



Issue Date: November 23, 2022
Deadline for Questions: December 4, 2022, 4:00 PM (Baghdad Time)
Applications Deadline Submission: January 23, 2023
Closing Time: 4:00 PM (Baghdad Time)

Subject: USAID/Iraq Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: 72026723RFA00001

Program/Opportunity Title: Iraq Civil Society Activity

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 98.001

To: All Interested Respondents/Parties:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through its Mission in Iraq (USAID/Iraq) seeks applications from eligible applicants to implement the Iraq Civil Society Activity.

USAID intends to make a **single** award to the responsible applicant whose application best meets the objectives of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) based on the merit review criteria described herein and subject to a risk assessment. Eligible parties interested in applying are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements, and selection process. While one award is anticipated as a result of this NOFO, USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Subject to funds availability, the anticipated funding for the Iraq Civil Society Activity is \$25 million over a five-year period, including a minimum of \$5 million for a subgrants component and \$5 million for a Rapid Response component. Final authority for assistance awards resides with the USAID/Iraq Agreement Officer.

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

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

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifiers and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements. The registration

process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the process, if not registered.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section D. The deadline for questions is shown above. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted on www.grants.gov. Eligible parties interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements, and selection process.

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

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

**Zachary
Clarke**

Digitally signed by
Zachary Clarke
Date: 2022.12.09
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Zachary Clarke
Regional Agreement Officer

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SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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

Iraq Civil Society Activity

Goal [Note to applicants, this subsection will be included in the final award]:

The USAID funded Iraq Civil Society Activity will increase citizen engagement in the public sphere, especially among women and youth, while supporting civil society organizations (CSOs) to connect to and empower citizens and other CSOs. The expected activity result is a relevant, active, resilient, and inclusive civil society sector that more effectively fosters change towards an increasingly equitable and democratic Iraq.

The Iraq Civil Society Activity (“The Activity”) has three main objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Increase the engagement and agency of citizens, especially women and youth, to actively contribute to positive change on shared citizen-identified priorities, as well as on priority sectors, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, and gender and youth inclusion.
- **Objective 2:** Increase sustainability and resilience of civil society organizations (CSOs) to represent citizens’ interests and advance community-led development.
- **Objective 3:** Strengthen a public sphere that fosters the active and inclusive participation of civil society in public discourse and citizen-driven change, including among marginalized groups.

Background:

USAID partners with Iraq in its transition to a stable, democratic state. This transition has been challenged by persistent conflict, entrenched elites, a culture of corruption, and civil society organizations struggling to effectively play their role as a bridge between Iraq’s people and its government.

Iraq’s citizens seeking change have taken to the streets in successive protest movements beginning in 2015 and reaching a fever pitch in 2019. “The constitution guarantees freedom of assembly, but protesters are frequently at risk of violence or arrest, and these dangers became acute during the 2019 protest movement.” Recent polling across the region has indicated a waning public support for “democracy” and general indifference to outright support for more authoritarian approaches to governance¹.

Support for civic action and increased, more effective, and credible civil society engagement is the primary mechanism for countering this loss of hope and channeling the frustration into more positive pathways for change. Iraqi civil society requires additional support to represent citizens’ interests and effect change. While street protest movements and elections are important channels for citizens seeking change, citizens have other avenues that are currently underutilized and underdeveloped. Young Iraqis who led the protest movements in 2019 have remained active in their communities, focusing on issues of environment, community development, and government

¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-62001426>

accountability, and capitalizing on that energy through direct support to civic actors provides USAID an opportunity to mitigate democratic backsliding in Iraq, as well as advance sectoral priorities.

However, Iraqi civil society has limited capacity to make this change. In addition, funding from USAID has been reduced and targeted in other areas in recent years. The last USAID country-wide civil society specific award was from 2012-2015. This paralleled a reduction in donor funds for all activities in Iraq, including civil society. From 2014 to date, most funding for civil society has focused on the distribution of humanitarian aid, stabilization programming, and some reconciliation work in select geographic areas. Very little of the current available funding includes CSO institutional capacity or organizational resilience building support, advocacy skills building, or support to CSO networking. There has been little funding for CSOs for other critical skills that help develop legitimacy, such as developing and engaging with constituencies to support their missions, increasing citizen engagement to make sustainable changes in public life, engaging the government, and networking.

Additionally, while the role of civil society has grown since 2003, the government has recently restricted space for civil society. In addition, citizen engagement in public life and/or constructive interaction with government is at a minimum; and, in recent elections, even voter turnout fell notably. Citizens need more access to information and there is a dearth of opportunities for constructive citizen-government dialogue. If access to information and dialog is increased, trust by the government in the role of civil society and its vital role in democratic governance will improve.

Activity Problem Statement:

Iraqi civil society has suffered shocks and stressors that have limited its capacity and resilience to effectively aggregate, network, and represent the interests of all citizens and limited citizen engagement in the public sphere. Donors' shifting priorities to shorter-term programming, particularly humanitarian assistance, broke early, post-2003 momentum in the growth of CSOs' advocacy, networking, and ability to foster change, and left Iraq's CSOs with a credibility problem due to a perception the organizations lacked focus and simply chased funds. Although some organizations have survived shifting funding priorities and political winds, it is clear that without an active civil society, gaps in citizens' understanding, skills, and avenues necessary to pursue positive change through the public sphere other than protest movements and elections have grown. As such, reinvigorated work with civil society to generate interest in and lay the groundwork for more citizen participation is necessary for civic initiatives to effectively represent citizen needs and hold the government accountable.

Marginalization of specific population groups further contributes to eroding trust in government. These groups include women and girls, youth and religious/ethnic minorities. Marginalized groups are increasingly and systematically excluded from government and decision making, both locally and at the national level. Although mitigated by the fall of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), these groups still face physical insecurity and disenfranchisement.

As outlined in USAID's gender analysis released as part of a May 2022 [Request for Information](#), Iraqi women and girls face particular challenges stemming from years of disenfranchisement and marginalization. Their role in civil society has been a bright spot in terms of political participation, leadership, and engagement. However, challenges remain, including online harassment and physical threats, particularly for women representing minority groups or working in more conservative areas of the country. Lack of appropriate legal frameworks or

implementation of existing legal protections hinders full female participation in civic life. The cycle of protests that began in October 2019 featured women not just as participants but as leaders in the movement. Through their participation, women focused attention on issues of equal access to social and economic justice. For the first time in current history, women's voices on these issues were not only raised, but raised in an organized and forceful manner. However, this momentum needs to be followed through and combined with support from the broader community, particularly men, to ensure calls for change are realized.

Youth in Iraq have played a key role in civic action, including leading protests, and calling for widespread reform to improve governance, the rule of law, employment opportunities, and access to public services. With nearly 60 percent of the population under the age of 25, this demographic represents one of the largest age groups in Iraq. Unfortunately, this population remains systematically excluded from politics, and have experienced significant trauma from conflict and the breakdown of traditional, societal frameworks. Across the country, young people are disillusioned and mistrustful of political institutions, in particular local/municipal government bodies. In a 2021 USAID survey, only 6 percent of young people surveyed (nearly 800 across the country) said they trusted local government.² Moreover, only 30 percent of respondents believed their community was supportive of young people participating in local politics. Despite these statistics, young people remain engaged. In the same survey, 55 percent noted that they had contacted a local official at least once. This is a high level of engagement when compared to other countries in the region, such as Lebanon, where only 30 percent of youth made contact. A whole-of-community approach is critical for strengthening the enabling environment and support for young people in Iraq to participate in civic and political life, and be critical agents of change to help move an issue from protest to policy.

Given the political environment in Iraq since 2019, civil society has a unique opportunity to engage the government, particularly at the local level, on issues of critical interest to Iraqi citizens including reliable public services, prudent and impartial governance, and an end to corruption. Thematic issues such as environment/climate change, gender based violence and community development are other areas of concern to Iraqis that throughout USAID consultations in support of the design of this program were expressed consistently by existing civil society organizations and community leaders. Marginalized groups are increasingly and systematically excluded from government and decision making both locally and at the national level. Although the fall of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) led to a more stable security situation in the country, citizens and particularly marginalized citizens still face physical insecurity and disenfranchisement. The sense of marginalization has expanded among civil society activists and social media influencers who demand change and inclusion. Support for their efforts will keep democratic engagement alive at a volatile time in Iraq's political development.

Theory of Change and Activity Objectives:

The Iraq Civil Society Activity will empower Iraqi citizens, citizen groups, and civil society organizations to increase their engagement in the public sphere while enhancing their skills to seek and affect meaningful change in their communities and society. The Activity will also provide tailored capacity building to cover any skill gaps that civil society may need - preferably

2

<https://www.youthpower.org/sites/default/files/YouthPower/files/resources/DRG%20Youth%20Civic%20Engagement%20Brief%20YP2LE.pdf>.

through networks of CSOs in Iraq and/or the region acting as “incubators” for this skills building.

The theory of change is as follows:

IF civic initiatives, especially with marginalized communities, effectively engage and empower citizens to identify, prioritize, advocate for, and contribute to shared priorities of their communities; **AND**

IF civil society is more capable and resilient and CSOs work together more effectively to inclusively represent citizen interests

THEN civic initiatives more accurately reflect citizen needs;

AND CSOs will have broader citizen support and increased credibility to advocate for change in accordance with local priorities;

Administrator Power has emphasized “localization” as a priority for USAID programming across sectors. USAID has defined “localization” along four principal lines of effort that include channeling a larger portion of funding directly to local civil society, business, and other institutions that are supported by and accountable to local communities. The Agency has a mandate to shift not only funding but also to put local partners in the lead to co-design projects, set priorities, drive implementation, and evaluate impact of aid programs. Grounded in these principles, the Iraq Civil Society Activity has 3 defined objectives:

Objective 1: Increase the engagement and agency of citizens, especially women and youth, to actively contribute to positive change on shared citizen-identified priorities.

Under Objective 1, the Expected Results of the Activity are:

1. Improved civic knowledge and practices that help citizens forge a shared vision of democratic processes and how to use them to seek change.
2. Increased women’s participation and leadership in civil society, and the amplification of their voices.
3. Increased participation of targeted marginalized groups, including youth, in civil society, and the amplification of their voices.

Under this objective, the Activity will increase the ability of individual citizens, and informal citizens’ groups not organized as registered CSOs, to engage productively in public life, including identifying local challenges and providing suggested solutions. The Activity will give citizens a better understanding of how they can improve their local communities through locally driven approaches to identifying, addressing, and sustaining citizen initiatives. There is a natural overlap between this objective and objective 2 in that the Recipient will engage Iraqi CSOs to act as implementing agents/partners and leaders in this community-driven work stream, from design through to monitoring and evaluation phases.

Objective 2: Increase sustainability and resilience of civil society organizations (CSOs) to represent citizens’ interests and advance community-led development.

Under Objective 2, the Expected Results of the Activity are:

1. CSOs more effectively network and build coalitions to improve advocacy and institutional effectiveness.

2. CSOs increasingly hold local and national policymakers accountable through new and creative approaches that mobilize citizen engagement.
3. CSOs are able to advocate effectively to create positive change on behalf of their constituents.
4. CSOs are increasingly able to adapt to Iraq's dynamic context and adjust their approaches to adapt to challenges like climate change, gender equality setbacks, and/or changes in their operating environment.

