁷

³⁴ [The Adolescent Brain: New Research and Implications For Young People Transitioning From Foster Care](https://www.usaid.gov/inclusivedevelopment)

³⁵ <https://www.usaid.gov/inclusivedevelopment>

³⁶ <https://gcap.global/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/LNWB-Mali-Country-Report.pdf>

³⁷ Final Report: Ex-Post Evaluation of the USAID/Mali Out of School Youth Project (PAJE-NIETA), ix, 2022.

Among the environmental influences that affect youth development, the fast-evolving array of media and technologies that are part of their lives has profound effects on their behaviors. Indeed, the digital age has made it easy for youth to take in a huge amount of information from a wide array of sources (messages, memes, viral videos, social media, video games, and more). Youth should be literate in the social media domain, able to use it in productive and positive ways building social capital rather than spreading disinformation. Youth should learn how to discern disinformation online effectively and develop critical thinking and effective communication skills allowing them to question and determine the reliability of information on the internet. Improved digital and media literacy will provide youth the necessary skills to distinguish accurate information from inaccurate information to avoid the harmful effects of disinformation.

Expected Results:

- Improved literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills for vulnerable and marginalized out-of-school youth.
- Increased media literacy for youth based on evidence-based best practices in areas including but not limited to inoculation theory, fact-checking, debunking mis/disinformation, critical thinking skills, and storytelling.
- Increased opportunities for youth community engagement.

OBJECTIVE 2: To provide youth, particularly adolescent girls, and young women with disabilities, with the skills and knowledge to access sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and practice healthy behaviors.

In Mali, youth have less access to basic services such as quality education and health, specifically sexual and reproductive health, because of socio-economic and cultural barriers such as provider bias and stigma. Empowering youth, in particular adolescent girls and young women with disabilities, to be more knowledgeable, self-reliant, and independent to make decisions about their health and well-being will increase their resilience. Reproductive health education provides youth with the information and skills they need to manage and negotiate health, childbearing, relationships, and marriage. This includes critical health topics of sexual and reproductive health, family planning, countering gender-based violence, and providing meaningful opportunities to promote positive health behaviors. As youth, in particular adolescent girls and young women with disabilities, are able to practice positive health behaviors, and delay childbearing and early marriage; they are able to stay in school longer, take advantage of out-of-school education opportunities, and have increased access to economic opportunities.^{38 39} The Activity will help youth develop the skills and knowledge needed to reduce their risk of gender-based violence, early pregnancy, and early or forced marriage to improve the trajectory and quality of their life.

³⁸ High Impact Practices in Family Planning (HIPs). Economic empowerment: a pathway for women and girls to gain control over their sexual and reproductive health. Evidence Summary, Washington, DC: USAID; 2017 Jan. Available from <https://www.fphighimpactpractices.org/briefs/economic-empowerment/>

³⁹ Starbird E, Norton M, Marcus R. Investing in family planning: key to achieving the sustainable development goals. Glob Health Sci Prat. 2016;4(2):191-210. <http://dx.doi.org/10.9745/GHSP-D-15-00374>

Expected Results:

- A multi-pronged approach to increase demand for SRH information and services among young people to reduce youth vulnerability to health risks of gender-based violence, early pregnancy, and marriage.
- Barriers to accessing quality youth friendly SRH services decreased.
- Increased knowledge about and practice of healthy behaviors related to sexual and reproductive health, family planning, marriage, and countering gender-based violence.

Objective 3: To provide youth with the relevant workforce readiness, vocational, and entrepreneurial skills to succeed as market actors in the agriculture and livestock value chains, vocational trades, and green jobs in their communities.

A combination of soft and technical/vocational skills training within a package of career guidance, experiential learning, mentoring, and entrepreneurship start-up kits can be an effective approach to obtain employment. Private sector linkages and follow-up services for youth are essential so that you can put their skills to work.

Although many youth prefer wage jobs because of their stability, youth who are interested in starting their own business or already have an existing income-generation activity may lack sufficient information or connections to start or grow their businesses. Youth may lack information about the latest equipment, large companies for which they could be suppliers or distributors, other suppliers and primary producers, and linkages to national or international markets. The activity will support youth to create microenterprises or to acquire a job in agriculture and livestock value chains, vocational trades, and green jobs in their communities.

