



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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Deadline for Questions: May 17, 2017 09:00 a.m. Almaty time

Pre-Application Conference: May 23, 2017

Concept papers due date: May 31, 2017, 09:00 a.m. Almaty time

Application Due Date: July 24, 2017, 09:00 a.m. Almaty time

Subject: Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: RFA-176-17-000004

Program Title: USAID Youth Development Activity

Dear Prospective Applicants:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking Concept Papers from qualified Non-U.S. organizations to fund a new cooperative agreement for youth development in the Kyrgyz Republic. Eligibility standards for this award are provided in Section C of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO).

USAID hereby requests Concept Papers, limited to six pages maximum and submitted in compliance with the instructions in Section D of this NFO. USAID will review Concept Papers and invite organizations deemed to be sufficiently competitive and responsive to this NFO to submit a full application.

Subject to the availability of funds, an award will be made to that responsible applicant(s) whose application(s) best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity and the selection criteria contained herein. While one award is anticipated as a result of this NFO, USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

For the purposes of this NFO the term "Grant" is synonymous with "Cooperative Agreement"; "Grantee" is synonymous with "Recipient"; and "Grant Officer" is synonymous with "Agreement Officer". Eligible organizations interested in submitting a Concept Paper are encouraged to read this funding opportunity thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, submission requirements, and evaluation process.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NFO and meet eligibility standards in Section C of this NFO. 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. Applicants will need to have available or download Adobe program to their computers in order to view and save the Adobe forms properly. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the entire NFO has been received from the internet in its entirety and USAID bears no responsibility for data

errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the NFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

The successful Applicant will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives. Please read each section of the NFO thoroughly. Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section D. The deadline for questions is shown above. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted to www.grants.gov.

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

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sam Kraegel", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Samuel Kraegel
Agreement Officer

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SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM SUMMARY

USAID Kyrgyz Republic's overarching goal for this funding opportunity is to enable young people in targeted communities to more actively and positively participate in civic, social, and economic life and contribute to the development of their families and communities. The resulting activity is meant to be supportive of USAID's Youth in Development Policy,¹ USAID's understanding of positive youth development,² and the GoKR's Youth Development Strategy. It should also support USAID Kyrgyz Republic's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), specifically Development Objective 1, Inclusive and accountable democracy, but applicants may also propose approaches that support achievement of the two other objectives of the CDCS3.

A. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

This activity will achieve the following results:

Individual Level:

- Youth develop relevant life and professional skills that enable them be civically engaged citizens, leaders, and economic actors in their communities.
- Youth acquire more inclusive and positive civic identity and values that motivate them to participate more actively and demonstrate leadership in their communities to address challenges of local concern.

Community Level:

- Opportunities created to increase youth engagement in local communities, including through partnerships with local government.
- Private sector opportunities created to enable youth to develop their professional skills and contribute to their families and communities.
- Improved public image of youth in targeted communities.

System Level:

¹ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Youth_in_Development_Policy_0.pdf

² USAID's YouthPower Learning provides the following definition: "Positive youth development (PYD) engages youth along with their families, communities, and/or governments so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD approaches build skills, assets and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems." To learn more about PYD, see resources available at <http://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development>.

³ See <https://www.usaid.gov/kyrgyz-republic/cdcs>.

- The evidence base about the challenges facing youth and the policy responses that are most effective is expanded and accessible to government and non-government actors.
- Public, private, and other civic actors identify policies and strengthen local systems to expand youth's assets, agency, opportunities for contribution, or otherwise address the enabling environment for youth engagement.

Throughout this document, the term Government of Kyrgyz Republic and GoKR denote the unitary state-president, prime-minister, parliamentarians, ministers, ministries, oblasts, and rayons; the terms Local Government and LSG denote the local councils (aiyl and city), aiyl okmotus and mayors' offices. The term youth denotes the age group of people from 14 to 28, in accordance with Kyrgyz Republic law. This age range covers distinct phases of youth development (mid and late adolescence and emerging adulthood), and programming should be age-appropriate in order to provide maximum outcomes.

USAID expects to make only one award under this NFO, for a period of five years. The maximum funding available is \$5 million, but the amount may be less, depending on the planned approach of the winning applicant. Applicants are welcome to propose approaches that address only some of the results below, but a strong application addressing all results will receive preference over an application of similar quality that addresses only some of the results. For this reason, applicants are encouraged to apply in consortium with like-minded organizations with the requisite capacity and experience to achieve all the results.

B. BACKGROUND

Country Context:

The Kyrgyz Republic is a mountainous country in Central Asia with a population of approximately 6 million, 1.7 million of which is composed of people aged 14-28, which the Law on Youth Policy (2009)⁴ defines as youth. The youth population continues to grow at a fast rate, because the country has the highest fertility rate in the region (4.0) and a major unmet need for family planning⁵. Two-thirds of youth live in rural areas. Like their peers in other Central Asian countries, young people in the Kyrgyz Republic face challenges related to education, lack of access to youth-friendly social services, limited employment opportunities, the influence of extremist and nationalistic ideas, and poor governance. All this leaves youth with few avenues to realize their potential, which in turn makes them vulnerable to various negative influences.

There is abundant research into youth's needs and concerns, challenges and opportunities, and their motivation and desire to assume leadership roles. One of the earlier (2003) studies of youth in Central Asia was conducted by International Crisis Group.⁶ It described the region's youth (which at that time constituted half of the population) as having poor academic prospects due to the overall deterioration of the region's education system, few opportunities to realize their full

⁴ http://www.youthpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/library/2009_Kyrgyz_Law_on_Youth_Policy_Kyr.pdf

⁵ 2014 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014, UNICEF

⁶ <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/central-asia/066-youth-in-central-asia-losing-the-new-generation.aspx>

potential, and low living standards. In research conducted by Saferworld in 2012⁷, young people in the region expressed feelings of being excluded from political, economic and social processes, a lack of trust in law enforcement and the legal system, dissatisfaction with the quality of public services and “decision making processes at local, family and even the individual level”. Other research shows that young people in Kyrgyzstan are lagging behind their peers in other countries and have limited employment opportunities.⁸ The deterioration of the education system since independence means that youth are not acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills they need to be responsible citizens and be competitive in the labor market. The education system badly needs colossal investments in teacher training, updates to curricula, and rehabilitation of infrastructure.

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic’s (GoKR) Youth Policy (2016-2020) discusses many of these challenges, including the education system’s low standing in international education rankings. These shortcomings directly contribute to young people’s limited access to quality state and municipal services, lack of involvement in local decision making, and the inability of the domestic labor market to absorb more than 50% of new market entrants.⁹

While the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, international donors, and other actors are working to address these long-term challenges, today’s youth need support now if they are to realize their full potential as members of society. While formal education is being provided through the regular education system, there is a need to improve life skills that the existing education system does not fully address.¹⁰ This includes helping youth to develop critical thinking, teamwork, interpersonal communication, and stress management skills. With these skills, young people will be more confident and better prepared for a successful transition to the professional world and participation in civic life.

Youth undergo rapid changes in their physical, cognitive, social, psychological wellbeing, presenting both opportunities and vulnerabilities. The youth years are a critical period for solidifying many behaviors and lifestyle choices which have great consequences on future opportunities, such as drug and alcohol use, early marriage, and child bearing. Engaging youth along with their families, communities, and governments can empower youth to make good choices that enable them to reach their full potential.

Youth values, attitudes, and identity

While it is clear that youth in Kyrgyzstan face considerable obstacles to achieving success, it is important to consider what they themselves think of their situation. Recent research identifies a number of common features in the attitudes and values of Kyrgyzstani youth, many of which give

⁷ <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/640-nobody-has-asked-about-young-peoples-opinions>

⁸ <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/46643496.pdf>

⁹ “Стратегия Молодежной Политики Кыргызской Республики на 2016-2020 гг.” (Youth Development Strategy, 2016-2020).