Under this objective, the Activity will increase the skills of CSOs to mobilize citizens and build constituencies around issues of shared interest as well as more effectively lead advocacy campaigns for change, which will simultaneously enhance their ability to network with one another to amplify their voices and those of the citizens they represent. Much work has previously been done to develop the capacity of CSOs in Iraq; however, this Activity must employ a new approach of building CSO networks that are: focused on specific activities/issues; build the capacity of their members in line with USAID Capacity Building 2.0 approach³; and seek to build longer-term sustainability. The Activity will build systematic capacity that goes beyond just administrative, financial, and procurement systems, but digs deeper into monitoring, evaluation, learning (MEL), strategy development, fundraising, strategic communications, advocacy, and organizational resilience-building capacities. This broadened approach will allow CSOs to better weather unexpected shocks to the external environment.

Under this objective, the Activity will create and implement a demand-driven small, sub-grants component valued at \$1 million annually to enable local sustainability, and shift more leadership, ownership, decision-making, and implementation to local groups. A co-creation and co-design process that includes the implementing partner/s, USAID and other stakeholders as required and will include joint development of focus and themes regarding calls for proposals, consultation with local partners and review of proposals, is anticipated. In line with USAID's emphasis on localization, the Activity will support the organic and locally led priorities of Iraq's CSOs through these small sub-grants while also presenting opportunities to address specific issues and priorities important to USAID, including but not limited to climate change, transparency, accountability, gender inclusion, and youth inclusion. ~~The sub-grants component will not include funds for renovation, rehabilitation, or construction related activities.~~

Objective 3: Strengthen a public sphere that fosters the active and inclusive participation of civil society in public discourse and citizen-driven change, including among marginalized groups.

Under Objective 3, the Expected Results of the Activity are:

1. Improved timely and reliable access to information by citizens, including through digital technologies, resulting from CSO and citizen advocacy.
2. Increased use of public information by civil society and marginalized groups to inform citizens and increase government transparency.
3. Greater public understanding of the role of civil society and CSOs in democratic governance.
4. Increased opportunities for safe, constructive citizen-government interaction to affect community-driven change.

³ <https://usaidlearninglab.org/resources/capacity-20#:~:text=Capacity%202.0%20focuses%20on%20adaptive,just%20at%20the%20organizational%20ones.>

Under this objective, the Activity will work with civil society to improve timely and reliable access to government information by citizens, create information resources to expand information and evidence available to the government for improved policy and program implementation, and increase public awareness and citizen engagement on critical community and national level concerns. The Activity will support CSO's in developing coherent and effective communication strategies that lead to enhanced public understanding of citizens' role in governance as well as the role of civil society in supporting civic action for better governance to improve the perception and credibility of Iraqi civil society. Expected result 4, focused on increased opportunities for citizen-government interaction presents a natural overlap with USAID's governance-focused activities and requires the Activity to collaborate closely with that implementing partner. Under this Activity however, USAID is focused on CSO-driven and citizen-driven approaches to engagement with government and technical approaches to increasing opportunities for this interaction, especially considering the violence citizens have experienced and witnessed during the street protest movements.

Programming Approach - Refine And Implement/Inception Phase

As the situation on the ground in Iraq continues to be dynamic, new challenges or new opportunities arise regularly, and may arise between the design and launch of this activity. The nature of the Iraqi environment requires shorter planning cycles, active monitoring and robust feedback systems that allow managers to adapt implementation at every stage. To identify challenges and allow flexibility and adaptation at an early stage of implementation, the Activity must apply a Refine and Implement (R&I) approach for an initial ***four-month refinement phase***. During this period the partner will initiate the co-creation process with USAID that will characterize implementation through the life of the activity and culminate in the first year's implementation plan, with a draft life of activity implementation plan. USAID recommends that potential applicants review and utilize USAID's Civil Society Assessment Tool to inform their approach toward this analytical and planning phase. Furthermore, although typically an implementation strategy and anticipated results established at the application stage will likely differ from the time of award, in the Iraq context implementation plans may be constrained to carry out what was initially envisioned. In response to this tension, a Refine and Implement (R&I) approach will be applied to this activity. As such in the initial four month R&I period the implementing partner can carry out an inception/refinement phase to its proposed technical, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation plan, that should include a landscape analysis, political economy analyses and/or other sectors or issue specific research and assessment components. The R&I period will also be extremely important to support the localization approach through deep dives into communities, to identify community leaders, women-led, youth-led or youth-focused, and marginalized community leaders, groups, and/or issue-focused organizations with whom to partner. As USAID requires more localization in all its awards, we recognize that, particularly in non-permissive environments, the necessary relationships to truly localize and co-design activities in partnership with local communities, groups, leaders, and CSOs, takes time. This inception phase is that time.

Flexible Activity Modifier Component for Rapid Response

This component is focused on identifying and seizing opportunities in the sector as an adaptive, collaborative program management tool. Rapid response actions must be targeted to opportunities that emerge or may fill a gap in technical expertise or information required to

achieve the objectives of the program. This requires co-creation and collaboration with USAID prior to invocation and will be initiated with agreement of USAID. The purpose of this component is to address the variabilities of the operational context in Iraq which requires programmatic flexibility particularly given the volatility of the political environment. With approval of the Agreement Officer, it is envisioned this rapid response mechanism will provide USAID/Iraq the ability to support leaders, movements and other emerging opportunities and evolving needs within the objectives of the program. It could also be used to scale and expand efforts. As needed and as directed by the Agreement Officer, in consultation with the USAID AOR, the awardee will present unique opportunities for assistance programming related to the program objectives. The cost line item will allow the release of rapid response funds to the Applicant and its partners for immediate activities to seize identified opportunities. Subject to the availability of additional funding, USAID may choose to invoke the activity modifier for rapid response to implement additional interventions at any point in the life of the activity. Any modification of the agreement is anticipated to include a process of co-creation and co-design, to include joint development of concepts for the modifier alongside USAID and partners. Full concepts for the modifier for rapid response activities will be developed prior to the modification of the anticipated award through a revised Activity Description and detailed budget submitted by the Applicant. The expenditure of funds for the activation of the modifier or rapid response component, will be dependent on review and approval by the AOR and AO in consultation with the MEO, of the revised Activity Description and detailed budget.

The topline figure to be set-aside for the program modifier is \$1 million per year (\$5 million total under the total estimated annual cost of the program); however, USAID recognizes the fluid operating environment and future modifications may be possible if they fit within the scope of the defined activity objectives, are sufficiently justified and according to the availability of funds. Any such modification would be at the discretion of the Agreement Officer and consider regulatory and policy requirements for competition.

Other Requirements

Collaborate, Coordinate, and Share Data with USAID’s third-party monitoring (TPM) contractor: The Recipient must collaborate, coordinate and share monitoring, evaluation, research, analysis, and reporting data and products with USAID/Iraq’s TPM contractor for verification, feedback, reporting and Collaboration, Learning and Adaptation (CLA) purposes.

Partnerships: USAID strongly encourages applicants to engage Iraqi and international groups that bring complementary capacity in their submissions.

Guiding Operational Principles

Inclusive Development/ Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) principles:
The Recipient must incorporate the following principles into the design and measurement of activities:

Inclusive Development: Inclusion is one of USAID’s core values. USAID promotes a nondiscriminatory and inclusive approach to development that ensures that all people – including those who face discrimination and thus may have limited access to a country’s benefits, legal protections, or social participation (including, but not limited to LGBTQI+ people, persons with disabilities, religious/ethnic minorities, women and girls, youth in underprivileged communities) – are fully included and can participate in and benefit from development processes and activities.

Youth Engagement Policy: USAID's Youth Policy outlines a conceptual approach to youth in development and provides guiding principles and operational practices in support of USAID's efforts to mainstream youth in development, carry out more effective programs, and elevate youth participation. If youth and women continue to feel disassociated from the democratic government, and are unable to secure gainful employment and/or receive a living wage, then they will continue to lose confidence in Iraq's democratic development.

Gender Inclusion: The 2020 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy affirms USAID's vision of a prosperous and peaceful world in which women, girls, men, and boys enjoy equal economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights and are equally empowered to secure better lives for themselves, their families, their communities, and their countries. Advancing gender equality is at the core of USAID's efforts to promote greater stability and prosperity, and support a more transparent and participatory democratic process in Iraq. The Recipient must systematically consider gender aspects and implications of specific interventions and seek opportunities to promote women participation in targeted interventions. To that end, data collected for monitoring and evaluation purposes must be gender disaggregated and other monitoring and evaluation tools, including surveys, must include questions to elicit information enabling differentiation of impact based on gender. In May 2022 USAID/Iraq released a draft gender analysis focused on elections and political process which can be found [at this link](#).

Sustainability, Legacy, and Localization

The Applicant's approach to sustainability of the goals and objectives is a key consideration for USAID. To the extent possible, reasonable, and within the bounds of Do No Harm and conflict sensitivity - recognizing the diversity and societal divisions in Iraq - the Recipient must engage Iraqi CSOs with existing capacity and competitive advantage to implement the activity and to maximize skills transfer and direct relationship building across CSOs throughout Iraq, and between Iraqi CSOs and Iraq's citizens. The Recipient must build the institutional capacity of CSOs that it works with while also increasing the resilience of Iraq's civil society. The aim is to foster partnerships and to introduce tools and mechanisms in a manner that will continue to develop beyond the timeframe and life of the activity. The Activity's interventions may build on existing opportunities and support target entities that are committed to investing in and receiving tailored assistance to improve their technical, organizational, as well as partnership and alliance-building skills to engage in inclusive development. To further sustain the outcomes of this Activity and foster local ownership, interventions should not only focus on building and strengthening the capacity of local partner CSOs, but also fostering the motivation to utilize the new knowledge, skills, and the benefits of broader collaboration and coordination. Additionally, the Recipient is required to work with local partners to understand their legal parameters and maximize the resources available to them through networking to continue and build on the interventions beyond the life of the Activity. Other donors and the private sector could play a role in this space.

Link to USAID's Local Capacity Development (LCD) Policy

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/LCD_Policy_-_FORMATTED_508_01-11.pdf

Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA)

USAID has put time and effort into building a culture of CLA into its operations. The Recipient must model a CLA culture and integrate that culture into internal processes and in the implementation of activities. A collaborative working relationship between the Recipient and

relevant USAID staff is required and as described above will include aspects of co-creation. Where applicable and appropriate, the Recipient should collaborate with the Mission's other implementing partners, interagency colleagues, and/or other donors. In addition, all products, briefings, and facilitated events should focus on providing recommendations for how the Mission can use that data to make evidence-based decisions and adapt programming as necessary.

USAID defines CLA as a set of practices that help improve development effectiveness throughout activity implementation. Key aspects for ongoing investigation include:

- **Collaborating:** Are we collaborating with the right partners and promoting synergy across USAID activities and activities implemented by others?
- **Learning:** Are we asking questions relevant to improving activity implementation and/or sharing information regarding implementation across audiences who can increase understanding of the effectiveness of implementation?
- **Adapting:** Are we using information gathered through CLA activities to pause, reflect and inform decisions regarding adaptation of the program if necessary?

Flexibility and Adaptability of Activities and Managing Risk:

As Iraq's operational environment shifts frequently, the Activity must be able to operate in a wide range of possible security, economic, and political environments. Applicants should address how they will approach programming under such variable conditions. USAID desires to fund an activity which is adaptive to contextual changes in order to achieve the stated objectives. During implementation of the Activity, plans and methods for assessing, mitigating, and adapting to risk factors should be vetted with USAID and regularly reviewed.