Previous labor market assessments⁴⁰ have been conducted and should be consulted to ensure the Activity meets the demands of employers to ensure relevant training for vocational trades and green jobs, i.e., carpentry, plumbing, metal working, sewing/tailoring, agricultural products processing and marketing, greenhouses, transformation of plastic waste. “Green jobs can be seen as those that help drive the change for systems to become more inclusive, lower-carbon, and climate-resilient, including but not limited to those requiring less land and water”.⁴¹ Construction, plumbing, electricity, and equipment repair skills are vital for Mali’s agricultural value chains.⁴² There are Malian companies committed to environmentally friendly industry, such as the transformation of plastic waste and producing fire starter bricks from agricultural and forestry waste.⁴³

Expected Results:

Diversified and relevant work readiness development program for youth to transferable skills for their social and professional development

⁴⁰ On the functioning of agricultural markets in Mali: Strategies for Development, USAID & CrossBoundary, 2018.

⁴¹ <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-11/USAID-Climate-Strategy-2022-2030.pdf>, p.45

⁴² On the functioning of agricultural markets in Mali: Strategies for Development, USAID & CrossBoundary, p.65, 2018.

⁴³ Rapport Final Provisoire De l'Étude Sur La Révision de la Contribution Déterminée au Niveau National du Mali, Mali Ministry of Environment, Sanitation, and Sustainable Development, May 2021, p.46

- Improved access to local labor market and value chain information for youth, to facilitate their employment/self-employment.
- Improved linkages between the private sector, training institutions, youth, and communities to enable employment/self-employment opportunities for youth.
- Increased employment/self-employment for youth in agriculture, livestock, vocational trades, and/or green jobs.

V. APPLICATION PROCESS

USAID/Mali has outlined the application process in Section D of this Addendum. Please see the YP2 APS for additional information.

VI. COORDINATION AND COMPLEMENTARITY WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES

The USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity should build upon past and existing USAID programs implemented in Mali and the Sahel. The Activity aims to build upon the good practices and lessons learned from previous initiatives; therefore, applicants should review reports from the following interventions in order to inform the approach:

a) Mali Out of School Youth Project (PAJE-Nieta, 2010-2015) implemented by Education Development Center in the regions of Sikasso and Timbuktu, funded by USAID/Mali's Education and Agriculture and Economic Growth offices in partnership with the Department of State's Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership.

b) Education Recovery Support Activity (ERSA, 2015-2020) focused on expanding access to literacy, numeracy, and life skills for out-of-school beneficiaries 8-24 years old while improving vocational, entrepreneurship, and employability skills of youth 15-24 years old.

c) Mali Girls Leadership and Empowerment through Education Activity (GLEE, 2018-2023) implemented by Winrock enrolled out-of-school adolescent girls in non-formal learning spaces and transitioned beneficiaries on to formal public schools. It includes elements of health and water access/sanitation and hygiene in order to overcome constraints that prevent adolescent girls from continuing their education beyond upper primary years.

d) Inclusive Education for Visually Impaired Primary School Children (2017-2020) was implemented by SightSavers to promote and support access to quality education for visually impaired children in the Bamako, Segou, and Fana regions.

e) Inclusive Education of Deaf and Blind Children into Mainstream Schools (2017-2020) implemented by Humanity and Inclusion focused on promoting inclusion of children with severe sensory (visual and auditory) disabilities.

f) Peacebuilding, Stabilization, and Reconciliation Project (2018-2023) is implemented by Creative Associates. Objective three of this program is youth empowerment and strengthened resilience to violent extremism.

g) Sugu Yiriwa/Sene Yiriwa (2021 - 2026) is implemented in Sikasso, Mopti and Timbuktu. This activity targets 75,000 actors in the market including 30 percent of the youth. The activity creates economic opportunities for youth. The Activity identified on- and off- farm opportunities tailored to youth across the market system.

h) Momentum Private Healthcare Delivery (MPHD)(2020-2025) is implemented in urban and semi-urban settings of Bamako, Kayes, Sikasso, Segou and Mopti. MPHD recognizes the importance of elevating youth voice (including youth parents) in project design and rollout, ensuring especially that health products and services meet the needs of young people including SBCC, approaches for skills transfer to local youth associations.