¹⁰ “Life skills are psychosocial abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. They are loosely grouped into three broad categories of skills: cognitive skills for analyzing and using information, personal skills for developing personal agency and managing oneself, and inter-personal skills for communicating and interacting effectively with others”.
http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7308.html.

hope that youth can overcome existing barriers to success. A 2015 study by GIZ points to widespread patriotism among youth and the positive desire of many to contribute to their country's development. GIZ' findings also point to a powerful optimism that persists among youth, despite the many objective challenges they face: "They display unchecked optimism regarding the future of the country ten years down the line. And most of the young Kyrgyz believe that it, too, is their personal duty to advance the country, and that their generation can make a difference."¹¹

This positive outlook contrasts somewhat with youth attitudes about how Kyrgyzstan is governed and concerns about their own economic prospects. Mercy Corps found that youth respondents were critical of elected officials and state entities' ability to serve the people, and this was accompanied by a strong sense of indignation about perceived systemic corruption at various levels of government and among service providers such as schools and hospitals.¹² The authors cited this low opinion of government as a particular risk because they view confidence in state institutions as essential to realizing national cohesion in pluralistic societies.¹³ This risk of low confidence in government undermining a sense of national cohesion is compounded by economic prospects for young people that are worsening in real terms, e.g. due to the fall in remittances in 2015-16, or to unmet economic expectations. This assessment aligned with the GIZ study, where optimistic, patriotic youth were nonetheless disenchanted with politics and governance, and relied minimally on the state or its institutions to achieve their personal goals. When asked about politics, youth most frequently described nepotism, corruption, mistrust, social inequality, and poor infrastructure.¹⁴ Despite this, youth reportedly remain ready to play a more active role in politics if the right opportunity were available, and remain encouraged to do so by a strong sense of responsibility to their country.¹⁵

The GoKR's Youth Development Strategy (2016-2020) recognizes many of the same challenges discussed in the research cited above. In response, it proposes an ambitious set of measures, with particular focus on improving youth access to services, enabling youth to participate in decision making processes, and cultivating values among youth that encourage them to make a positive contribution to their country's development. The latter goal covers a wide range of values, including civic, patriotic, and traditional values. It also emphasizes tolerance and respect for diversity, legal awareness, and counteracting extremism, terrorism, and bullying.¹⁶

In summary, the optimism, sense of duty, and desire to build a better future for their country are important factors that can motivate and enable youth to bring about positive changes in their communities, especially if they are supported by all stakeholders – whether in the government, private sector, civil society, or the international community. The Youth Development Strategy and the USAID documents cited below offer good starting points for identifying the kinds of support

¹¹ Dr. Marc Calmbach and Heide Möller-Slawinski "Youth in Kyrgyzstan: Bridging Tradition and Modernity," GIZ, 2015. <https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2015-en-youth-in-kyrgyzstan.pdf>

⁹ "Vulnerable to Manipulation: Interviews with Migrant Youth and Youth Remittance-Recipients in Kyrgyzstan," May 2016. Available at: <https://www.usaid.gov/kyrgyz-republic/key-documents>

¹³ Vulnerable to Manipulation, p. 5.

¹⁴ "Youth in Kyrgyzstan," GIZ, p. 13

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 45.

¹⁶ Youth Development Strategy 2016-2020, pp. 14-15.

that will empower and equip youth to realize their potential and contribute to the development of their families and communities.

C. CROSS-CUTTING ELEMENTS

The following program elements should be addressed in the youth program funded under this NFO:

Bridging the Divide

Research conducted by Mercy Corps and Foundation for Tolerance International suggests that public places such as schools, religious institutions, and neighborhoods are increasingly divided along ethnic lines. It also noted widespread negative attitudes about other ethnic groups, both on the part of the majority and minority populations. One intended result of this activity is to foster the development of a positive civic identity among youth, one which transcends ethnic and religious differences and gives young people a common sense of identity and purpose oriented toward advancing their communities' and their country's development. All planned interventions should be designed to contribute to a sense of unity among youth, regardless of regional, ethnic, and religious differences, with a view to increasing resilience against negative ideologies that exclude specific individuals or groups and that could contribute to their disaffection and alienation.

Identifying a Path to Sustainability

From the start, applicants should design their proposed interventions with a view to ensuring sustainability. Applicants should outline a Sustainability Strategy in their applications that describes how their proposed or related interventions will be continued after USAID funding ends, including the government and non-government actors who will be responsible for implementation. Applications that propose building on ongoing and successful initiatives that are already sustained by local resources may prove to be more sustainable.

D. PROJECT DESCRIPTION COMPONENTS

USAID/Kyrgyz Republic requests that applicants propose technical approaches that they believe will best achieve the following overall goal and results:

Goal: Youth engaged in project activities more actively and positively participate in civic, social, and economic life and contribute to the development of their families and communities. Whatever the approach proposed by applicants, this youth activity should build a menu of options for youth to participate more actively¹⁷ in their communities. This menu should be based on the needs and preferences of youth and should take into account and build on any ongoing and promising youth-related initiatives or activities in targeted communities. To this end, the successful application should:

¹⁷ For more on USAID's vision of youth engagement and practical approaches for how to achieve it, see "Youth Engagement in Development: Effective Approaches and Action-Oriented Recommendations for the Field," available at: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00JP6S.pdf

- Describe the priority demographic and geographic groups the activity should engage, and clearly explain their greater importance in view of the goal of the activity and the higher level CDCS goal(s) to which it contributes.
- In partnership with youth and youth champions (teachers/professors, family, community and government leaders), develop a methodology and conduct an assessment to identify critical educational and professional training needs and outcomes that will enable youth to become more civically and economically engaged citizens.
- Develop tools and approaches enabling a broader cross section of youth to engage meaningfully in local governance, community development, and private sector activities.
- Propose concrete partnerships or other approaches to ensure the tools, resources and methodology developed are evaluated, adapted, and institutionalized after this activity ends.

Applicants should base their proposed approach on evidence gathered through their own or other organizations' past work, as well as from the wider body of literature. For activities for which there may not be sufficient evidence of the causal chain that leads to the desired results, applicants may consider proposing an experimental approach whereby multiple interventions are tested on a smaller scale and then evaluated and adapted based on what was learned. In the case of testing-evaluation-adaptation type approaches, the interventions to be tested, the method and criteria for their evaluation, and potential options for response should be described clearly. The desired results of this activity fall into the following three categories:

1. Individual-level results

Result 1: Youth develop relevant life and professional skills that enable them be civically engaged citizens, leaders, and economic actors in their communities.

School and university graduates often lack key skills they need to succeed in the professional world. This includes leadership, self-efficacy, goal setting, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills and media literacy. These skills are not only important in the workplace, but are essential characteristics of citizens of a democratic country. This activity should provide a range of professional development opportunities and civic and life skills training that will better position young people to compete in the job market. More importantly, it will connect them to the concrete opportunities to put these skills into practice through interventions under results 3 and 4.

Result 2: Youth acquire more inclusive and positive civic identity and values that motivate them to participate more actively and demonstrate leadership in their communities' to address challenges of local concern.