USAID recognizes that risks abound in the Iraq context and as such we expect the grantee to have an approach to implementation that accounts for and mitigates risk to the greatest possible degree. This means risk that program description objectives are not met as well as risk to implementing partners operating in the field. USAID has made the following critical assumptions with respect to the activity's theory of change, and these may serve as a basis for considering risk mitigation efforts.

Activity Level Assumptions:

- The Applicant and its partners have the ability to operate in the field to identify and engage local partners, assess their needs and abilities as organizations, as well as transfer knowledge and skills to them as well as manage a small granting mechanism.
- The Applicant is able to partner with local organizations through sub-awards, within and outside of the small granting mechanism, when appropriate.
- The Applicant and its partners have the ability to track and analyze Iraq's political, social, and economic developments and are willing and capable to engage with the stakeholders and adjust programming accordingly.
- Iraqi CSOs will continue to have the space needed to operate without government interference.
- Iraqi CSOs are willing to work with the United States Government
- The Applicant and its partners have the ability to operate throughout both Federal Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.
- The Applicant and its partners will register with the appropriate local government entities.

[END OF SECTION A]

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

Subject to the availability of funding and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID/Iraq intends to provide **\$25,000,000** in total USAID funding and anticipates supporting one (1) Cooperative Agreement over the course of five (5) years pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity. USAID anticipates an initial obligation of \$7.5M for approximately 18 months of implementation.

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

The overall goal of the Civil Society Activity (“The Activity”) is to increase citizen engagement in the public sphere, especially among women and youth, while supporting CSOs to connect to and empower citizens and one another, thereby enhancing CSO resilience, increasing its credibility and effectiveness. The expected result is a more active and inclusive civil society sector that effectively fosters change and contributes to a more equitable and democratic Iraq. This activity has three main objectives.

- **Objective 1:** Increase the engagement and agency of citizens, especially women and youth, to actively contribute to positive change on shared priorities.
- ~~Increase sustainability and resilience of CSOs to represent citizens’ interests and advance community-led development.~~
- **Objective 2:** Increase sustainability and resilience of CSOs to represent citizens’ interests and advance community-led development.
- ~~Increase the engagement and agency of citizens, especially women and youth, to actively contribute to positive change on shared priorities.~~
- **Objective 3:** Strengthen a public sphere that fosters the active and inclusive participation of civil society in public discourse and citizen-driven change.

Expected Activity Level Results:

- CSOs hold local decision-makers accountable through new and creative approaches that mobilize citizen engagement.
- CSOs effectively aggregate and advocate for the interests and needs of all citizens.
- Formal and informal organizations are able to advocate effectively to create positive change on behalf of their constituents.
- Increased women’s participation in civil society, and the amplification of their voices.
- Increased participation of targeted marginalized groups in civil society.
- Greater public understanding of the role of civil society and CSOs in democratic governance.
- Credibility of CSOs increased among citizens.

USAID/Iraq will request applications from potential recipients in which they describe a results-oriented set of interventions that they propose to perform in support of achievement of the above Objectives.

3. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The period of performance anticipated herein is five (5) years. The estimated start date will be upon the signature of the award, which is anticipated **on or about May 01, 2023**.

4. Substantial Involvement

Consistent with 2 CFR 200.24 Cooperative Agreement and the USAID Automated Directive Services (ADS) 303.3.11 Cooperative Agreements and Substantial Involvement, USAID/Iraq anticipates having substantial involvement throughout the implementation of the Iraq Civil Society Activity.

USAID has designated an Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) for this cooperative Agreement. The role of the AOR is to assist in the programmatic monitoring and administration of the award.

The Agreement Officer (AO) may delegate the approval listed in the items below to the AOR, except for authority to change the program description, the period of performance, the approved budget, and key personnel that require AO approval.

USAID's substantial involvement under the award is expected to be as follows:

1. Approval of Annual Implementation Plans (i.e., work plans);
2. Approval of the detailed Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL Plan);
3. Approval of Key Personnel and any changes in Key Personnel; and
4. Approval of the Recipient's subawards, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.308(c)(6), managed through the award.

5. Title to Property

Property title under the resultant agreement shall vest with the recipient in accordance with the requirements of 2 CFR 200.310-316.

6. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for this program is 937 (the United States, the recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source) for the procurement of commodities and services, per ADS 310.3.1.1.

7. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the Iraq Civil Society Activity which is authorized by Federal statute.

The successful Recipient will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives and the efficient and effective administration of the award through the application of sound management practices. The Recipient will assume responsibility for administering Federal funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreements, program objectives, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award. The Recipient, using its own unique combination of staff, facilities, and experience, has the primary responsibility for employing whatever form of sound

organization and management techniques may be necessary in order to assure proper and efficient administration of the resulting award.

8. Selection of Instrument

Beginning in February 2022, USAID conducted a series of consultations with Iraq's non-state actors, CSOs, formal and informal groups, as well as other donors and international implementing organizations operating in the sector. The outcome of the consultations and corresponding analysis of both consultations, research documents, data, and other information was the development of the concept for the new Civil Society Activity. The elements of this concept support that the Agency's programmatic needs would be best met by providing funds and/or in-kind support to an implementing organization, where the primary beneficiary is the recipient organization, who then provides a benefit to third party civil society organizations throughout Iraq. The activity will require a flexible approach as it will prioritize experimentation, particularly when supporting any newly emerging civic groups or movements, exploring new ways of supporting existing groups and networks, as well as seeking sustainable funding models that are specific to the Iraq context. Critical to the activity's success will be co-creation approaches and bringing together a wide range of stakeholders to jointly define problems and brainstorm solutions. Given the nature of work with informal entities and groups of citizens seeking to organize around common goals, USAID support should be provided through an assistance mechanism. USAID intends to provide funds to an eligible organization that has experience in the civil society sector.

We are not seeking to contract for supplies or services to be provided to USAID for its direct use or benefit therefore an acquisition mechanism is not appropriate. The principal purpose of the Assistance instrument is to transfer Federal financial assistance to the recipient to carry out in the designated program.

9. Other Information

Award will be made to a responsible Applicant(s) whose Application best meets the requirements of this NOFO and the merit review criteria contained herein. Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an Application. In addition, final award of any resultant award 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, the potential applicant is hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award. The Application is submitted at the risk of the Applicant; all preparation and submission costs are at the Applicant's expense.

[END OF SECTION B]

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SECTION C: APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. **Eligible Applicants**

Eligibility for this NOFO is unrestricted, except that individuals and government entities are not eligible.

The Applicant must have established financial management, monitoring and evaluation processes, internal control systems, and policies and procedures that comply with established U.S. Government standards, laws, and regulations. The successful Applicant(s) will be subject to a positive risk assessment by the Agreement Officer (AO).

A positive risk assessment means that the applicant possesses or has the ability to obtain the necessary management competence to plan and carry out the assistance program to be funded, and that the applicant will practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided by USAID.

2. **Cost Sharing or Matching**

There is no cost sharing requirement anticipated under this award.

3. **Fee/Profit**

While for-profit firms may participate, pursuant to 2 CFR 200.400(g), it is USAID policy not to award Fee/Profit to prime recipients and subrecipients under assistance instruments. However, while Fee/Profit is not allowed for sub-awards, the prohibition does not apply when the recipient acquires goods and services in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317-326, "Procurement Standards." Forgone profit does not qualify as cost-share.

4. **Limitations on submissions**

Each applicant is limited to one Application submission under this NOFO as the prime Applicant. There is no limitation on being included as a potential sub-awardee across multiple applications. The use of exclusive teaming arrangements is discouraged.

5. **Partner Vetting Pre-Award Requirements**

- a. USAID has determined that any award resulting from this assistance request for applications is subject to vetting. An applicant that has not passed vetting is ineligible for award.
- b. The following are the vetting procedures for this request for applications:
 - i. Prospective applicants review the attached USAID Partner Information Form, USAID Form 500-13, and submit any questions about the USAID Partner Information Form or these procedures to the Agreement Officer by the Question and Answer deadline in the RFA.
 - ii. The Agreement Officer notifies the Applicant when to submit the USAID Partner

Information Form. Due to the time frame for making this award and the length of the vetting process, these forms must be submitted as soon as feasible once the individuals are identified. USAID reserves the right to award to the next best applicant if the higher rated applicant's vetting is not completed with enough time to finalize an award.

The designated vetting official is:

Vetting official: Jonathan Hartrey
Email: iraqaidvsu@usaid.gov
(for inquiries only).

- iii. The applicants must notify proposed subrecipients and contractors of this requirement when the subrecipients or contractors are subject to vetting.

Note: Applicants who submit using non-secure methods of transmission do so at their own risk.

- c. Selection proceeds separately from vetting. Vetting is conducted independently from any discussions the agreement officer may have with an applicant. The applicant and any proposed subrecipient or contractor subject to vetting must not provide vetting information to anyone other than the vetting official. The applicant and any proposed subrecipient or contractor subject to vetting will communicate only with the vetting official regarding their vetting submission(s) and not with any other USAID or USG personnel, including the agreement officer or the agreement officer's representatives. The agreement officer designates the vetting official as the only individual authorized to clarify the applicant's and proposed subrecipient's and contractor's vetting information.
- d.
 - i. The vetting official notifies the applicant that it: Is eligible based on the vetting results, is ineligible based on the vetting results, or must provide additional information, and resubmit the USAID Partner Information Form with the additional information within the number of days the vetting official specified in the notification.
 - ii. The vetting official will coordinate with the agency that provided the data being used for vetting prior to notifying the applicant or releasing any information. In any determination for release of information, the classification and sensitivity of the information, the need to protect sources and methods, and the status of ongoing law enforcement and intelligence community investigations or operations will be taken into consideration.
- e. Reconsideration:
 - i. Within 7 calendar days after the date of the vetting official's notification, an applicant that vetting has determined to be ineligible may request in writing to the vetting official that the Agency reconsider the vetting determination. The request will include any written explanation, legal documentation and any other relevant written material for reconsideration.
 - ii. Within 7 calendar days after the vetting official receives the request for reconsideration, the Agency will determine whether the applicant's additional information merits a revised decision.
 - iii. The Agency's determination of whether reconsideration is warranted is final.

- f. Revisions to vetting information:
 - i. Applicants who change key individuals, whether the applicant has previously been determined eligible or not, must submit a revised USAID Partner Information Form to the vetting official. This includes changes to key personnel resulting from revisions to the technical portion of the application.
 - ii. The vetting official will follow the vetting process of this provision for any revision of the applicant's Form.
- g. Award. At the time of award, the agreement officer will confirm with the vetting official that the apparently successful applicant is eligible after vetting. The agreement officer may award only to an apparently successful applicant that is eligible after vetting.

6. Additional Vetting Requirements

In addition to the vetting requirements found in [to be updated at the time of award], the terms and requirements of the USAID/Iraq Vetting Mission Order is incorporated by reference. The Recipient is responsible for seeking vetting in accordance with the requirements of the USAID/Iraq Vetting Mission Order and Section [to be updated at the time of award] of this award.

The term “subaward” may include both contracts and sub-assistance awards. All subawards, which require vetting and were proposed in the pre-award application(s) and associated budget(s), are not approved at the time of award unless a Notice of Eligibility was sent prior to award for that organization or individual being vetted. Any such subaward that requires vetting must also be approved by the AO in accordance with Section [to be updated at the time of award] after it is successfully vetted.