Coordination and Collaboration with other Development Partners and Stakeholders: USAID/Mali's Education Office developed an activity mapping tool entitled "Qui fait Quoi?" (Who is doing what?) in 2021. This mapping exercise has been an opportunity to meet and discuss with a variety of stakeholders working in the youth sector. Key findings revealed that World Bank, African Development Bank, National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment, Swiss Contact, Danish Embassy, Dutch Embassy and the Alliance CAEB-CORAID, local youth-serving organization such as Think Peace, CAEB, AJA, Youth National Council are all implementing initiatives throughout the country. The main purpose of this mapping was to reveal the existing types of support and identify the gaps or the niche areas, as well as potential for synergy and complementarity with other donors and implementers. It is highly advised that Applicants coordinate and collaborate with other stakeholders where possible and refrain from duplication of efforts.

Partnership with the Government of Mali: The goal of the Government of Mali's Ministry of National Education (MNE) is to ensure the right for all Malian citizens to access quality education and vocational training through an inclusive education system better adapted, coherent and functional. The Applicant should seek partnership with all concerned Ministries (National Education; Youth, Sports and Civic Construction; Women and Children's Affairs; and Vocational Training). Partnership can be extended to other regional level governing entities as well. For vocational training, the MNE's 10-year strategy *Programme Décennal de Développement de l'Education et de la Formation Professionnelle Deuxième Génération* (PRODEC2, 2019-2028) plans to develop the training curriculum aligned with the needs of the economy and local potential and make it an essential pillar for self-entrepreneurship and socio-professional integration. For non-formal education, PRODEC 2 plans to support uneducated and out-of-school young people in alternative forms of learning that guarantee them the skills necessary for better social integration and professionalism.

The transitional Government of Mali initiated plans and policies on youth, professional development, and employment:

- National Policy for Vocational Training July 2009
- PRODEFPE (Le Programme Décennal de Développement de la Formation Professionnelle pour l'Emploi) January 2015
https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/mali_prodefpe_2015_2017.pdf
- National Agency for Employment (ANPE) <https://www.anpe-mali.org/>
- Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (APEJ) <https://apej.ml/>

- Plan Decennal de Developpement Sanitaire et Social 2014-2023 (PDDSS)
http://www.sante.gov.ml/docs/PDDSS_2014-2023.pdf

The Activity aligns with the MNE's PRODEC2, 2019-2028 to promote equitable access to a quality education for all Malian children and youth (Program No. 7.3).

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

I. ESTIMATE OF FUNDS AVAILABLE AND NUMBER OF AWARDS CONTEMPLATED

This program is authorized in accordance with the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. Issuance of this Addendum does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor do those commit the U.S. Government to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of questions, comments, suggestions, concept notes, or an application. Applicants submit Concept Note applications at their own risk, and all preparation and submission costs are at their expense.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/Mali anticipates supporting up to one award of \$25 million over the life of the award. USAID reserves the right to award more or fewer awards than this estimate and is not obligated to make any awards. All terms and conditions of the YP2 APS apply.

II. START DATE AND PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE FOR FEDERAL AWARD

The anticipated period of performance for awards made under the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum to the YP2 APS is five years. The estimated start date will be determined at the time of the award.

III. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

Should a concept note move forward to full application it is anticipated that the Request for Application (RFA) will include the following areas of substantial involvement from USAID. A work plan, key personnel, and AMELP are not required for this concept note stage.

a. Approval of the Recipient's Annual Work Plans:

The initial Annual Work Plan and subsequent work plans must be submitted to and approved by the Agreement Officer's Representative per the description of work plans in "Reporting Requirements".

b. Approval of Specified Key Personnel:

Key personnel as designated in the Section "Key Personnel" must be submitted in writing to the Agreement Officer's Representative for approval.

c. Approval of Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP):

The initial AMELP and subsequent updates to the AMELP must be submitted to and approved by the Agreement Officer's Representative.

d. Approval of Subawards:

The Agreement Officer must approve all subawards and provide concurrence on the substantive provisions of these subawards.

e. Direction and Redirection of Activities:

The Agreement Officer's Representative may direct or redirect activities because of interrelationships with other projects/activities.

IV. AUTHORIZED GEOGRAPHIC CODE

The geographic code for the procurement of commodities and services under this program is Code 935 (any area or country including the cooperating country but excluding foreign policy-restricted countries).

V. NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN USAID AND THE APPLICANT

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Applicant and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity which is authorized by Federal statute. The successful Applicant 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 Applicant 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.