Today's generation of youth were born at a time when notions of national and civic identity were rapidly changing or even disintegrating. The fall of the Soviet system created an opening for new (or previously suppressed) expressions of identity, through language, religion, ethnicity, political ideologies, etc. But it also left the current generation of youth somewhat adrift, which was compounded by massive migration of Kyrgyzstanis in search of work, often leaving children with less parental supervision than would previously have been the case. In these circumstances, when a new national identity or identities are being formed, young people need opportunities to explore and develop their ideas of who they are and how they fit in society. A diverse society like

Kyrgyzstan's also requires that youth (and everyone) learn about and can be tolerant of others' identities, ideas, and individual rights. A wide range of social practices are relevant in this regard, such as the evolving role of men and women, public decision making and electoral processes, and cross-cultural communications. Young people who are conversant in these and other topics and who have a firm understanding and appreciation of their own and others' identities will be better positioned to constructively contribute to their communities and serve as a bulwark against destructive ideologies, such as nationalism, xenophobia, and violent religious extremism. Illustrative performance measures for individual level results:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Performance Measure 1.1 | Youth self-assessment of readiness for job market ¹⁸ |
| Performance Measure 2.1 | Interpersonal and/or positive identity scores of participating youth ¹⁹ |

2. Community-level results

Result 3: Opportunities created to increase youth engagement in local communities, including through partnerships with local government.

One area that is ripe for greater youth engagement in public life is local government, which has important roles in the provision of education and health services and manages such issues as the local budget, housing, and land use. Many health and social services are neither easily accessible nor friendly to youth, leading to low use of services which could greatly benefit young people, including by promoting the uptake of positive behaviors and avoidance of negative behaviors (drug use, domestic violence, etc). Given their limited resources and considerable responsibilities, local governments could benefit from increased youth engagement in local decision making and public life. Using the youth committees that exist in many, if not most, communities, local governments can support youth engagement in those areas of public policy that are of concern to them, and ultimately improve the quality and accessibility of services. This activity could provide resources enabling youth to contribute to local government efforts, for example, through support to small community infrastructure, public outreach, and internships in local government offices. Such activities should be linked to USAID's Community and Municipal Governance Initiative (CAMI) where possible, as it will partner directly with dozens of local governments in several oblasts.

Result 4: Private sector opportunities created to enable youth to develop their professional skills and contribute to their families and communities.

The private sector also provides opportunities for youth to contribute to their communities, whether through employment or internships with existing firms or through entrepreneurial activity. Skill development under Result 1 should be oriented to the needs of the private sector in targeted

¹⁸ Illustrative performance measures may be used by applicants, but they are not required and are included only to help communicate the intent of the activity. The actual performance measures used will depend entirely on the approach applicants propose, including their approach to learning (see Cross-Cutting Elements, below). One resource that is available to help applicants think through options for learning and measurement is USAID's Positive Youth Development Measurement Toolkit, available at: https://static.globalinnovationexchange.org/s3fs-public/asset/document/PYD%20Measurement%20Toolkit%20Final.pdf?FmETOPj.28pXhWjfwDXARknamnNBVg_r

¹⁹ These are two indicators and measurement methodologies described in the Positive Youth Development Measurement Toolkit, p. 70.

communities. The implementer should seek to cultivate linkages with USAID's economic development activities and their partner firms, where there is geographic overlap, or with other private sector firms in targeted communities.

Result 5: Improved public image of youth in targeted communities

Research discussed in the Problem Statement describes factors that limit youth's potential to contribute to the country's development as well as young people's feeling of exclusion and disempowerment from public life. This is compounded by negative perceptions about youth, which are too often based on myth rather than fact.²⁰ Improving the public image of youth and their potential to contribute to their communities' development is a key to the success of this activity, because a more positive image will motivate both public and private sector stakeholders to engage with youth. This activity will deploy a youth-led communications strategy to achieve this result. Work toward this result should identify specific audiences whose negative perception of youth presents the greatest barrier to youth community participation. Creative approaches are encouraged, and preference should be given to those that are lowest cost, most appealing, and can be sustained after the project ends.

Illustrative performance measures for community level results:

Performance Measure 3.1	Youth engagement in community development projects, local government initiatives, or local government internships
Performance Measure 3.2	Number of youth-centered services developed or improved
Performance Measure 4.1	Youth engagement in private sector, through employment, internships, or entrepreneurial activity
Performance Measure 5.1	Number of media and communications products available in targeted communities about youth contributions
Performance Measure 5.2	Perception of key stakeholders of youth contributions to the community

The individual- and community-level results are interrelated, with the first laying the groundwork for the second. Thus, gains in life and professional skills and positive civic identity will enable youth to more actively engage with local government and the private sector, and the practical opportunities provided under Results 3, 4, and 5 will enable youth to apply and further develop their new skills and make positive contributions to their community.

Specific interventions undertaken through this activity in support of individual- and community-level results should be demand driven and aim to provide a menu of options that attracts the largest possible number of vulnerable youth. The menu of possible activities should be driven, first, by youth interests, and second, by the demands of their communities, including private sector

²⁰ Youth Development Strategy 2016-2020, pp. 6-7.

companies interested in hiring young people. The activities proposed should be based on the applicant's successful experience in increasing youth engagement and/or evidence from research related to youth engagement. Possibilities include:

- Cultural and educational events (e.g., history classes, Russian/Kyrgyz/Uzbek language, computer courses)
- Civic and life skills trainings (debate clubs, leadership training, goal setting, negotiation skills development)
- Voter and civic education
- Outreach, information campaigns, and fora to support adoption of positive behaviors
- Private sector internships/employment
- Soft (e.g. career planning, interviewing, social skills, communication skills) and professional skills training for private sector employment Media literacy courses
- In-country exchanges between youth from different oblasts
- Courses on rights (employment, gender, property, or other subjects of interest to youth)
- Community development projects and other voluntary opportunities
- Internships with the local or state government entities
- Advocacy campaigns for youth-related issues
- Youth organizational and leadership development

3. System-level results

These system-level results are included to ensure that this activity contributes to learning about the challenges facing youth and the most effective interventions for overcoming these. To this end, USAID expects all applicants to propose a research and learning approach in their applications. This will enable USAID and the implementer to effectively assess progress towards achieving the goal and results of this activity and make course corrections as needed, while expanding the understanding of all interested parties in Kyrgyzstan of the issues facing youth and providing evidence for both government and non-government actors to inform more effective public policy responses. Combining research and activity implementation may require the skills and capacities of multiple organizations. USAID welcomes applications that draw on the different strengths of multiple partners.

Result 6: The evidence base about the challenges facing youth and the policy responses that are most effective is expanded and accessible to government and non-government actors.

This result may be approached by applicants from whatever angle they find most important in addressing youth community engagement in society as a whole. Applicants may propose, for example, separate studies, or an activity whose implementation will naturally generate greater understanding and evidence on the issue and ways to solve it. Activity planning in support of this result should take into account the costs and procedures needed to collect, document, and disseminate learning.

This purpose will be particularly important for parts of activities undertaking testing-evaluation-adaptation type approaches. Adequate plans and budgets should be presented to collect and evaluate suitable evidence to make decisions about which approaches to continue or discontinue.

Result 7: Public, private, and other civic actors identify policies and strengthen local systems to expand youth's assets, agency, opportunities for contribution, or otherwise address the enabling environment for youth engagement.

Although this proposed activity is limited in time-frame, enduring benefit is possible by identifying and strengthening community groups, enterprises, universities or other actors who can benefit from engagement with youth and who are willing and able to continue this engagement and contribute to public policy about youth after USAID funding ends. In working towards all results, proposed activities should engage those groups to the greatest extent possible.

E. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

As part of their technical proposals, the Applicant will need to provide a draft Award Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (AMEP) describing the methods for collecting and analyzing performance data and other information to track progress toward planned results.