The Recipient may not incur costs for any subawards, which require vetting under the vetting provision or USAID/Iraq Vetting Mission Order, under this award until vetting has been successfully completed. Any costs incurred in relation to a subaward that requires vetting but has not been successfully vetted are unreasonable as they are outside the terms of the agreement and unallowable.

[END OF SECTION C]

SECTION D: APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency Point of Contact

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

Mr. Zachary Clarke
Regional Agreement Officer
USAID/MERP
zclarke@usaid.gov

The Point of Contact (POC) for information on this NOFO is:

Ms. Olga Ekkert
Senior Acquisition & Assistance Specialist
USAID/Iraq
oekkert@usaid.gov

The above contact information is only for informational purposes. The NOFO itself and any subsequent amendments can be found at www.grants.gov. All Applications must be submitted according to instructions contained in this NOFO.

In order to maintain a fair and transparent funding opportunity, USAID maintains strict guidelines on who within USAID may be contacted regarding applications or questions about the opportunity. Applicants may only contact USAID via the email address provided in this NOFO. Failure to comply with the USAID points of contact guidance mandated in the NOFO may disqualify the Applicant(s).

2. Questions and Answers

Questions and requests for clarification regarding this NOFO should be submitted by email to BaghdadOAADropbox@usaid.gov no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter. The subject line must read “*72026723RFA00001 Iraq Civil Society Activity*”.

Any information given to a prospective Applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective Applicants as an amendment to this NOFO on www.grants.gov, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective Applicant. Please check www.grants.gov for any amendments.

3. Applicants’ Responsiveness

All Applications received by the closing date and time will be reviewed for responsiveness to the specifications outlined in these guidelines and the application format. Section E:

Application Review Information addresses technical merit review criteria. Applicants must review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to do so may lead to the disqualification of an Application. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary documentation is complete and received on time.

No addition or modifications will be accepted after the submission date. PDF documents are the preferred file format, though MS Word documents will be accepted, if necessary.

4. Application Process

In accordance with 5 CFR 1320, which implements the Paperwork Reduction Act, USAID requires an electronic submission of the application.

Applications in response to this NOFO must be submitted to BaghdadOAADropbox@usaid.gov no later than the closing date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Late applications will not be reviewed nor considered.

It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary documentation is complete and received on time. Only electronic (email) submission will be accepted. For an application sent by multiple emails, please indicate in the subject line of the email whether the email relates to the technical or cost application, and the desired sequence of multiple emails and of attachments (e.g. "No. 1 of 4", etc.). For example, if your cost application is being sent in two emails, the first email should have a subject line which says: "[organization name], Cost Application, Part 1 of 2".

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

After you have sent your applications electronically, immediately check your own email to confirm that the attachments you intended to send were sent. If you discover an error in your transmission, please send the material again and note in the subject line of the email that it is a "corrected" submission. Do not send the same email more than once unless there has been a change, and if so, please note that it is a "corrected" email.

5. Application Submission Instructions

Each applicant must furnish the complete information required by this NOFO. Applications must be submitted in English and two separate parts/two separate emails: (1) Technical application and (2) Cost/business application. The technical application must address technical aspects only while the Business Application must present the costs.

Applicants who include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose other than for U.S. Government evaluation, should mark the title page with the following legend:

“This application includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the U.S. Government and shall not be duplicated, used, or disclosed – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, a grant is awarded to this Applicant as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government shall have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting grant. This restriction does not limit the U.S. Government’s right to use information contained in this data if it is obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in pages ____.”

Mark each sheet of data to be restricted with the following legend:

“Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application.” Applicants should retain for their records one (1) copy of the application and all enclosures which accompany it.

Both the Technical and Business Application must include a **cover page** containing the following information:

- Program Name
- Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Number: 72026723RFA00001
- Name of the Organization Submitting the application
- Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number
- Applicant Contact Person (name, phone, email)
- Identification and signature of the primary contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address) and the identification of the alternate contact person (by name, title organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address)
- Full Address of Applicant Organization
- Type of Organization (e.g. US, non-US, multilateral, private, for-profit, non-profit)
- Name(s) of any proposed sub-recipients or partnerships, if any (identify if any of the organizations are local organizations, per USAID’s definition of “local entity” under ADS 303), and sub-recipients’ or partnerships’ Unique Entity Identifiers (UEIs)

Technical and Cost Application must comply with the following:

- USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections. Please ensure that applications comply with the page limitations.
- Use standard 8 ½ x 11 (or A4), single sided, single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1 inch margins, left justification and headers and/or footers on each page including consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and Applicant’s name. Ten point font can be used for graphs and charts. Tables however must comply with the 12 point Times New Roman requirement.
- The Technical Application must be submitted via Microsoft Word or PDF formats (or equivalent). Zipped files are not allowed.

- The Business Application must include an Excel spreadsheet (or equivalent) with all cells **unlocked** and no hidden formulas or sheets.
- The total size of each e-mail transmission should not exceed 10MBs. USAID will not be responsible for errors in compiling electronic applications if no instructions are provided or are unclear.

1. Technical Application Format

The Applicant must organize the Technical Application to follow the technical evaluation criteria. The page length of the entire Technical Application **must not exceed 25 pages**, including executive summary (1 page), Technical Approach (15 pages), Management Approach (4 pages), Personnel Qualifications and Experience (3 pages), overview of Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (2 pages). Annexes, including the two plans, must not exceed an additional 10 pages in total. All pages of the Technical Application must be sequentially numbered. Failure to include all information or to organize the application in the manner prescribed immediately below will result in rejection of the application.

The Technical Application must be organized as follows:

- A. **Cover Page** containing information listed on the previous page of this NOFO (not included in page limitation).
- B. **Table of Contents** that follows the technical application format outlined herein (not included in page limitation).
- C. **Executive Summary (1 page):** The Executive Summary must provide a high-level overview of key elements of the technical application.
- D. **Technical Approach (15 pages):** describing the following:
 - a) A discussion of the development context, including a brief background on the specific development challenge/opportunity and the needs that will be addressed by the Activity (include a description of the target population and any gender integration specific challenges).
 - b) A statement of how the goals and objectives relate to specific challenges and opportunities in Iraq and in the civil society sector(s). Applicants should indicate how proposed activities will contribute to supporting specific U.S. government objectives included in the [Integrated Country Strategy](#) such as *Iraq's governance institutions improve accountability, transparency, and performance in serving its citizens* and stated USAID priorities described throughout the NOFO Program Description, such as localization, conflict sensitivity/do no harm, gender integration, inclusive development, and climate change, as emphasized by Administrator Power in numerous public statements including the [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2023 President's Budget Request](#).
 - c) The technical approach to be used, including the specific program activities to be conducted and implemented, including the following specifics;
 - **Under Objective 1**, the Applicant must engage Iraqi CSOs to act as implementing agents/partners and leaders in this community-driven work stream, from design through to monitoring and evaluation phases. Applicants must articulate their technical approach for accomplishing this, name any local partners already identified, and describe how this and

objective 2 will inter-relate and mutually reinforce one another. Core sectors for the focus of this activity will be co-created with USAID.

- **Under Objective 2**, the Activity will create and implement a demand-driven small grants program to enable local sustainability, and shift more leadership, ownership, decision-making, and implementation to local groups. The Applicant must articulate how this would be structured, used, and add value to the objective and the overall Activity as well as any other compelling details related to the Applicant's vision for a dedicated small granting program. The successful applicant will co-create core sectors for the focus of this activity with USAID.
- **Under Objective 3**, the Activity will work with Iraqi CSOs to advocate for increased quantity and quality of government information available to citizens in federal Iraq as well as the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. Information may be provided to the public through information technology, social media or traditional media. Applicants should outline how they intend to work with Iraqi CSOs on increasing public awareness and access to reliable information as well as how they will advocate how it should be disseminated to citizens once it is acquired. In addition, the Applicants must identify how this information could or will be used as a driver for positive change.
- **Under the Activity Modifier/Rapid Response Component** (\$5 million total): the Applicant must lay out clear criteria for activating this component, what conditions should be present, and what the sequence of programming interventions would potentially be should those conditions be present.
- With respect to the necessary **Local Capacity Development** elements present in the activity description, the Applicant will incorporate relevant organizational capacity and resilience related findings in their support to local partners (if known) and articulate this in their technical approach.
- In order to meet USAID's expectations with respect to **gender integration**, the Applicant will clearly express their approach to integrating gender equality, women's empowerment, and protection of women and girls in the technical approach and describe how it will prepare a nuanced, and flexible gender action plan for this award, which will be submitted in accordance with the reporting requirements for the award.
- The Applicant will specifically describe how it will ensure participation and leadership of USAID/Iraq's key targeted demographics - **women, youth, and marginalized communities** - in the activities under this award through genuine partnership with individuals and groups led by, consisting of, and representing these demographics in the spirit of the phrase, Nothing About Us, Without Us.
- The Applicant should describe how it will use the conflict sensitivity analysis and implementation strategy throughout the life of the award and how it will inform activity design and implementation.
- The Applicant should describe how the activity will respond to dynamic changes in the operating environment and should incorporate regular risk assessment and flexibility to revise program activities that quickly respond to the needs of citizens, civil society, and other partners, the United States Government (USG), key stakeholders, and the changing political environment.

d) A clear description of how the applicant will ensure the sustainability of the approaches that are developed and the results that are achieved via the activity and any proposed partnerships within the activity. For example, what specific steps and actions will the applicant take to ensure sustainable results and impacts beyond the term of USAID's financial support?

The Technical Approach of the successful applicant will form the basis of the Program Description in the resulting award. Therefore, the Technical approach must be written as a stand alone document. Furthermore, the PD must be written from the perspective of USAID. That is, it must say “[organization name or project name] will do xyz...” as opposed to “we will do xyz...”

E. Project Management Approach (4 pages)

The approach must include:

a) Refine and Implement (R&I) Period

The Applicant must submit a brief narrative description of the R&I Plan specific to the four-month R&I period. This will include a matrix that illustrates proposed interventions and when they will take place. The following must be included:

- A summary of the main tasks that the Applicant plans to complete during the R&I period.
- The methodology and timeline for development of a Gender Action Plan, Civil Society Landscape Analysis, Political Economy Analysis, and Conflict Sensitivity Analysis.
- A description of any other planned studies or surveys to be undertaken in year 1 with clear justification for their use in terms of learning, baseline understanding or adaptive management benchmarks.
- A description of any innovative approaches or technologies to be tested in the first 18 months of implementation and a methodology to demonstrate the efficacy of these approaches prior to scaling or further deployment.
- A timeline and processes for regular consultation with USAID during the R&I period and through the first year of implementation, to include discussion of adaptive management needs identified (also can be referred to as “pause and reflect” sessions).
- Consultation with USAID on the refinement and planning for co-creation and approval processes related to sub-grant awards.

b) Identification of potential partners for activities. This list is illustrative as core sectors for focus (climate, gender, community development etc.) of this activity will be developed concurrently with USAID.

c) A well-defined partnership framework that specifies the roles and responsibilities of any proposed partners, including the particular expertise, resources and other assets they will bring to an alliance/partnership, and what will result as a consequence of such participation and engagement.

d) A clearly articulated approach to incorporate lessons learned from previous efforts. This activity will build on previous investments in the civil society sector (USAID and non-USAID) and expand into new activities supporting citizens and community-led activities. Applicants must ensure that lessons-learned from previous civil society capacity strengthening efforts are integrated into this design. Applications should describe what other USAID, USG, and other donor entities are operating in this space and how they will relate to, coordinate with, mutually support, and/or avoid duplication.

e) An efficient and logical structure for overall program implementation, including how the applicant will divide labor, responsibilities and funding with partners or any potential Sub-grantees.

f) An organizational chart for the applicant's proposed implementation structure (not included in page limitation).