[END OF SECTION B]

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

I. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

U.S. and non-U.S. public, private, for-profit, and non-profit organizations, as well as higher education institutions (especially minority-serving institutions (MSIs) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)), public international organizations, and non-governmental organizations are eligible to submit a concept note. Further, the organization must be a legally recognized organizational entity in the country where it operates.

USAID values the participation of the U.S. higher education community in this activity. U.S. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are key partners for developing solutions to development challenges, by serving as intellectual hubs for knowledge, research support, and innovation. MSIs and HBCUs have played an important role in both American history and global affairs and are uniquely positioned to contribute to youth development efforts.

All interested organizations are restricted to submitting only one Concept Note as the Prime Applicant. If more than one Concept Note is received with the same Prime Applicant, USAID will seek written clarification from the relevant entity regarding which Concept Note should be considered for review. If clarification is not resolved within five (5) business days, all Concept Notes submitted by the Applicant will be deemed ineligible.

Please note that Applicants can serve as sub-awardees or supporting partners on multiple Concept Notes under this Addendum.

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

II. COST SHARING OR MATCHING

USAID has established a required minimum recipient cost share of \$1,250,000 for the award. Such funds may be provided directly by the recipient; other multilateral, bilateral, and foundation donors; host governments; local organizations, communities and private businesses that contribute financially to implementation of activities at the country level. For guidance on cost sharing in grants and cooperative agreements see 2 CFR 200.306.

III. OTHER

An applicant may submit only one application under this Request for Application. Notice of Funding Opportunity. All applications must include at least one local youth organization based in Mali equipped with being able to partner with the prime applicant and achieve the results listed in the Addendum. The prime applicant is expected to build the capacity of the local youth organization in order for that organization to independently manage USAID awards in the future.

[END OF SECTION C]

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

I. AGENCY POINT OF CONTACT

The Agency Agreement Office for this Award is:

USAID/MALI/AAO

Bamako, Mali

bamakoao@usaid.gov

II. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions regarding this USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum should be submitted in writing via email to bamakoao@usaid.gov by the due date and time specified on the cover page of this NOFO. If a full application is awarded, the AO will appoint an Agreement Officer Representative (AOR) at that time to provide technical and administrative oversight of the specific award.

The Agency will furnish promptly to all prospective applicants as an amendment to this addendum any information concerning this Addendum given to a particular prospective Applicant, if that information is necessary in submitting applications, or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective Applicant.

III. APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process for USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum will happen in four phases:

1. An open call for a brief (5-page) Concept Note and Budget.
2. Review of concept notes and Budget by USAID as outlined below.
3. In-person and/or virtual co-creation discussions and/or workshop(s) with selected Concept Note(s), by invitation only: and
4. Submission and review of Full Application(s), by invitation only.

The overall amount required for the Award per objective is described below:

- a. Objective 1: \$16,500,000
- b. Objective 2: \$7,500,000
- c. Objective 3: \$1,000,000

USAID/Mali will be responsible for the review of Concept Notes and Full Applications and management of any subsequent awards issued under this Addendum. Additional information about each phase of the Application and Review process is provided below.

Concept Note Submission

All concept notes must be prepared and submitted in English using the provided template (see Attachment A) on www.grants.gov. Respondents are asked to download the template from grants.gov in Word format, provide their responses in that document, and email a PDF saved copy of the document to bamakoao@usaid.gov with the file name saved as: "Insert File Name." Concept notes

must be five (5) pages or less, with 12-point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins on the electronic equivalent of 8.5 x 11-inch paper. Content above five pages will not be reviewed. Concept notes are due by the due date specified on the cover page of this NOFO. Concept notes submitted after the deadline will not be reviewed.

After a concept note is received, USAID/Mali reserves the right to request supplementary information or pose clarifying questions to any applicant. Requesting supplementary information or posing clarifying questions to one applicant does not obligate USAID to do so with all applicants, nor does it guarantee invitation to submit a full application. USAID will host a two-week Q&A period, where prospective applicants are invited to ask questions until 11:59 p.m. Bamako of the due date specified on the cover page of this NOFO. Questions regarding the substance and objectives of the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum should be directed to bamakoaa@usaid.gov. One week after the closure of the Q&A submission period, USAID/Mali will post written responses on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

Concept Note Review

Concept notes will be reviewed based on the proposed approach, feasibility, and alignment with the above-referenced purpose of the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum. Additionally, concepts should be consistent with USAID legal and policy restrictions, including those set forth in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) and in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

All terms and conditions of the YP2 APS apply.