The AMEP must include a logic model diagram and narrative detailing the following: the development hypothesis underlying the logic model; how data collection will be managed; how and when internal data quality assessments will be undertaken; how gender analysis will be incorporated into the M&E methodology; and the planned staffing structure and resource allocation for M&E to complete these tasks. The AMEP must detail any plans for learning, and collaboration and adaptation as they relate to M&E. This must include plans for internal evaluations, and if an external evaluation will be taking place, plans for collaborating with the evaluation team throughout implementation. As appropriate, it should also include planned efforts to: fill knowledge gaps and test uncertain causal links in the development hypothesis, collaborate with other groups or organizations in areas relevant to learning, conduct context monitoring for identified risks and assumptions, or capture and disseminate knowledge. In dynamic contexts or where aspects of the project are such that cause and effect relationships are poorly understood, the system for complexity-aware monitoring that will support discovery and programmatic adaptation should be described.

The AMEP must include an appropriate set of quantitative and/or qualitative indicators, which maximizes validity, reliability, integrity, precision, timeliness, and cost effectiveness. No non-mandatory indicator should be proposed without a clear analytic purpose. Preference should be given to all relevant standard indicators before proposing custom indicators. For each indicator, the M&E Plan must include a Performance Indicator Reference Sheet whose content and format follows a template to be provided by the mission. The M&E Plan should also include a Performance Indicator Tracking Table (PITT), an excel-based file that tracks all quantitative performance data, including: baseline figures, quarterly and/or annual actuals, quarterly and/or annual targets, life of project totals, and life of project targets, disaggregated as appropriate. The PITT will be submitted to USAID on a quarterly basis as part of the Quarterly Report. Proposed indicators must at minimum include these disaggregates: sex disaggregates for all people level indicators, numerators and denominators for all ratios and percentages, and geographic locations. Sex and ratio disaggregates must be included in the PITT. For geographic disaggregation, all indicators associated with a discrete project site must be disaggregated by the decimal GPS coordinate associated with that site. All indicators associated with an area-wide activity must be disaggregated by province and district name. Geographic disaggregates should not

be included in the PITT unless otherwise directed, but must be provided in conjunction with the Quarterly Report if requested through a separate reporting template or by uploading the data to the USAID/Kyrgyz Republic online GIS system.

F. KEY PROGRAMMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

The following considerations should be taken into account when submitting concepts/applications under this NFO:

1. Building on USAID investments and experience

USAID has been promoting democracy in Kyrgyzstan since the early 1990's. Significant investments have been made towards building the capacity of civil society actors, government institutions and change agents which can be tapped to support youth. Activities under this NFO should foster direct links, where relevant, with the following USAID programs: CAMI, the Collaborative Governance Program (CGP), the Business Growth Initiative (BGI), and AgroHorizon (see below for contact details). USAID may also launch other new activities during the lifetime of this activity that will be relevant. Other donor programs operating in KR that focus on youth should also be taken into consideration while responding to this NFO.

2. Do No Harm

Activities under this NFO should be founded on a sound theory of change based on empirical data and analysis of the situation in Kyrgyzstan. Activities must be based on strong analysis and not favor (or give the appearance of favoring) a particular region or population group or individual groups/clans/families or other distinct identity groups over others. All activities should be as inclusive as possible.

3. Geographic Focus

Activities under this NFO should reflect a geographic balance. The applicant will select a mix of targeted communities, with equal representation of rural and urban sites, northern and southern communities, and a mix of multi-ethnic and mono-ethnic communities, in consultation with USAID. In the interests of creating synergies with USAID and other donor or Government of the Kyrgyz Republic activities, applicants should also consider where other relevant activities are currently underway. For the purposes of coordination with ongoing USAID activities, the following list of activities, implementation sites, and contact information is provided:

- Community and Municipal Governance Initiative (CAMI): currently works in Jalabad (Jeti-Oguz, Ak-Suu rayons) and Issyk Kul Oblasts (Bazar Korgon and Suzak rayons) and will be expanded to other oblasts later; point of contact: Robert Bodo, Chief of Party, Robert_Bodo@dai.com
- Business Growth Initiative (BGI): BGI has a sectoral, not a geographic focus, which includes the tourism and apparel industries; point of contact: usaid.bgi.project@gmail.com; see also <https://www.facebook.com/BGIProject/>

- AgroHorizon: Works in Batken, Osh, Jalalabad, and Naryn Oblasts; point of contact: Sivara Baibulatova, Public Communications Specialist, sbaibulatova@agrohorizon-kg.org
- Collaborative Governance Program (CGP): Works nationwide; point of contact: Fatima Kasmahunova, Public Outreach Specialist, fkasmahunova@ewmi-kg.org

4. Gender Issues

Gender is a social construct that refers to relations between and among the sexes, based on their relative roles. USAID's Automated Directive System (ADS) states: "Gender issues are central to the achievement of strategic plans and Assistance Objectives (AO), and USAID strives to promote gender equality, in which both men and women have equal opportunity to benefit from and contribute to economic, social, cultural and political development; enjoy socially valued resources and rewards; and realize their human rights." (ADS 201.3.9.3).

Applicants' submissions should reflect analysis of the gender disparities related to young men and women's ability to actively participate in public life and positively contribute to the development of their communities. The purpose of this analysis is to identify and address gender issues that may obstruct or improve the impact of this activity. Considering a gender perspective helps to ensure that the interests of both women and men are adequately represented, so that women and men will benefit equally from the activity interventions. Interventions should aim to empower young men and women equally and help them overcome any barriers or negative social trends such as those cited above that prevent them from realizing their potential, whether in the educational, professional, or social spheres.

Applicants should identify gender equality gaps that most affect youth today. For example, non-consensual bride kidnapping, domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence are widespread and negatively impact women (and some men) across the country.²¹

Gender and Performance Indicators: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pdacp778.pdf "Reflecting Gender Issues in Performance Indicators" sets forth USAID's requirements for performance indicators in projects/activities regarding gender. In order to ensure that USAID assistance makes the optimal contribution to gender equality, performance management systems and evaluations at the activity levels must include gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data, where relevant.

For more guidance on gender analysis and integration, please see the following references:

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACT200.pdf

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Youth_in_Development_Policy_0.pdf

<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/205.pdf>

5. USAID Funding Must be Used for Secular Purposes Only

²¹ One recent piece of research in this area is the UN's "Gender in Society Perceptions Study," available here: <http://stat.kg/en/publications/gender-v-vospriyatii-obshestva/>

USAID can only finance activities and programs that have a secular purpose. USAID assistance must be allocated on the basis of neutral, secular criteria that neither favor nor disfavor religion, and is made available to both religious and secular beneficiaries on a nondiscriminatory basis.

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

Subject to funding availability, USAID intends to provide up to \$5,000,000 in total USAID funding over a five year period. The ceiling for this program is \$5,000,000. Actual funding amounts are subject to availability of funds.

USAID intends to award one Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity.

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

2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The period of performance anticipated herein is five years. The estimated start date will be determined at the time of the award.

3. Substantial Involvement

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

The **initial draft Work Plan** shall be submitted with the full application. The draft Work Plan must be finalized no later than 30 days after the award is made. The Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) must provide written comments on the draft Work Plan within three weeks of receipt and when the plan is finalized, the AOR will provide written approval.

Annual Work Plans for subsequent years are due to the AOR no later than 30 days prior to the end of the USG's fiscal year or approximately August 30th. Work plans may be submitted electronically. Upon acceptance of the work plan by the AOR, any substantial revisions to the plan shall require the written approval of the AOR.

The work plan should include a description of the activities to be completed during the year, the expected results, provide quantitative targets for all indicators outlined in the activity monitoring and evaluation plan (AMEP), list of commodities to be procured and key benchmarks to be met throughout the fiscal year and provide a timeline for the implementation of activities. The work plan shall include a detailed budget with a pipeline analysis of costs incurred and projections of costs for the life of the award implementation plan for achieving project outputs.