F. Personnel Qualifications and Experience (3 pages of total narrative in the application body and in the annex CVs of proposed key personnel not to exceed 2 pages each) –
This section must include:

a) A staffing plan that corresponds to the skills and experience called for by the applicant's approach and project management / implementation plan, catering to the technical approach, necessity for flexibility and adaptability, and the other specific elements of the program description.

b) Technical and managerial experience and skills of personnel.

c) Subject matter expertise related to the activity objectives, program description, and proposed approaches.

d) Focused, practical experience in managing and implementing similar programs in developing countries.

Required Key Personnel:

The proposed staffing plan must include the following key personnel positions:

- **Chief of Party (COP)** is responsible for overall program management and will be expected to interact regularly with program staff, USAID Mission staff, civil society organizations, GOI officials, other donors, and all program stakeholders. Desired qualifications for the position include:
 - Master's degree in social sciences, community development, communications, business, international development, and/or other related fields.
 - Ten (10) years work experience implementing civil society activities including engagement with legal frameworks imposed on civil society, grants to local organizations, citizen engagement, and CSO financial and organizational sustainability.
 - Five (5) years experience in managing staff with proven skills in managing diverse teams across a wide implementation area.
 - Strong coordination and communication skills to include a variety of stakeholders (national, international, government, non-government, international organization, donor).
 - Fluent written and spoken English. Some knowledge of Arabic is preferred.
 - Knowledge of the Middle East Region is a plus.
- **Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP)** will work closely with the COP in overseeing program operations and will have strong written and oral communication skills as well as operational, implementation experience. The incumbent will assume technical direction and oversight of the civic participation grants component of the program. S/he will be expected to interact regularly with project and Mission staff, as well as with civil society partners and all stakeholders to the program. Desired qualifications include:

- A Master's degree in social sciences, community development, communications, business, international development, and/or other related fields.
 - At least eight (8) years of experience working in the engagement of civil society.
 - Demonstrated experience developing systems to identify potential partners, evaluation of capacity of partners, and managing grants (in-kind and cash) with local partners, training development and other technical areas related to the objectives of this activity.
 - The DCOP must also demonstrate professional capacity in written English and experience presenting to a variety of audiences (national and international).
 - Professional proficiency in Arabic is preferred.
 - Knowledge of the Middle East Region is a plus.
- **Civil Society Capacity Development Technical Specialist and Coordinator** will be responsible for the provision and oversight of technical direction and assistance in support of improved public outreach and information, coalition building, and improved organizational management capacity. The individual will support development of financial capacity and will support any technical trainers engaged in this or other areas of capacity development. Desired Qualifications include:
 - University degree in management, public administration, finance, or related field.
 - At least 8 years of demonstrated experience and expertise in civil society strengthening, including capacity development; community mobilization; and civil society-related training and facilitation. Work with grassroots communities and advocacy movements is a plus.
 - Previous work experience with civil society in Iraq is required.
 - Candidates must also have a high level of interpersonal and communication skills.
 - English and Arabic language proficiency are both required.

A balance of technical experience, management qualifications and compliance experience is encouraged in the proposed team. Expatriate staff will be considered for this program but skilled Regional experts and/or Iraqi nationals are encouraged. Proposed staff from the region should have demonstrated ability to work in a diverse environment with flexibility and adaptive approaches to learning and sharing experience.

G. Overview of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (2 pages)

The Applicant must submit a proposed activity level Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL Plan) to rigorously and credibly document the activity's effectiveness and to commit to sharing and learning from ongoing work and accomplished results. USAID acknowledges that there could be multiple approaches to achieving the objectives outlined in this project description, and the specific indicators may vary somewhat depending upon the technical approaches proposed. It is also acknowledged that output indicators may be necessary for overall day-to-day management of the program, however, the Applicant should vest more time in developing quality outcome level indicators that have the ability to track overall achievements toward the goal and objectives and engage in effective discussions about innovations introduced and any adaptations that may be required. This entails identifying indicators and realistic (yet ambitious) targets that correspond to and measure the activity's interventions at different levels of results (goal, objectives, expected outcomes, outputs) and are linked to established baselines to assess the performance of proposed interventions. It may be necessary to also consider proxy indicators with the caveat that there may be challenges to attribution. Gender-focused indicators should be included and disaggregation of output indicators by sex and age is required where

appropriate. The Applicant must rely on context monitoring to understand the influences, conditions, and external factors that impact implementation of interventions. Collaborating, learning and adapting (CLA) approaches must be applied throughout the course of implementation for all interventions.

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

Illustrative Activity Level Indicators

- Number of local partners' activities that aim to influence laws, policies, and reforms in the legal, information, financial spaces following USAID support.
- Number of CSO activities resulting in a measurable increase in visibility and/or credibility of CSOs within Iraqi society.
- CBLD - 9 Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance.
- Number of CSOs using evidence/research to support their advocacy and policy work.
- Number of consensus building forums (multi-party, civil/security sector, and/or civil /political) held with USG Assistance.
- Percentage of CSOs assisted that have a youth engagement strategy.
- Number of public policies introduced, adopted, repealed, changed, or implemented with U.S. Government (USG) assistance (outcome).
- Number of USG-assisted civil society organizations (CSOs) that participate in legislative proceedings and/or engage in advocacy and/or information dissemination and analysis with legislatures.

Illustrative Learning Questions

- How and to what extent have barriers to inclusion and leveraged opportunities for strengthening the engagement of Iraqi citizens in civic processes been addressed?
- What are effective and sustainable mechanisms or processes to integrate local, community, sub-national, national, and regional voices, priorities, and contributions into civil society strengthening efforts?
- What are effective and sustainable mechanisms or processes that enable the participation of civil society and public organizations in developing locally-led solutions to improve citizen confidence and engagement in democratic governance?

USAID encourages the use of complexity-aware monitoring and evaluation methodologies. For more on Complexity Aware Monitoring: <https://usaideallearninglab.org/complexity-aware-monitoring/approaches>

USAID also encourages the inclusion of pause and reflect sessions that include USAID Mission staff, at key points in the activity's annual performance implementation, identified by the Recipient, to review progress, identify pivot points, and address challenges adaptively. This creates opportunities to reconfirm the assumptions from which the design is built and review that the theory of change is still valid or if adjustments to the approach are required, what those adjustments may need to be. The periodic pause and reflect

sessions are particularly critical in this space due to the often fluid political and security environment. They do not need to be long in duration. The awardee is encouraged to use a political economic analysis lens to inform these sessions. Political economic analysis does not need to take the form of formal reporting or engage a lengthy process but should be used to refine understanding of the context and check that assumptions are valid on a periodic basis.

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

H. **Annexes** (not to exceed a total of ten [10] pages). Annexes are not included in the 25 page limit:

- Illustrative MEL Plan with indicators
- Resumes (key personnel) (not counted in the 10 page limit for annexes but each resume is limited to a maximum of 2 pages)
- Mobilization Plan (4 pages)
- Institutional Capabilities/Experience (1 page) - This section must include:
 - a) A concise description of the Applicant's, as well as prospective or existing local or other partners', previous work and experience relative to the activities being proposed.
 - i. A list of up to three awards involving similar or related awards in which the Applicant was a prime or sub-partner, whether or not involving USAID, during the past three years. If the Applicant submits an award on which they were a sub, please specify, to the degree possible, the role played as a sub.
 - b) For each award, include a brief statement about:
 - i. The relevance and brief description of work performed;
 - ii. Results achieved;
 - iii. Duration, size, value; and
 - iv. Award numbers and contact information with current email addresses and telephone numbers.

No other annexes shall be included in the application.

I. **Branding Strategy & Marking Plan**

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

J. **Other relevant information**

Links to applicable regulations and references:

- Systems for Award Management (SAM) at www.sam.gov

- ADS Series 300 Acquisition and Assistance
<https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/agency-policy/series-300>

Further background on USAID's Gender can be found here:

Gender: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and ADS Chapter 205 - Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle.

2. Business (Cost) Application Format

The Cost or Business Application portion of the Application shall be submitted separately from the Technical Application. While there is no page limit for this portion of the application, the Applicant is encouraged to be as concise as possible, but still provide the necessary details.

The business (cost) application must illustrate the entire period of performance, using the budget format shown in the SF-424A.

Prior to award, the applicant may be required to submit additional documentation deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to assess the applicant's risk in accordance with 2 CFR 200.206.

The Applicant should not submit any additional information with their initial application.

The Business Application must contain the following sections:

a) Cover Page

b) SF 424 Form(s)

The applicant must sign and submit the cost application using the SF-424 series at [Standard Form 424](#)

- (1) SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance;
- (2) SF-424A - Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs; and
- (3) SF-424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs;

c) Required Certifications and Assurances

The applicant must complete the following documents and submit a signed copy with their application: "Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient" document found at:
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mav>

d) Summary Budget: inclusive of all Activity costs broken out by major budget category and by fiscal year for interventions to be implemented by the Applicant and any potential sub-recipients for the entire period of the Activity.

e) Budget and Budget Narrative

The Budget Narrative must contain sufficient detail to allow USAID to understand the proposed costs. The applicant must ensure the budgeted costs address any additional requirements identified above, such as Branding and Marking. The Budget Narrative must be thorough, including sources for costs to support USAID's determination that the proposed costs are fair and reasonable.

The budget includes:

(1) a budget with a breakdown by activity year, sufficient to allow the Agency to determine that the costs represent an efficient use of funding to implement the Applicant's activity.

(2) a detailed budget for each sub-recipient, broken out by budget category and by year, for the entire implementation period of the Activity with an accompanying budget narrative which provides, in detail, the total costs for implementation of the Activity.

The Applicant must include a budget with **an accompanying budget narrative (word document)** which provides, in detail, the total costs for implementation of the Activity.

The budget must be submitted in US dollars, in Excel format **using the template provided** with visible formulas and unlocked cells to enable USAID to check the formulas and calculations included. All cells that are derivative calculations from other information submitted on the budget template must be calculated in the cell from the relevant equation and cannot be submitted as just a final value.