USAID/Mali anticipates notifying authors of concept notes within 60 days of submission if USAID/Mali wishes to engage in further discussions/co-creation, maintain the application in a pool for potential future engagement, or if USAID/Mali will not pursue further collaboration under the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum based on the submitted concept note.

Co-Creation Process

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/Mali will invite a subset of the most highly qualified concept note applicants to engage in a round of co-creation with USAID/Mali prior to submission of full applications. The aim of the co-creation phase is to further define activity objectives, design interventions, align timelines, and finalize budgets. Through discussions, both the applicant(s) and USAID/Mali may identify additional resources, partners, or strategies necessary to successfully implement the activity. This process may involve extensive discussions with USAID/Washington, USAID Mission staff, or other experts, within or outside of USAID. Co-creation may happen in-person or virtually, through video conference, and phone calls.

By applying to the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum, applicants give USAID/Mali the right to share concept notes with appropriate external partners for the purposes of evaluation or co-creation. All parties privy to the contents of submitted concept notes, whether within or outside of USAID, will be required to keep contents in confidence. Additional information about the co-creation process can be found in the "Co-Creation, Collaboration, and Communication under YP2 APS" section of the umbrella YP2 APS and through USAID's Co-creation Toolkits.

Note: Communication with USAID/Mali during the concept note/co-creation phase should NOT be interpreted as a commitment to funding or guaranteed request for a full application. Any expenses incurred by applicants during this time are solely the responsibility of the applicants, unless otherwise stated in writing by USAID/Mali.

If USAID/Mali decides to continue with the proposed activities following the co-creation phase, USAID/Mali will request a full application from applicants, inclusive of all modifications, expansions, discussions, etc. resulting from the co-creation phase and will provide a full application template for completion.

Full Application

USAID/Mali will only accept full applications from applicants invited to continue in the application process. It is expected that full applications will expand upon their concept note and incorporate any discussions, ideas, plans, feedback or changes from USAID/Mali and other partners discussed during the co-creation phase. **Note: USAID/Mali's Request for Application (RFA) should not be interpreted as a commitment of funds.**

QUESTIONS

Questions regarding the substance and outcomes of the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum should be directed to bamakoaa@usaid.gov. Questions regarding the substance and terms of the YP2 APS umbrella should be directed to YP2APS@usaid.gov and the subject line "Question-UP2 APS Umbrella".

[END OF SECTION D]

SECTION E: INFORMATION ON THE REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

I. REVIEW OF CONCEPT NOTES

Once a Concept Note has been submitted in response to the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum, USAID/Mali will conduct an initial review of the Concept Note using the criteria outlined in the Merit Review Criteria and Considerations section below.

The purpose of the initial review and related communication is to determine whether USAID wishes to engage in further discussions regarding the proposed approach and activities. The initial review and communication will result **in three** outcomes:

- A decision to forego further consideration of the approach proposed in the Concept Note.
- A decision to maintain the application in a pool for potential future engagement.
- An invitation to engage in more in-depth and specific co-creation discussions aimed at further developing the proposed approach and determining whether to request a Full Application.

II. MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA AND CONSIDERATIONS

Concept Notes to the USAID/Mali Shifin ni Tagne Activity Addendum will be assessed according to the following merit review criteria on an adjectival system (Very Good, Satisfactory, Marginal).

- **Criterion 1 - Quality of Partnership and Collaboration Approach for Youth Engagement and Capacity Building**

Extent to which the proposed partnerships, research, projects, or activities describes a commitment to equitable collaboration and deep partnership with youth-led and youth-serving organizations, including marginalized groups as defined by the reference to [ADS 201 Additional Help](#), at every stage of the concept development, activity design, and implementation; proposes appropriate, inclusive, equitable, and effective capacity building strategies for youth-serving and youth-led organizational partners; and demonstrates partner commitment to proposed collaboration(s), including a brief synopsis of how each partner will engage within the partnership.

NOTE: If a Concept Note does not demonstrate strong/significant engagement and collaboration with youth-led and youth-serving organizations, the Concept Note will be deemed ineligible.