Regardless of the start date of this award, work plans will be adjusted to the fiscal calendar of October 1-September 30.

b. Approval of Specified Key Personnel: For this program the Applicant shall propose Key Personnel positions for USAID approval.

c. Approval of Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP): Within 30 days of award, the Recipient shall finalize the AMEP in conjunction with the AOR. The Work Plan must set forth a comprehensive AMEP that measures impact and progress toward achieving results over the life of the award. The AMEP must include indicators, targets, data sources and collection methods, baseline information, benchmarks and periodic evaluations, and data quality assessment reports. Data collected under the AMEP shall be submitted with the final report. Regardless of the start date of this award, the AMEP will be adjusted to the fiscal calendar of October 1-September 30. As necessary, the AMEP may be updated each year of this award as part of the work plan approval process.

The Recipient shall adhere to the relevant ADS provisions with respect to monitoring and evaluation activities for the design and final program. The designed activity must include indicators against which results will be measured. These indicators are expected to include USG standard indicators and additional indicators as identified by the Recipient in their application.

d. Agency and Recipient Collaboration as follows:

- i. USAID concurrence is required in the selection of any sub-award recipients and on the substantive provisions of these sub-awards.
- ii. USAID monitoring to permit direction and redirection because of interrelationships with other projects;
- iii. USAID authority to immediately halt a construction activity, if applicable.

e. No construction is anticipated under this award.

4. Title to Property

Property title under the resultant agreement shall vest with the Recipient in accordance with the Requirements of the Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations.

5. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for this program is Code 937 and 110.

6. Purpose of the Award

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 “USAID Youth Development 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.

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

This NFO is restricted to Non-US, local organizations registered in the Kyrgyz Republic. USAID welcomes Concept Papers from organizations which have not previously received financial assistance from USAID. Although not required prior to submission of a Concept Paper, interested organizations should note that they must register in www.sam.gov before USAID may consider an application (if requested). Additional details and instructions for this registration process will be provided.

Applicants 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 responsibility determination assessment (Pre-award Survey) by the Agreement Officer (AO).

The Recipient must be a responsible entity. The AO may determine a pre-award survey is required to conduct an examination that will determine whether the prospective Recipient has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

At its discretion, Applicant may propose a cost share in cash, in-kind, or a combination of both. Leveraged non-USAID resources from private firms and institutions (such as equipment, training, level of effort and any in-kind contributions) may be considered part of cost share. USAID will make the final determination and assess whether or not the Applicants cost share contributions (e.g. categories or items) meet the standards set in 2 CFR 200. All cash and in-kind contributions committed by partners must be documented in accordance with 2 CFR 200.306. For guidance on cost sharing in grants and cooperative agreements see ADS 303.

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency Point of Contact

Mr. Samuel Kraegel
Agreement Officer
USAID/Central Asia
41 Kazibek Bi Street
050010 Almaty, Kazakhstan
Email: skraegel@usaid.gov

Tel.: +7 727 250-76-12

Questions and Answers:

All questions regarding this NFO should be submitted in writing to Mr. Samuel Kraegel, Agreement Officer via e-mail at skraegel@usaid.gov and to Ms. Aliya Baioralova, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist at abaioralova@usaid.gov no later than the date and time specified on the cover letter of this NFO, to provide sufficient time to address the questions and incorporate the questions and answers as an amendment to this notice of funding opportunity.

Any information given to a prospective Applicant concerning this NFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective Applicants as an amendment to this NFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective Applicant.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Submit applications to the USAID Central Asia according to the instructions below.

There are two (2) steps to the application under this NFO:

Step One (1): Submission of a concept paper (instructions below)

Step Two (2): Submission of a full application, if requested (instructions below)

Do not submit a full application unless requested to do so by USAID/Central Asia Mission.

USAID/Central Asia Mission will notify organizations submitting Concept Papers whether or not to submit a full application. Organizations that are requested to submit a full application should follow the instructions included in this Section of the NFO below.

Before submitting a concept paper under this NFO, it is recommended the interested organizations review the full submission instructions in this Section to ensure they can meet all of the requirements listed therein. Reviewing these requirements will help the organizations prepare for what must be done to increase the likelihood that their concept paper is successful.

CONCEPT PAPER SUBMISSION INFORMATION (STEP 1)

Any questions about this NFO should be submitted in writing no later than on May 17, 2017 to the following email addresses: abaioralova@usaid.gov, skraegel@usaid.gov, and AlmatyAASolicitation@usaid.gov.

A Pre-Application Conference for eligible organizations interested in submitting Concept Papers will be held in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic on **May 23, 2017**. The purpose of this conference will be to respond to comments and questions as well as to provide information to interested organization about this opportunity. Attendance at this conference is optional and will in no way affect consideration of Concept Papers or full Applications.

Full details of the time and location of this conference, including RSVP requirements, will be provided through a modification to this NFO at least a week in advance of the event.

USAID/Central Asia will collect, organize, and respond to questions and provide relevant notes and information from this conference by posting a modification to the NFO on www.grants.gov on or about May 25, 2017.

Please remember to register on www.grants.gov in order to receive email updates regarding any modifications or additional information that is posted regarding this NFO.

Submission Instructions for Concept Paper

Submit concept papers to the USAID/Central Asia Mission according to the instructions below:

1. Electronic: Send one electronic copy of your concept paper by email to abaioralova@usaid.gov, skraegel@usaid.gov, and AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov. E-mail submissions must include the following description in the subject line: "Concept paper for RFA-176-17-000004, submitted by: [name of Applicant organization]."

2. Fax: Faxed concept papers will not be accepted.

3. Deadline for Submission of Concept Papers: All concept papers (electronic) must be received by the deadline. The deadline for the concept paper submission is May 31, 2017, 09:00 a.m. (Almaty time). Concept papers received after this deadline will not be considered. Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of the NFO.

Concept Paper Format and Instructions

During the first phase of this competition, interested organizations are invited to submit concept papers addressing one or multiple components reflecting the program description below. All interested organizations must submit an initial concept paper no longer than six pages, which will be reviewed in accordance with the evaluation criteria below and the Program Description of the NFO.

1. Concept Paper Format: All concept papers must be:

- A maximum of six (6) pages;
- Typed, single space on letter size, not legal size, paper;
- 12 font size; charts, tables and spreadsheets may not be less than 10 font;
- Written in English;
- In Word (version 2010 or later) or Adobe PDF format;
- Spreadsheets must be in MS Excel (version 2010 or later) or in tables that are compatible with MS Word.
- The six-page maximum does not include the cover page.

2. Concept Paper Instructions: Concept papers must include the following components, organized according to the outline below.

a. Cover Page (does not count towards 6 page limit)

1. USAID NFO #RFA _____
2. Name and address of organization;
3. Contact person (lead contact name, telephone number, fax and e-mail Information);
4. Name(s) and title(s) of the principal author(s) of this concept paper;
5. Title of proposed program and total dollar amount of funds requested for the project period;
6. Identify applying organization as a registered Public International Organizations (PIO) or International Organizations (IO) or U.S. and Non-U.S. For-Profit Organizations or U.S. and Non-U.S. Colleges and Universities;
7. Names of other organizations or donors to whom the Applicant is submitting the application and/or which are funding the proposed activities; and
8. Signature, name and title of the authorized representative of the applicant.

b. Concept Paper (6 pages maximum)

1. Briefly describe the approach and activities your organization will use to achieve the goal, purposes, and results described in Program Description;
2. Describe in brief your approach to learning, both to monitor progress toward achieving activity results and to contribute to broader understanding of the challenges facing youth and to inform policy responses to address them.
3. Describe measures to be taken to ensure sustainability of the interventions and results achieved.