The following major line items with a budget narrative must be included. Each major line item must be supported by detailed breakdowns of each expected sub-expense under that line:

i. Personnel: Must be proposed consistent with 2 CFR 200.430 Compensation - Personal Services. The applicant's budget must include position title, salary rate, level of effort, and salary escalation factors for each position. A detailed level of effort estimate must be included for all key personnel. Other non-key personnel costs should be estimated based on the estimated number of full- and part-time staff needed to successfully enable the Applicant to meet their technical scope of work. Allowances, when proposed, must be broken down by specific type and by position. The applicant must explain all assumptions in the budget narrative. The budget narrative must demonstrate that the proposed compensation is reasonable for the services rendered and consistent with what is paid for similar work in other activities of the applicant. The applicant must provide their established written policies on personnel compensation. If the applicant's written policies do not address a specific element of compensation that is being proposed, the budget narrative must describe the rationale used and supporting market research.

ii. Fringe Benefits: (if applicable) If the applicant has a fringe benefit rate approved by an agency of the U.S. Government, the ASA must use such a rate and provide evidence of its approval. If an applicant does not have a fringe benefit rate

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

iii. Travel and Transportation: The application should provide details to explain the purpose of the trips, the number of trips, the origin and destination, the number of individuals traveling, and the duration of the trips. Per Diem and associated travel costs must be based on the applicant's normal travel policies. When appropriate please provide supporting documentation as an attachment, such as company travel policy, and explain assumptions in the budget narrative.

iv. Supplies: The application should specify the procurement of all tangible personal property other than those described in Equipment. A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes or \$5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. The application should indicate the quantity of the equipment to be purchased, the unit cost and the total price.

v. Equipment: The application should specify the procurement of any tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. The application should indicate the quantity of the equipment to be purchased, the unit cost and the total price.

vi. Other Direct Costs: The application should provide a breakdown of all anticipated other direct costs (i.e. the amount, type, and unit cost with as much detail as possible) not elsewhere specified, such as report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams and inoculations, as well as any other miscellaneous costs which directly benefit the program proposed by the applicant. The applicant should also indicate the subject, venue and duration of any proposed conferences and seminars, and their relationship to the objectives of the program along with estimates of costs. Otherwise, the narrative should be minimal.

vii. Subawards: (If applicable) The application should specify the budget for the portion of the program to be passed through to any subrecipients. See 2 CFR 200.330 for assistance in determining whether the subtier entity is a subrecipient and any identified consortium partners or contractor. The subrecipient budgets must align with the same requirements as the Applicant's budget, including those related to fringe and indirect costs.

viii. Flexible Activity Modifier Component for Rapid Response: The application should include the topline figure to be set-aside for the program modifier is \$1million per year (\$5 million total under the total estimated annual amount of the award).

ix. Subgrants Component: The application should include set-aside for a demand-driven small, sub-grants component valued at a minimum of \$5 million

over a five-year period to enable local sustainability, and shift more leadership, ownership, decision-making, and implementation to local groups.

x. Indirect Costs - The applicant must submit the most recent Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement NICRA.

If the organization or its sub-recipient has never received a NICRA then a 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate may be applicable.

f) Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407

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

g) Approval of Subawards

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

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

h) SAM requirements

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements. The applicant (unless the applicant has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

- i. Provide a valid UEI number for the applicant and all proposed sub-recipients;
- ii Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. SAM is streamlining processes, eliminating the need to enter the same data multiple times, and consolidating hosting to make the process of doing business with the government more efficient (www.beta.sam.gov) .

iii. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin the process early. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements above by the time USAID is ready to make an award, USAID may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

UEI and SAM registration: <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>

Note: Request for Application is NOT a commitment to funding. USAID/Iraq reserves the right to make no award under this RFA at any stage of the process at no cost to the USG.

[END OF SECTION D]

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SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Application Merit Review Criteria

The Application Merit Review Criteria prescribed here are tailored to the requirements of this particular NOFO. The Applicant should note that these criteria serve to:

- (a) identify the significant matters which the Applicant should address in the application, and
- (b) set the standard against which the Applications will be evaluated.

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

2. Review and Selection Process

a) **Merit Review and Rating**

USAID will conduct a merit review of Applications received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO. The Applications will be reviewed and evaluated using an adjectival rating system (Exceptional, Very Good, Satisfactory, Marginal, Unsatisfactory) in accordance with the definitions below:

Adjective	Merit Review Criterion
Exceptional	An Exceptional Application has the following characteristics: • A comprehensive and thorough Application of exceptional merit. • Application meets and fully exceeds the Government expectations or exceeds NOFO objectives and presents very low risk or no overall degree of risk of unsuccessful performance. • Strengths significantly outweigh any weaknesses that may exist.
Very Good	A Very Good Application has the following characteristics: • Application demonstrating a strong grasp of the objectives. • Application meets NOFO objectives and presents a low overall degree of risk of unsuccessful project performance. • Strengths significantly outweigh any weaknesses that exist.
Satisfactory	A Satisfactory Application has the following characteristics: • Application demonstrating a reasonably sound response and a good grasp of the objectives.

	• Application meets NOFO objectives and presents a moderate overall degree of risk of unsuccessful project performance. • Strengths outweigh weaknesses.
Marginal	A Marginal Application has the following characteristics: • Application shows a limited understanding of the objectives. • Application meets some or most of the NOFO objectives, but presents a significant overall degree of risk of unsuccessful project performance. • Weaknesses equal or outweigh any strength that exists.
Unsatisfactory	An Unsatisfactory Application has the following characteristics: • The Application does not meet the NOFO objectives or requires a major rewrite of the Application. • Present an unacceptable degree of risk of unsuccessful project performance. • Weaknesses demonstrate a lack of understanding of the Government's needs. • Weaknesses significantly outweigh any strength that exists.

Technical applications will be evaluated on the extent to which they are complete, presented concisely, and responsive to the instructions and the criteria shown below.

The criteria below are listed in descending order of importance. Bullets are not sub criteria; rather, they are factors for consideration under each criterion and will not be reviewed separately.

Criterion 1. Soundness of Technical Approach

The applicant's technical approach - including proposed activity strategy, suggested methodologies, and proposed plan for integration and implementation of the proposed refine and implement/inception phase within the technical approach - will be evaluated on the clarity, consistency, quality, appropriateness to the Iraq context, engagement strategy to work with local partners and grantees, and likelihood of the proposed technical approach and proposed interventions to achieve the objectives and intended results of this activity, including the USAID sectoral priorities, within the implementation period.

Criterion 2. Soundness of Program Management Approach, Staffing Approach,

Qualifications of Key Personnel and Institutional Capability

The applicant's program management/implementation and staffing approach will be evaluated on:

- Clarity and soundness of the program management and implementation approach, including the proposed first year draft implementation plan matrix which integrates the applicant's refine and implement approach.
- Clarity and appropriateness of roles and responsibilities for each key technical position, including partner personnel proposed to implement the agreement.
- Clarity and appropriateness of the organizational structure of the entire project team, including partner organizations.
- Extent to which the proposed key personnel demonstrate experience necessary to carry out the proposed technical and management actions, including how well they meet the minimum qualifications.

Criterion 3. Soundness of MEL Plan

The soundness of the MEL plan will be evaluated on:

- Clarity, feasibility, and comprehensiveness of applicant's approach to the MEL plan;
- Extent to which it corresponds to the stated goals and objectives outlined in the technical approach; and
- Clear learning approach to explore potential outcomes and innovations introduced through program activities at different points over the course of implementation.

b) Business Review

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

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

The AO will perform a risk assessment (2 CFR 200.206). The AO may determine that a preaward survey is required to inform the risk assessment in determining whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organizational, experience, accounting and operational controls, financial resources, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award. Depending on

the result of the risk assessment, the AO will decide to execute the award, not execute the award, or award with “specific conditions” (2 CFR 200.208).

3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Based on the NOFO issue date and considering that no submission extensions will be granted, and if there are no delays in the review/evaluation process, USAID anticipates having an award in place by **May 01, 2023**.

[END OF SECTION E]

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SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

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

The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Agreement may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed Agreement or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

The Cooperative Agreement signed by the Agreement Officer is the authorizing document, which shall be transmitted to the Recipient for countersignature to the authorized agent of the successful organization(s) electronically.

2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

The Agreement Officer will use applicable policies and standard provisions in the administration of the resulting award. No deviations are currently contemplated to the standard provisions for the Cooperative Agreement resulting from this NOFO. The standard provisions to be used will be the Mandatory Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental Recipients or the Mandatory Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Recipients.

For U.S. organizations, the resulting federal award will be administered in accordance with the following policies and regulations: [ADS 303](#), [2 CFR 700](#), [2 CFR 200](#), and [ADS 303maa](#). Standard Provisions for U.S. NGOs are applicable. For complete copies of 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700, please also see [ADS 303.4](#).

For non-U.S. organizations, [ADS 303mab](#), Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. NGOs will apply.

This NOFO only contains provisions that are required at this stage. Final provisions will be incorporated in the final award as applicable to the selected Recipient.

3. Reporting Requirements

Program Reports shall be in accordance with applicable USAID Standard Provisions. All written documentation must be submitted in professional-level English. The reports listed below are the initial reports that USAID anticipates requiring from the successful recipient. Based on the evolving nature of the agreement, USAID may provide modified reporting requirements.

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

a. Financial Reporting:

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

Quarterly Financial Report: Quarterly Financial Reports shall be due within 30 days following the end of each quarter corresponding to USAID’s fiscal year from October 1 through September 30.

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.327, Standard Form 425 (SF-425) and SF-425A are used to report accrued expenditures. Reporting periods are calendar quarters. Quarterly financial reports are due no later than 30 days after the end of each calendar quarter (January 30, April 30, July 30, and October 30).

Quarterly Accruals Reporting: Accruals are the estimated cost of the liability recognized during the period for goods and/or services received but not disbursed, or goods and/or services invoiced but not recorded.

USAID performs a quarterly accrual exercise at the end of each quarter; i.e. December 31, March 31, June 30, and September 30. The Recipient is expected to submit four quarterly accrual expenditures reports 15 days before the end of a quarter per year. The Recipient must submit a spreadsheet showing cumulative disbursements and estimated (un-disbursed) accruals to the AOR.

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

Financial reports shall be submitted as follows: Financial Analyst, Office of Financial Management (Baghdadfmo@usaid.gov) and AOR.

Foreign Tax Reports: Reporting of foreign taxes under this agreement shall follow the standard provision entitled “Reporting Host Government Taxes (December 2014)” of this award document.

Host government taxes are not allowable where the Agreement Officer provides the necessary means to the recipient to obtain an exemption or refund of such taxes, and the recipient fails to take reasonable steps to obtain such exemption or refund. Otherwise, taxes are allowable in accordance with the Standard Provision, “Applicability of 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700 (December 2014),” and must be reported as required in this provision.

The Recipient must include this reporting requirement in all applicable sub-agreements, including subawards and contracts.

b. Performance Reporting and Plan Requirements:

The Recipient shall be responsible to USAID/Iraq for all matters related to the execution of the agreement. Specifically, the Recipient shall report to the Agreement Officer (AO) and to the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR), who will be designated by the AO prior to award. All approved performance reports and technical reports shall be posted to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), as appropriate.

All reports listed below shall be submitted by the specified due dates, electronically via email for approval by the USAID AOR unless otherwise agreed upon with the AOR. The Recipient will consult the AOR on the format and expected content of reports prior to submission. The Recipient should always be ready for revision in program indicators and reporting requirements.