- **Criterion 2 - Technical Merit Including PYD Approach and Alignment with USAID Programming Priorities**

Extent to which the proposed partnerships, research, projects, or activities and PYD Approach align with USAID Strategies and Policies, particularly the Youth in Development Policy and reflects youth's cross-sectoral needs; ensures effective youth engagement; demonstrates relevant technical expertise in PYD programming; and proposes effective approach(es) to achieving objectives/outcomes that are technically sound, well-defined, and achievable.

- **Criterion 3 - Sustainability of Anticipated Outcomes and Impact**

Extent to which the proposed partnerships, research, projects, or activities demonstrates contribution to sustainable outcomes beyond the lifetime of the award; demonstrates engagement with the private sector and leverages new or existing resources; and proposes an evidence-informed plan for analyzing, synthesizing and disseminating data and findings that will inform ongoing and future programming and contribute to sustainable outcomes and impact; and contribute to evidence and learning on PYD.

Note: The inclusion of a minimum \$1,250,000 in cost share, as described on page 22, is required.

Note: More comprehensive information regarding the application and review processes (including concept note submission, co-creation, full application, and merit review stages) can be found in the umbrella YP2 APS, located at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Applicants are advised to refer to both the umbrella APS and this addendum in preparing concept notes and full applications, as applicable.

III. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Applicants should ensure that their concept note is aligned with USAID strategies, policies, and priorities, such as the [USAID Youth in Development Policy](#), [USAID Education Policy](#), [USG International Basic Education Strategy](#), [USG Global Water Strategy](#), [Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance](#), [USAID Global Health Research and Development Strategy](#), [President's Plan for AIDS Relief \(PEPFAR\) 3.0](#), [Children in Adversity](#), [USG Global Food Security Strategy](#), [USG Feed the Future Initiative](#), and [Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy](#).

Private Sector Engagement

The Malian private sector is large, diverse, and encompasses businesses run by both individuals and small/medium enterprises. The market is largely informal and not state controlled. However, there is an opening for collaboration to 1) assess growth across the sector, 2) plan and deliver relevant skills to meet the needs of employers, and 3) empower beneficiaries to find a sustainable livelihood. While the youth unemployment rate continues to grow, it is difficult for employers to find qualified workers with the right skills.

Previous USAID/Mali investments trained youth and established connections with the private sector; however, the importance of considering the market demand for certain skills has become more apparent. Former collaboration focused mainly on capacity building of youth, but now the private sector must play a more integral role in advancing sustainable livelihoods for Malian youth. Past experience with the private sector also shows that early consultation is key to garnering the interest of those who want to support youth. Applicants should propose approaches that demonstrate collaboration, use feedback loops, reflect gender considerations, and can prove sustainable. Partnerships should emerge that help beneficiaries reach their highest potential.

Inclusion and Gender

USAID/Mali's Gender Analysis identified gender gaps to be reduced throughout our interventions. Promoting gender equality and advancing the status of women and girls is vital to achieving USAID's development objectives. It is USAID policy that all activities mainstream and integrate gender into their interventions. Therefore, it is expected that all interventions will demonstrate compliance with USAID

Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy ADS [205](#) regulations and explicitly support the gender policies and strategies of the United States and Mali. Gender-based violence and early, forced marriage are of particular concern, with many forms of violence perpetrated against young women. Major cultural constraints continue to place obstacles in the way of many young people reaching their full potential.

USAID encourages gender equality and inclusion of marginalized populations to be addressed and integrated within program activities in every technical sector. While the APS and this addendum refers to the term “youth” throughout the document, it encompasses the notion of inclusion and gender differentiation along the lines specified in [USAID Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy](#) and the [United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally 2022](#). USAID supports youth programming that is inclusive, equitable, and gender responsive.

Universal Design for Learning

The Activity should approach all interventions using principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).⁴⁴ UDL is a research-based set of principles to guide the design of learning environments that are accessible and effective for all. UDL is based upon the premise that all children and youth learn differently and as a result, the activity needs to provide learners with pathways to (1) be engaged, motivated and to learn through multiple means, (2) receive information in various ways, and (3) express their learning in multiple ways.

Digital Integration

USAID/Mali conducted a Digital Ecosystem Assessment which provides guidance on how the Mission can integrate digital programming. The transitional Government of Mali’s Digital Agenda (Mali Numerique 2020) plans to invest in digital literacy, and one of the actions is to develop a digital learning program for marginalized groups. This represents a strong need in the country and a potential opportunity for collaboration. Digital literacy is an entry point for how to use social media, [countering disinformation](#), influencing adoption of innovative tools and services that expand economic opportunities, and diversifying ways to reach marginalized groups.