4. Specify governmental and non-governmental organizations and private sector companies that you will partner with.
5. Identify the proposed geographical focus (by oblast, rayon, and ail okmotu) within the Kyrgyz Republic.
6. Briefly describe the technical and managerial resources of your organization (and any proposed partners who would also receive funding under this award) and past performance on related activities.
7. Briefly describe how the overall program will be managed, including staff plan, role of partners (if any), and timeline for activity implementation.
8. Provide a rough budget that allows assessment of cost effectiveness and realism. This should include a rough estimate of costs included such as salaries, travel, benefits, sub-awards, other direct costs, etc., along with an estimate of the total funding request. As applicable, include the amount and source of cost share contribution in cash or in kind, by the organization. For more information on Cost Share, see the full application Cost Share requirement in Section E.

Concept Paper Review Criteria

Concept papers will be reviewed using the following evaluation criteria:

1. Extent to which Applicant demonstrates a sound understanding of the context affecting youth civic and economic participation in the Kyrgyz Republic, including how this context impacts young men and women and boys and girls differently;
2. Degree to which proposed programmatic approach (including any partnerships proposed) and activities are clear, logically connected, evidence-based, and represent a realistic approach to achieving the activity results and objective;
3. Degree to which the proposed approach holds promise to generate actionable lessons learned, both for the purposes of activity monitoring and management and to inform public policy related to youth in Kyrgyzstan.
4. Feasibility of the proposed budget, timeline, work plan and proposed staff;
5. Sustainability of proposed activities beyond the life of this activity;

Those organizations whose concept papers are deemed to be sufficiently competitive and responsive to this NFO will be invited to submit a full application in the format described in the section below.

FULL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS (STEP 2)

Do not submit a full application unless requested to do so by USAID/Central Asia Mission. USAID will only request full applications from Applicants who have submitted successful concept papers.

USAID/Central Asia Mission will notify Applicants whether to submit a full application or not. If the Applicant has been requested by USAID to submit a full application, please follow the instructions below.

Organizations invited to submit a full application should note that registration in www.sam.gov is required before USAID can accept or review any application received. If an applicant is not fully and properly registered in this system at the time of submission the application will be rejected without consideration.

Submission Instructions for Full Application

Submit full applications to the USAID/Central Asia Mission according to the instructions below:

1. Electronic. Application and modifications thereof shall be submitted in two separate volumes (electronically): (a) technical and (b) cost applications. Email submission must include the following in the subject line:

- a. “Technical application under RFA-176-17-000004, submitted by: [name of Applicant organization].”
- b. “Cost application under RFA-176-17-000004, submitted by: [name of Applicant organization].”

Applications and Modifications thereof shall be submitted electronically to:
abaioralova@usaid.gov, skraegel@usaid.gov, AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov.

2. Fax: Faxed full applications will not be accepted.

3. Deadline for Submission of Full Applications: The deadline for full application submission is July 24, 2017, 09:00 a.m. (Almaty time). An application received by the deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness to the specifications outlined in these guidelines and the application format. Late or incomplete application will not be considered. Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of the NFO.

Preparation of Applications:

Each Applicant shall furnish the information required by this NFO. Applications shall be submitted in two separate parts: (a) Technical Application, and (b) Cost/Business Application.

Any erasures or other changes to the application must be initiated by the person signing the application. Applications signed by an agent on behalf of the Applicant shall be accompanied by evidence of that agent’s authority, unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

Applicants who include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation purpose, should mark the 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 sheets {insert sheet numbers} and, mark each sheet of data it wished to restrict 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.

3. Application Submission Procedures

It is the Applicant’s responsibility to ensure that all necessary documentation is complete and received on time.

Applications must be submitted via e-mail to Ms. Aliya Baioralova, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist at abaioralova@usaid.gov, Mr. Samuel Kraegel at skraegel@usaid.gov and AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov.

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 (if more than one is sent) 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 and the cost application be submitted as single email attachments, 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. All applications received by the submission deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness to the NFO and the application format. No addition or modifications will be accepted after the submission date.

After you have sent your applications electronically, immediately check your own email to confirm that the attachments you intended to send were indeed sent. If you discover an error in your transmission, please send the material again and note in the subject line of the email or

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

4. Technical Application Format

The technical application will be the most important factor for consideration in selection for award of the proposed Cooperative Agreement. The technical application should be specific, complete and presented concisely. The application should demonstrate the Applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this program. The application should take into account the requirements of the program and evaluation criteria found in this NFO.

The Technical Application should be in English. Technical application must not exceed 21 (Twenty one) pages, utilizing Times New Roman 12-font size, single spaced, typed in standard 8 ½" x 11" on letter size paper with one-inch margins both right and left, and each page numbered consecutively. Cover letter, dividers, table of contents, and annexes will not count toward the page limit. Any pages that exceed the page limitation will not be furnished to the Evaluation Committee. There is no page limit on annexes or the cost application.

The technical application will have more significant importance than cost application in the selection of a successful Applicant. It should demonstrate the Applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this activity. Therefore it should be specific, complete and presented concisely. It should take into account the instructions below and be arranged in the order of the technical merit review criteria specified in Section E.

The technical application shall include the following sections:

(a) Cover Page (1 page)

The Cover Page should include the following (does not count towards the 21 page limit):

- a. Program title;
- b. Request for Applications reference number;
- c. Name of organization (s) applying for the agreement;
- d. Any partnerships; and
- e. Contact person, telephone number, email address, address, and types name(s) and title(s) of person(s) who prepared the application, and corresponding signatures.
- f. DUNS number of the Applicant must also be listed on the cover page

(b) Table of contents listing all parts of the technical application, with page numbers and attachments (does not count towards the 21 page limit).

(c) Executive Summary (1 page)

Provides a concise summary of the Applicant's program description, program methodology and expected results. Describe how the overall program will be managed. State the bottom line

funding request from USAID and the bottom line cost share secured from other sources (state the sources and amounts) for the proposed program. Counts toward the 21 page limitation and shall not exceed two pages.

(d) Technical Approach (maximum 12 pages)

In twelve (12) pages or less, the applicant should describe the Technical Approach. It is essential for applicants to specifically address how each of the expected results and the goal and purposes outlined in this NFO will be achieved or progress will be made towards achieving them. The application should demonstrate the applicant's understanding of the context, capabilities and expertise, and evidence used to justify the proposed approach to achieving the goals of this program. The Technical Approach must include a clear description of any proposed partnerships, including the roles of each, and explain how the technical approach will complement or relate to other USAID, other donor, or Kyrgyz Government activities. The applicant should provide a description of the target population (including geographical location and proposed number of beneficiaries) or a detailed description of the process by which the target population will be identified. It should outline specific activities, the relationship between them, and make a convincing case about how the mix of activities will achieve the results and goal.

The Technical Approach should describe how learning will be built into implementation, both to monitor progress toward achieving results and to make course corrections, and to contribute to learning that can inform public policy about youth in Kyrgyzstan. Applicants should identify knowledge gaps that they seek to fill through their proposed learning approach. Applications should also incorporate learning from other related programs or research implemented in similar contexts.

Gender Integration

The proposed technical approach and methodology must address gender issues in a substantive and integrated manner. Applicants should describe key constraints that limit the participation of or ability to benefit from this program for men, women, boys and girls, as well as how the proposed approach will help overcome these constraints..

Environmental Procedures

If relevant, respondents to this NFO should include as part of their technical approach a clear statement of their approach, experience, and/or expertise for achieving environmental compliance, protection and management over the life of the proposed program.

(e) Management Plan (maximum 2 pages)

The application must specify the composition and organizational structure of the program team, including the extent of home-office support and either long-term or short-term (domestic or international) technical assistance planned to complement full-time staff. A description must be provided on the role of each proposed staff member and the amount of time the staff member will be devoting to the program.