TYPE OF REPORT	DUE DATE (Counted from Effective Award Date)	DISTRIBUTION
Quarterly and Annual Performance Reports	Within 30 calendar days after the end of each quarter; fourth quarter report will comprise the annual performance report. [English and a summary in Arabic, soft copy]	AOR or A/AOR. Acceptance will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.
Annual Implementation Plan	Within 60 120 calendar days of the date of award. By September 15 of each subsequent year. [English and Arabic, soft copy]	AOR or A/AOR. Approval will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.
Grants Manual	Within 90 calendar days of the date of the award [English, soft copy]	AOR or A/AOR and AO
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL)	A full MEL is expected to be submitted within 90 calendar days of the date of award. Updates to the MEL will be submitted by October 30 for subsequent years. [English, soft copy]	AOR and A/AOR. Approval will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.
Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Reporting	Twice annually as part of the 2nd Quarterly Performance Report and the Annual Report. Geospatial (geo-referenced)	AOR and A/AOR Approval will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by

	data will be submitted or updated for each project site. [English, soft copy]	Recipient.
Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP)	With submission of the first Annual Implementation Plan, within 60 calendar days of the date of the award. Updated and submitted at least once per year using USAID/Iraq's template. [English, soft copy]	AOR and MEO (Mission Environment Officer). Approval will be provided in writing after AOR and MEO review and revisions made by Recipient.
Conflict Sensitivity Analysis Implementation Strategy	Within 120 calendar days of the date of award.	AOR or A/AOR. Acceptance will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.
Gender Analysis and Action Plan	Within 120 calendar days of the date of award. [English, soft copy]	AOR or A/AOR. Acceptance will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.
Final Report	90 calendar days after completion of the award. [English and Arabic, soft copy] No page limit.	AOR, AO and DEC (Reference to M.21) AO approval after AOR review and approval after revisions made by Recipient.
Closeout/Demobilization Plan	120 calendar days prior to award completion date.	Approved, in writing, by the AO.
Other Reporting	Submitted upon request [English/Arabic, soft copy]	AOR
Project Fact sheet	Submitted 90 days after award using the USAID/Iraq template. It will then be updated at least quarterly.	AOR

	[English/Arabic]	
Highlights & Success Stories	Submitted regularly during the project lifetime, and at a minimum three highlights and/or success stories per each quarter. [English]	AOR
Reporting reference in Standard Provisions		
Reporting of Foreign Taxes – Reference to RAA13. Reporting Host Government Taxes	The recipient must annually submit a report by April 16 of the next year.	FMO/AOR/AO
Participant Training (TEAMS)	Within 30 days after the end of each Federal Fiscal year quarter. Recipient is responsible for submitting data into TEAMS directly. [English]	AOR, A/AOR and Mission R-2 Verifier

The Recipient will allow at least 10 business days for review and comments from the AOR on any draft report submission. All reports and plans are subject to written approval by the AOR, except for the Closeout Plan and the Property Disposition Plan, which are subject to Agreement Officer's approval.

- **Quarterly Performance Reports:**

The Recipient will report performance progress for the program under the award and monitor and track indicators as reviewed and agreed to with USAID on a quarterly basis, by submitting a quarterly report. Quarterly performance reports will be submitted **30 calendar days** after the end of each quarter and contain the following information:

(1) A comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals and objectives established for the period, including up-to-date figures for indicators identified in the Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Plan (MELP). Whenever appropriate, and the output of programs or projects can be readily quantified, such quantitative data should be related to cost data for computation of unit costs.

(2) Reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate.

(3) Other pertinent information including, when appropriate, analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs.

A general quarterly performance report template, in addition to the indicator reporting, will be provided by the AOR. The Recipient must submit via email a copy of quarterly, annual, and final performance reports to the AOR in accordance with 2 CFR 200.328.

The timing, format and other instructions will be agreed by the AOR and the Recipient's Key Personnel at the outset of implementation.

- **Annual Implementation Plan:**

Submitted annually to the AOR for approval, the first Implementation Plan, including activity planning and timeframe, **is due 60 calendar days of the date of the award**. For the subsequent years, the implementation plan will be submitted for approval by **September 15 of every year**. The plan shall include subcontract and sub-grants planning. Additionally, the plan will include weekly submissions of key activity highlights to the AOR in bullet form.

Annual Implementation Plans are to be submitted in English to the AOR and Alternate AOR via email.

- **Grants Manual:**

The Recipient shall submit a Grants Manual to the AOR and the Agreement Officer **within 90 days of the date of the award**.

- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL):**

The applicant will be responsible for developing and tracking activity targets, outputs and impact, and overall activity indicators in the application which gauge individual program activities and program effectiveness. Within 90 days of signing the award, the Recipient must submit the activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL) to the AOR for approval. It is the AOR responsibility to review, collaborate on any necessary changes and finally approve the MELP. The MEL must adhere to USAID's **ADS 201.3.4.10, which requires that**, "Activities must have an approved Activity MEL Plan in place before major implementation actions begin."

The Recipient must ensure that the MEL Plan is adjusted to USAID's fiscal calendar of October 1 to September 30. Revisions to the MEL Plan must be approved by the AOR. The activity MEL Plan must be updated on an annual basis (by fiscal year) and should be revised as needed in response to changes in the activity or context that occur during the life of the activity.

The MEL plan must contain the following:

1. Introduction: This section introduces the activity MEL Plan, describes the structure of the plan, sets the time/period covered by the plan, and describes how it will be updated.

1.1 Activity Theory of Change: Include a summary description of the activity theory of change.

1.2 Logic model: Add a logic model that graphically depicts the activity theory of change. Add performance indicators and learning questions to the logic model where relevant to indicate the connection between elements of the theory of change and MEL tasks.

2. Monitoring Plan: The Monitoring Plan, at a minimum, must include the following:

2.1 Description: Describe the activity's monitoring approach, including monitoring processes, systems, data collection methodologies and internal control procedures.

2.2 Performance Monitoring: Describe the efforts to monitor activity performance. Include a list of the relevant high quality performance indicators of the activity's outputs and outcomes. The indicators must measure progress and achievement of the intended results, their baseline values (or plan for collecting baseline), and quarterly, annual and life of activity targets. The targets should be listed in an annex (see Indicators summary tracking table), in the form of an Indicators Tracking Table. For each indicator, the MEL Plan must include a Performance Indicator Reference Sheet, also as an annex (see PIRS template).

2.3 Context Monitoring: Describe any efforts for monitoring the activity's context and emerging risks that could impact achievement of the activity's results, this includes setting up at least 1-2 context indicators.

3. Beneficiary Feedback Plan: The MEL Plan must include a Beneficiary Feedback plan that includes:

- Determination on whether collecting beneficiary feedback is appropriate for the activity. If not, then a written explanation for why not.
- Describe procedures for collecting feedback from beneficiaries.
- Describe procedures for responding to feedback from beneficiaries.
- Describe procedures for reporting beneficiary feedback to USAID.

4. Evaluation Plan: The MEL Plan must include plans for collaborating with external evaluators: If USAID is planning to conduct an external evaluation of this activity, the MEL Plan must describe how the Recipient will collaborate with the external evaluation team.

5. Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting Approach (CLA): The MEL Plan must include learning questions related to the theory of change or knowledge gaps and plans to address them. It must describe plans for strategic collaboration with other activities or stakeholders, reflection opportunities, how the implementing partner will use new knowledge and learning for adaptations, and plans for knowledge capture at closeout.

6. Gender/inclusiveness considerations: Describe how gender analysis and other disaggregated data will be incorporated into the M&E methodology

7. Resources: Specify the budget allocated to monitoring, evaluation, and learning by listing the tasks, estimated costs, and proportion of the budget.

8. Roles and Responsibilities: Describe the general and individual roles and responsibilities for activity monitoring, evaluation and CLA tasks and approaches.

9. Schedule of the Activity MEL Plan Tasks: Provide a schedule of recurring tasks related to monitoring, evaluation, CLA or other planned learning efforts during the activity and the individuals who are responsible for them.

10. Schedule of the Activity MEL Plan Deliverables to USAID: List the various monitoring, evaluation, and CLA or other learning deliverables (including ad hoc and recurring reports) that will be provided to USAID.

Annex A:

Indicator tracking table:

This plan may be adapted to include other information based on what is most relevant to the needs of the activity implementing partner or the USAID Operating Unit.

Instructions

1. **Indicator:** State the name and unique identifier for the indicator that will measure the expected result listed in the next column. Disaggregates of an indicator may be listed on a separate row below the parent indicator. Indicators should be disaggregated by community, by sex and where appropriate, by age, disability, and vulnerable ethnic and religious minority status.
2. **Result Measured by Indicator:** State the result statement and the unique identifier for the expected result in the theory of change that the indicator intends to measure.
3. **Type of Indicator:** State whether the indicator is (1) a “Performance” indicator or a “Context” indicator, and (2) a “Standard” indicator or a “Custom” indicator.
4. **Data Source:** State the source of the data or planned source of the data.
5. **Frequency:** State how often the data are reported to USAID (quarterly, annually)
6. **Unit of Measure:** State the unit of measure (e.g., number of hours, percent of households).
7. **PPR:** State “Y” if this indicator is included in the PPR or “N” if this indicator is not included in the PPR. (Note: standard indicators are required to be reported in the PPR.)

8. **Baseline Date:** State the month and year (mm/yyyy) when the baseline data were collected. If the baseline is still planned, state the month and year when the baseline is planned to be collected.

9. **Baseline Value:** State the value of the indicator at “baseline,” i.e., before major implementation actions of the planned USAID-supported activity. Enter “TBD” if the baseline has not yet been collected.

10. **Target Date:** State the month and year (mm/yyyy) for when the target value is expected to be achieved. This may be aligned with the reporting frequency of the indicator, it may be an end-of-activity target, or some other relevant milestone date.

11. **Target Value:** State the estimated value of the indicator expected on the target date (quarterly/fiscal year, annually/per fiscal year, life of activity target).

Annex B.

PIRS template: [PIRS guidance and template](#)

For each indicator, the MELP must include a [Performance Indicator Reference Sheet](#) which provides a precise definition, information on disaggregation, the data source, frequency of data collection, collection method, the party responsible for data collection, when baseline information will be collected, and expected annual/outyear targets. Indicators should be disaggregated by gender, youth age groups, urban/rural, and disability, as feasible.

USAID’s website contains further background on [USAID’s MEL approach](#) as well as more detail on [developing a MELP](#).

In line with the Agency’s recent directives on agency-wide implementation of the Development Information Solution (DIS), USAID/Iraq will likely transition to the DIS during the life of this activity, potentially in the first or second year of implementation. In anticipation of this transition, the Recipient should review publicly available information

(<https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/resources-for-partners/development-information-solution>) and be prepared to transition to data entry into the DIS should it be required by USAID in the future.

The Recipient is responsible for oversight of the operations of the supported activities. The Recipient must monitor its activities under this Agreement to assure compliance with applicable Federal requirements and performance expectations are being achieved. Monitoring by the Recipient must cover each program, function, or activity. Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates that have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, the Recipient must immediately notify the AOR and the AO as soon as the following types of conditions become known:

- ❖ Problems, delays, or adverse conditions which will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the award. This disclosure must include a

statement of the action taken, or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation.

- ❖ Favorable developments which enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned. Notifications must include a statement of actions taken and / or any assistance needed to resolve the situation.

Notifications must include a statement of actions taken and / or any assistance needed to resolve the situation.

Additionally, USAID/Iraq currently has a third-party monitoring contractor. The Recipient agrees to provide any information needed to enable this contractor to properly monitor activities under this award.

It is anticipated that USAID will conduct performance evaluations during the life of the activity. The Recipient will provide any necessary information or support to enable the third-party evaluators to properly conduct such evaluations.

- **Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Reporting:**

The Implementation Plan will also apply geospatial methods using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to support USAID's effort to incorporate geographic data and analysis into USAID's overall development planning, design, and monitoring & evaluation. The Recipient is not expected to purchase or utilize GIS software unless it is relevant for implementation of their activities. The Recipient can utilize any of the GIS tools publicly available. When geographic data is acquired through data use or ownership agreements with the host-country government or other entity, the Recipient must ensure that the agreement makes it permissible for the geographic data to be submitted to, and used by, USAID and other U.S. Embassy agencies. Please refer to the USAID [link](#) for more details.