Sustainability

Sustainability needs to be a guiding principle and objective of the Activity. Consistent with Program Cycle principles defined in [ADS 201.3.1.2](#), all interventions of the new activity will be designed to achieve clear and measurable results, but also be aimed at strengthening local systems so that local actors continue to sustain key results after the activity ends. Strategically, the Activity outcomes will be best achieved within a country context by building local ownership and fostering partnerships across organizations and sectors. The Activity should be designed to align with the priorities of local actors, leverage local resources, and increase local implementation over time to sustain positive changes. Where practical and feasible, potential Applicants should use local systems, help build the capacity of partner government service providers, leverage USAID’s influence and convening power, facilitate local

⁴⁴ Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. UDL’s goal is to support learners to become “expert learners” who are purposeful and motivated, resourceful and knowledgeable, and strategic and goal driven. Instead of changing the learner, UDL aims to change the design of learning environments to reduce barriers so that all learners can engage in rigorous, meaningful learning. The UDL Guidelines provide a set of concrete suggestions that can be applied to any discipline or domain to ensure that all learners can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities.

service delivery, and mobilize domestic resources. This could involve direct support to local youth-led and youth-serving organizations, as well as government and non-government institutions, agencies, or regional associations. This may also involve partnering with the private sector to: 1) ascertain problems and issues that warrant attention; 2) mobilize and apply private sector expertise, capabilities, and resources; and 3) build a robust development cooperation between targeted sectors and industry. A phased exit plan should be forecasted, and a sustainable strategy shared with Malian partners.

Climate Change

Mali's landlocked geography and climate-sensitive economy render the country among the most vulnerable to climate stress. A recent Climate Risk Management (CRM) analysis helped to identify potential climate risks that could affect implementation of this activity. For example, severe conditions such as drought, flooding, and unpredictable rainfall amounts can impact agricultural and pastoral productivity. It could also reduce the willingness of private sector partners to collaborate with youth, even when they are trained in agriculture production. Mitigation measures should be considered that can work around these risks and challenges.

[END OF SECTION E]

SECTION F: INFORMATION ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF FEDERAL AWARDS

I. FEDERAL AWARD NOTICES

The USAID Agreement Officer (AO) is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds. Applicants are prohibited from charging or incurring costs to the proposed award prior to receipt of either a fully executed award or a specific, written authorization from the AO. USAID will administer awards in accordance with Parts 700 and 200 of Title 2 of the CFR, and Standard Provisions for U.S./non-U.S. organizations.

II. TYPE OF AWARD

USAID intends to issue a Cooperative Agreement as a result of this Notice of Funding opportunity, following the co-creation phase and subsequent Full Application, subject to risk assessment and availability of funds.

III. AWARD DISCRETION

USAID reserves the right to make, or not to make, awards through this Addendum to the YP2 APS. The actual number of assistance awards, if any, under this Addendum is subject to the availability of funds, the interests and requirements of USAID, and the viability of Concept Notes/Applications received.

IV. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON AWARD ADMINISTRATION

- ADS Chapter 201 Program Cycle Operational Policy:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/201.pdf>
- ADS Chapter 204 Environmental Procedures:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/204.pdf>
- ADS Chapter 205 - Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/205.pdf>
- ADS Chapter 303 Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations: <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/references-chapter/303mab>
- ADS Chapter 303 Standard Provisions for U.S. organizations: <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/references-chapter/303maa>
- ADS Chapter 318 Intellectual Property Rights: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-01/318_2.pdf
- ADS Chapter 579 USAID Development Data: <https://2012-2017.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/579.pdf>
- Grant and Contract Process: <https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/get-grant-or-contract/grant-and-contract-process>
- USAID Graphic Standards Manual and Partner Co-branding Guide: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/USAID_GSM-02_04_2020.pdf

[END OF SECTION F]

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

G.1. NOFO Points of Contact

The Agreement Officer for this Award is:

Aaron Ruble

Supervisory Agreement Officer

USAID/Mali

C/O American Embassy

Hamdallaye ACI-2000 Street 243, Door 297

P.O. Box 34 - Bamako, Mali

[END OF SECTION G]

END OF APS No:7200AA20APS00007