The Recipient shall provide geographic location or coordinate data twice annually as part of the 2nd Quarterly Performance Report and the Annual Report for all USAID-supported sites as follows:

A. Activity Location Data

The Recipient must collect and submit Activity Location Data (ALD) and Location of Intended Beneficiaries according to the following four requirements:

1. Level of Geographic Detail

At a minimum, the location(s) where the activity is implemented must be collected at the Exact Site Level, unless otherwise specified by USAID. The Location of the Intended Beneficiaries shall be collected at least at the Administrative Unit 1 Level (i.e., Region), and where possible/appropriate at the Administrative Unit 3 Level (i.e., Commune) or at the Administrative Unit 2 Level (i.e., Province).

2. Activity Location Data Collection Standards

Activity Location Data must be collected according to the standards provided by USAID, such as the use of standard names, boundaries, and locations in Latin script. Activity location data collection standards are detailed in [579saa](#):

3. Activity Location Data Submission Method and Frequency

Activity Location Data must be submitted quarterly and the Annual Report to an Agency approved reporting tool or in a digital format according to the standards and procedures provided by USAID. If the Activity Location Data has not changed since the previous data submission, it must be indicated when the data is submitted.

4. Activity Location Data Risk

Activity Location Data must exclude personally identifiable information. If the Activity Location Data collected by the Recipient requires protection from unauthorized access to mitigate data risk, the Recipient must notify USAID before submitting the Activity Location Data to USAID and implement mitigation techniques to protect the data from unauthorized access in consultation with USAID.

B. Geographic Data Assets

Geographic data assets are primary or derived data assets that are developed or utilized during a project. All geographic data assets must be submitted in accordance with the special clause or provision “Submission of Datasets to the Development Data Library (DDL)” per ADS 302.3.5.21.

NOTE: Activity Location Data (ALD) and geographically disaggregated indicators are not considered geographic assets. ALD should be submitted as reported in accordance with section “A. Activity Location Data” sub-section “3. Activity Location Data Submission Method and Frequency” above.

1. Geographic Data Files

- a. Both primary and derived Geographic Data Files must be submitted.
- b. Geographic Data Files must be submitted in Shapefile (.shp), GeoTIFF (.tif), CSV (.csv), or GeoJSON (.geojson) file formats.
- c. In addition to fulfilling the submission requirements noted above, Geographic Data Files that are stored in other file formats that may be useful to end users can be voluntarily submitted in those file formats. For example, Geographic Data Files stored in a File Geodatabase (.gdb) or as a Web Map Service (WMS) can also be submitted.
- d. Geographic Data Files that are stored in Shapefile (.shp) or GeoTIFF (.tif) formats will include metadata that follows ISO 19115 using the ISO 19139 XML implementation schema.
- e. Geographic Data Files that are stored in a CSV or GeoJSON format and contain latitude/longitude coordinates will include supplementary information regarding the:
 1. Method used to create the latitude/longitude coordinates;
 2. Spatial reference used to generate the latitude/longitude coordinates; and
 3. Geographical precision of the latitude/longitude coordinates using the International Aid Transparency Initiative standards. For example, a

latitude/longitude coordinate may represent an exact location, the center of a populated place, or the center of a subnational administrative unit. This information must be included in addition to the actual CSV dataset.

- f. Geographic Data Files that are stored in Shapefile (.shp), GeoTIFF (.tif), or GeoJSON (.geojson), JSON (.json) file formats will use the Geographic Coordinate System World Geodetic System 1984 (GCS WGS 1984) spatial reference. If the use of a different spatial reference was required for an analysis, the spatial reference that was used must be indicated elsewhere in the metadata.

2. Geographic Data Processing and Analysis Files

- a. Geographic Data Processing and Analysis Files that are written in programming languages will include a description of the language they are written in (e.g., a Python file would be .py, a Javascript file would be .js, etc.), the intended purpose of the file, use limitations, and execution instructions.
- b. Geographic Data Processing and Analysis Files will include descriptive comments and relative pathnames to enable efficient and effective use by an end user.
- c. Geographic Data Processing and Analysis Files are stored in an online repository, such as GitHub, these files can also be submitted as a clone of the repository.

3. Geographic Data Visualization Files

- a. Geographic Data Visualization Files created using desktop GIS software will be submitted in Esri Map Document (.mxd) or QGIS Project (.qgs) file formats.
- b. Geographic data visualization products that are finalized in separate desktop software or stored in a different file format can also be submitted if they may be of use to an end user. For example, when a data visualization product is stored as a Map Package or is finalized in Adobe Illustrator, the Map Package (.mpk), or Adobe Illustrator (.ai) file can be additionally submitted.
- c. Geographic Data Visualization Files written in a programming language and used to generate web-based data visualization products will include an indication of the programming language (for example, a Python file would be .py, a Javascript file would be .js, etc.)
- d. Geographic Data Visualization Files will reference relative pathnames to the source of all Geographic Data Files that are displayed in the data visualization product.
- e. When products created with the Geographic Data Visualization Files are included in documents that are submitted to the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), such as a report that includes a map created with a Geographic Data Visualization File, the URL that links to the location of the document in the DEC must be provided.

- **Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP):**

Submitted annually to the AOR and MEO for approval, the first Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) is **due 60 calendar days of the date of the award**, with submission of the first Annual Implementation Plan. For the following

subsequent years, the Recipient shall update and submit at a minimum once per year using USAID/Iraq's template.

Refer to Section Environmental Compliance Requirement for complete details.

- **Conflict Sensitivity Analysis Implementation Strategy**

The Recipient will submit a Conflict Sensitivity Analysis and Implementation Strategy during the Refine and Implement period prior to the end of Year 1. The Conflict Sensitivity Analysis and Implementation Strategy must include a conflict-sensitivity analysis to inform design and ensure that conflict sensitive approaches are incorporated throughout implementation. From this analysis, the Applicant will develop an annual implementation strategy as a component of the Annual Work Plan. The Conflict Sensitivity Implementation Strategy must ensure a 'do no harm' approach is integrated into activities to minimize potential negative impacts (including gender and ethnic tensions) and maximize positive impacts (community stability, etc.). The Applicant must analyze the two-way relationship between conflict and a more empowered, effective, and prominent civil society in Iraq. The Applicant will update the Conflict Sensitivity Implementation Strategy annually and submit as a part of the Annual Work Plan.

- **Gender Analysis and Action Plan:**

The Recipient shall submit a Gender Analysis and Action Plan **within 120 calendar days of the date of the award** to the AOR for approval.

To meet USAID's expectations with respect to gender integration, the Applicant will clearly express their approach to integrating gender equality, women's empowerment and protection of women and girls in a nuanced, and flexible gender action plan, submitted by the end of the refine and implement phase of this award (within 4 months of award). The Applicant should review USAID/Iraq's draft sector gender analysis as part of the process of development of this plan ([available at this link](#)).

- **Final Report**

The Recipient must prepare and submit the final report required by this Agreement to the Agreement Officer's Representative in English **within 90 calendar days** after completion of the award and to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) at <http://dec.usaid.gov>.

Refer to Standard Provisions Section M.21 Submissions to the Development Experience Clearinghouse and Publications (June 2012).

The final performance report should contain, but not be limited to the following information:

- ❖ Executive summary
- ❖ Describe the methods of assistance used and the pros and cons of these methods
- ❖ Brief description and mapping of the results of the program

- ❖ How this program assisted USAID in meeting targets
- ❖ Success stories
- ❖ Problems and how they were overcome
- ❖ Cost-effectiveness
- ❖ Final-year (and/or final fiscal year) as well as cumulative life-of-activity indicator reporting
- ❖ Lessons learned, and
- ❖ Recommendations for USAID's future interventions

- **Close out/Demobilization Plan**

In order to efficiently close-out this activity and reduce time and costs for both parties, USAID/Iraq requests that, **120 calendar days prior to award completion**, the Recipient shall submit a closeout/demobilization plan for AOR approval. The closeout/demobilization plan shall include:

- a) a draft property disposition plan,
- b) plan for the phase-out of operations,
- c) delivery schedule for all reports or other deliverables required under the agreement, and
- d) timetable for completing all required actions in the demobilization plan, including the submission date of the final property disposition plan to the Agreement Officer.

- **Other Reporting**

During the life of the award, the Recipient may be required to prepare and submit other special reports concerning specific activities and/or analyses as directed by the AOR or other USAID Officials in English and/or Arabic. These requests will be in writing and will specify the due date.

4. Program Income

Program income is not anticipated.

5. Environmental Compliance

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered, and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) Parts 201.5.10g and 204 (<https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/agency-policy/series-200>), which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities.

Environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this NOFO. In addition, the recipient must comply with host country

environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter shall govern.

No activity funded under this NOFO will be implemented unless an environmental threshold determination, as defined by 22 CFR 216, has been reached for that activity, as documented in a Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE), Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), or Environmental Assessment (EA) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO). RCE ME 22-68 received concurrence from the Middle East BEO on August 18, 2022, for activities under this NOFO.

Specifically, the activities envisioned in this NOFO fall into the following classes of action:

- Education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)
- Analyses, studies, academic or research workshops and meetings
- Document and information transfers

In case of a sub-grants component, the recipient will be required to use an Environmental Review Form (ERF) or Environmental Review (ER) checklist using impact assessment tools to screen grant applications to ensure the funded applications will result in no adverse environmental impact, to develop mitigation measures, as necessary, and to specify monitoring and reporting. Use of the ERF or ER checklist is called for when the nature of the grant applications to be funded is not well enough known to make an informed decision about their potential environmental impacts, yet due to the type and extent of activities to be funded, any adverse impacts are expected to be easily mitigated. Implementation of sub-grant activities cannot go forward until the ERF or ER checklist is completed and approved by USAID. The recipient is responsible for ensuring that mitigation measures specified by the ERF or ER checklist process are implemented.

The recipient will be responsible for periodic reporting to the USAID Agreement Officer Representative, as specified in this NOFO.

USAID anticipates that environmental compliance and achieving optimal development outcomes for the proposed activities will require environmental management expertise. Respondents to the NOFO should therefore include as part of their application their approach to achieving environmental compliance and management, to include:

- The respondent's approach to developing and implementing an environmental review process for a grant fund and/or an EMMP.
- The respondent's approach to providing necessary environmental management expertise, including examples of past experience of environmental management of similar activities.
- The respondent's illustrative budget for implementing the environmental compliance activities. For the purposes of this NOFO, applicants should reflect illustrative costs for environmental compliance implementation and monitoring in their cost application.

As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the recipient, in collaboration with the USAID Agreement Officer Representative and Mission Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing and planned activities under this NOFO to determine if they are within the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.

If the recipient plans any new activities outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation, it shall prepare an amendment to the documentation for USAID review and approval. No such new activities shall be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval of environmental documentation amendments.

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

[END OF SECTION F]

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SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

The Agreement Officer for this Award is:

Mr. Zachary Clarke
Regional Agreement Officer
USAID/MERP
zclarke@usaid.gov

The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist for this Award is:

Ms. Olga Ekkert
Senior Acquisition & Assistance Specialist
USAID/Iraq
oekkert@usaid.gov

[END OF SECTION G]

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