If it applies, the application must describe the role of partner organizations or consortium members. As part of this, the application should articulate the additional resources, if any, that would be brought to the program by the consortium members.

The applicant should describe its proposed approach to knowledge management, including the system it will use to collect and organize performance and geographic information and how it will capture and share what it learns about issues identified in the technical approach as knowledge gaps.

(f) Key Personnel (maximum 2 pages)

The applicant should list all members of the implementation team and describe each staff member's role, technical expertise and estimated amount of time to be devoted to the project. Proposed personnel not yet identified may be shown as "TBD" (to be determined). Proposed key personnel should have appropriate prior experience and technical qualifications, supervisory skills (if required by role), academic credentials, and demonstrated experience in Kyrgyzstan or a similar operating environment.

It should be noted that: 1) references will be obtained for key personnel including information obtained from other than the sources provided by the applicant; 2) if letters of commitment are not provided for each key personnel candidate, the Technical Evaluation Committee can take this into account in evaluating this factor, including, but not limited to, ignoring the qualifications and experience of the person proposed.

Resumes, references and letters of commitment will not be counted against the page limit allotted for the technical application. Please include all these documents in the Annex.

(f) Institutional Capability/Past Performance (maximum 4 pages)

Institutional Capability

The applicant must offer evidence of their technical expertise in youth programming, research, and productive interaction with government and private sector actors to achieve development objectives. Information in this section should include (but is not limited to) the following (where it applies):

Brief description of organizational expertise;

- a) Pertinent work experience and examples of accomplishments in developing and implementing programs of the type required under this NFO;
- b) Evidence of successful implementation of projects in Kyrgyzstan;
- c) Institutional strength as represented by breadth and depth of experienced personnel in relevant disciplines/areas;
- d) Proposed sub-recipient capabilities and expertise;

Past Performance Information

The applicant must include a complete list of all U.S. Government, other donor, and/or privately funded contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, etc. received in the last three years involving programs similar to the program proposed in the application. The following for each award listed must be provided:

- a) Name and address of awarding organization or agency;
- b) Place of performance of services or program;
- c) Award number;
- d) Amount of award;
- e) Timeframe of award (start and end dates (month/year) of services/program);
- f) Name, current telephone number and e-mail address of a responsible technical representative of that organization or agency; and
- g) Brief description of the program - USAID may contact references and use the past performance data, along with other information to determine the applicant's responsibility. The Government reserves the right to obtain information for use in the evaluation of past performance from any and all sources inside or outside the Government.

(f) Attachments (includes institutional capabilities and supporting information) (Not included in page limit but please be concise; 21 pages maximum) - these may include, but are not limited to:

- a. A brief statement of the history of the organization; its primary development focus, capabilities and challenges;
- b. An organizational chart of the Applicant organization;
- c. A copy of the articles of incorporation or other documentation which substantiates the legal character/registration

5. Cost Application Format

The Applicant must sign and submit the cost application standard form number SF-424 and SF-424A. Standard Forms can be accessed electronically at www.grants.gov.

The cost application must be submitted as a separate file from the technical application. The cost application must be in MS Excel and compatible with a MS Windows operating environment. The excel worksheets **must not** contain passwords, locked cells, hidden spreadsheets or references to calculations not provided elsewhere in the application and **all calculations and formulas must be visible**.

The following sections describe the documentation that the Applicant must submit to USAID prior to award. While there is no page limit for this portion, Applicant is encouraged to be as concise as possible, but still provide the necessary details to address the following:

I. The budget must have an accompanying detailed budget narrative and justification that provides in detail the total program amount for implementation of the program your organization is proposing. The budget narrative should provide information regarding the basis of estimate for

each line item, including reference to sources used to substantiate the cost estimate (e.g. organization's policy, payroll document, and vendor quotes, etc.).

II. The budget for each program year with an accompanying detailed budget narrative which provides in detail the total costs for implementation of the program. The budget must be submitted using Standard Form 424 which can be downloaded from the following web site at: www.grants.gov

III. A breakdown of all costs associated with the program according to the costs of, if applicable, headquarters, regional and/or country offices.

The Cost application should include sufficient detail information to evaluate and support your proposed costs. At a minimum, this should include an explanation of the salaries, supplies, travel, other direct costs and indirect cost components of your budget. Please indicate which items, if any, are being cost-shared and their value.

a) **Summary Cost Breakdown**

Please provide a breakdown, by activity and years, in the following format:

ACTIVITY	USAID	Other Sources	Total
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b) **Salaries**

Please provide a separate line item for each proposed individual and identify each by name, title and the level of effort and salary rate. Also include position descriptions for all employees and consultants whose compensation will be charged as a direct cost to the agreement. This information will also be required for subrecipients. Also, specify key personnel and all essential personnel under the program and include CVs for all those individuals and salary history.

c) **Fringe Benefits**

Please provide a breakdown of proposed fringe benefits. This breakdown should include the rate at which the benefit is charged and the base against which it is applied.

d) **Travel/Per Diem**

Please provide the destination and duration of each trip, the individuals traveling, and a breakdown between the per diem and airfare and the basis for each.

e) **Other Direct Cost**

Please provide a breakdown and explanation for all other direct costs (ODCs).

IV. Budget Notes: The application shall provide budgetary notes for all costs and explain how the costs were derived.

Salary and Wages. Direct salaries and wages should be proposed in accordance with the applicant's personnel policies.

Fringe Benefits. If the Applicant has a fringe benefit rate that has been approved by an agency of the Government, such rate should be used and evidence of its approval should be provided. If a fringe benefit rate has not been so approved, the Applicant should propose a rate and explain how the rate was determined. If the latter is used, the narrative should include a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., unemployment insurance, workers compensation, health and life insurance, retirement, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in dollars and as a percentage of salaries.

Travel and Transportation. The application should indicate the number of trips, domestic and international, and the estimated costs. Specify the origin and destination for each proposed trip, duration of travel, and number of individuals traveling. Per diem should be based on the Applicant's normal travel policies (Applicants may choose to refer to the Federal Standardized Travel Regulations for cost estimates).

Other Direct Costs. This includes communications, report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams and inoculations, insurance (other than insurance included in the Applicant's fringe benefits), equipment (procurement plan for commodities), office rent abroad, etc. The narrative should provide a breakdown and support for all and each other direct costs.

Branding and Marking. All USAID-funded foreign assistance (including programs, projects, activities, public communications, or commodities) must be communicated, promoted, and marked as coming from the American people through USAID. Specific communications and promotion measures shall be described in the "Branding Strategy" and "Branding Implementation Plan," and specific marking will be described in the "Marking Plan" for the this award. Branding and marking under this award shall comply with the USAID Automated Directive System Chapter 320 Branding and Marking (ADS320).

A Branding Implementation Plan and a Marking Plan are to be submitted by the applicants as part of the response to this NFO in the Full Proposal. The selected applicant's Branding Implementation Plan and Marking Plan will be finalized in coordination with USAID and included in the Cooperative Agreement/Grant. The cost application must incorporate the estimated cost of the proposed Branding Implementation and Marking Plan.

Monitoring and Evaluation Costs. Pursuant to ADS 203.3.5 Monitoring Activities/Implementing Mechanisms, Recipients are required to provide in the budget a separate line item for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). The line item must include costs for data collection, analysis, and reporting. This line item will be tracked during implementation of the activity. The Applicant should propose to USAID the most cost-efficient and effective way to address this requirement.

Seminars and Conferences - The Applicant should indicate the subject, venue and duration of proposed conferences and seminars, and their relationship to the objectives of the program, along with estimates of costs.

Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences: Funds in this agreement may not be used to finance the travel, per diem, hotel expenses, meals, conference fees or other conference costs for any member of a foreign government's delegation to an international conference sponsored by a public international organization, except as provided in ADS 350 Mandatory Reference for "Guidance on Funding Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences".

Indirect Costs. The Applicant and/or Major Sub-Applicant that have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or the equivalent with USAID or another federal agency should include indirect costs per the terms of their agreement. Local Institutions usually do not have an indirect cost rate agreement with the US Government. Therefore no indirect costs should be included in the cost/business application submitted by local NGOs as prime Recipients or sub-recipients. Local institutions submitting applications should treat all indirect costs as direct costs.

V. Cost Sharing: The Applicants should estimate the amount of cost-sharing resources to be mobilized over the life of the agreement and specify the sources of such resources, and the basis of calculation in the budget narrative. Applicants should also provide a breakdown of the cost share (financial and in-kind contributions) of all organizations involved in implementing the resulting Cooperative Agreement.

VI. Contracts and Sub-awards. Applicants who intend to utilize contractors or sub-awardees should indicate the extent intended and a complete cost breakdown. Extensive contracts/agreement financial plans should follow the same cost format as submitted by the primary Applicant. A breakdown of all costs according to each partner organization, contract or sub-awardee involved in the program should be provided.

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200 Contract means a legal instrument by which the Applicant purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a resulting award. The term does not include a legal instrument when the substance of the transaction meets the definition of a Federal award or sub-award (see § 200.92 Sub-award), even if the Applicant considers it a contract. The Applicant must describe the work to be performed, the risk borne by the contractor, the contractor's investment, the amount of subcontracting proposed by the contractor, and the quality of its record of past performance for similar work. For-profit contract organizations that work under the award and do not meet the above definition of a sub-awardee are eligible for profit/fee.

VII. Other Information. Certain documents are required to be submitted by an Applicant in order for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility. However, it is USAID policy not to burden Applicants with undue reporting requirements if that information is readily available through other sources. There is no page limit on the Cost Application. However, unnecessarily elaborate brochures or other presentations beyond those sufficient to present a complete and effective application in response to this NFO is not desired. Elaborate art work, expensive paper and bindings, and expensive visual and other presentation aids are neither necessary nor wanted.

VIII. Representations and Certifications. Representations and certifications should be included with the cost application. Complete copies of these Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements may be found at <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mav.pdf>.

Please include information on the organization's financial status and management, including:

- (a) Audited financial statements for the past three years,
- (b) Organization chart, by laws, constitution, and articles of incorporation, if applicable,
- (c) Copy of its personnel (especially regarding salary and wage scales, merit increases, promotions, leave, differentials, etc.), travel accounting management and procurement policies.

1. The application should include information that substantiates that the Applicant:

- (a) Has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the Agreement.
- (b) Has the ability to comply with the Agreement conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the Applicant, non-governmental and governmental.
- (c) Has a satisfactory record of performance. In the absence of evidence to the contrary or circumstances properly beyond the control of the Applicant, Applicants who are or have been deficient in current or recent performance (when the number of grants, contracts, and Cooperative agreements, and the extent of any deficiency of each, are considered) shall be presumed to be unable to meet this requirement. Past unsatisfactory performance will ordinarily be sufficient to justify a determination of non-responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance. The Agreement Officer will collect and evaluate data on past performance of Applicants using information from sources provided in accordance with Paragraph 6 above.
- (d) Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics.
- (e) Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a Cooperative Agreement under applicable laws and regulations (e.g., EEO).

Applicants may submit any additional evidence of responsibility considered necessary in order for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility. Please note that a positive responsibility determination is a requirement for award, and all organization shall be subject to a pre-award survey to verify the information provided and substantiate the determination.

Unnecessarily elaborate applications: unnecessarily elaborate brochures or other presentations beyond those sufficient to present a complete and effective application in response to this NFO are not desired and may be construed as an indication of the Applicant's lack of cost consciousness. Elaborate artwork, expensive paper and bindings, and expensive visual and other presentation aids are neither necessary nor wanted.

The Applicant and/or Major Sub-Applicant must submit a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement NICRA if the organization has such an agreement with an agency or department of the U.S. Government. If no NICRA the Applicant should submit the following:

Reviewed Financial Statements Report: a report issued by a Certified Public Account (CPA) documenting the review of the financial statements was performed in accordance with Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services; that management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation. The account must also state the he or she is not aware of any material modifications that should be made to the financial statements; or

Audited Financial Statements Report: An auditor issues a report documenting the audit was conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS), the financial statements are the responsibility of management, provides an opinion that the financial statements present fairly in all material respects the financial position of the company and the results of operations are in conformity with the applicable financial reporting framework (or issues a qualified opinion if the financial statements are not in conformity with the applicable financial reporting framework).

IX. Dun and Bradstreet and SAM.gov Requirements

All Applicants [unless the Applicant is exempted under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by USAID under 2 CFR 25.110(d)] is required to:

- (i) 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.;
- (ii) Provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and
- (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.
- (iv) Provide Affirmation of Certifications (please refer to ADS 303mad, Affirmation of Certifications).

USAID may not make a Federal award to an Applicant until the Applicant has complied with all applicable **DUNS and SAM requirements** and, if an Applicant has not fully complied with the requirements 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.

It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary documentation is complete and received on time.

X. Funding Restrictions

1. USAID policy is not to award profit under assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the agreement program and are in accordance with applicable cost principle under 2 CFR 200 Subpart E. of the Uniform Administrative Requirements may be paid under the anticipated award.
2. Construction under this award is not eligible for reimbursement.
3. Sub-awards to government organizations are not eligible for reimbursement.

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

The criteria presented below have been tailored to the requirements of the Associate award. The Applicant should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant matters which Applicant should address in the application and (b) set the standard against which the application will be evaluated.

Recognizing that various approaches may have merit, the award seeks an implementing partner that, on the basis of its experience, can propose cost-effective ways of implementing this program. USAID may reject the application if the response is not deemed sufficiently responsive.

An award will be made according to the evaluation criteria below. The application will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria and sub-criteria set forth below in descending order of importance:

- Technical Approach
- Management Plan
- Key Personnel
- Past Performance

2. Review and Selection Process

A. Technical Evaluation

USAID will conduct a merit review all applications received that complies with the instructions in this NFO. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the following criteria shown in descending order of importance:

Criterion	Description
Technical Approach	The degree to which the proposed approach displays a grounded understanding of the development challenge to be addressed by this program; is technically sound; and meets the objectives of the program as described in this NFO.
Management Plan	The extent to which the organizational configuration of the management plan maximizes the chances for program success, while minimizing risk.
Key Personnel	The extent to which the proposed Key Personnel convincingly demonstrate the ability to successfully and effectively implement the proposed program.
Past Performance	The extent to which the applicant and its teaming partners, if any, demonstrate successful Past Performance in achieving results on similar programs.

B. Cost Evaluation

While Cost is less important than technical and is not weighted, however, the cost applications of the apparently successful technical applications will be evaluated for cost effectiveness including the level of proposed cost share. Other considerations are the completeness of the application, adequacy of budget detail and consistency with elements of the technical application. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability, to be measured for a responsibility determination.

The application with the lowest estimated cost may not be selected if award to a higher priced technical application offers a greater overall benefit for the program. All evaluation factors other than cost or price, when combined, are significantly more important than cost. However, estimated cost is an important factor and the estimated cost to the Government increases in importance as competing applications approach equivalence and may become the deciding factor when technical applications are approximately equivalent in merit.

Cost estimates will be analyzed as part of the application evaluation process. Proposed costs may be adjusted, for purposes of evaluation, based on results of the cost analysis and its assessment of reasonableness, completeness, and credibility.

Cost Sharing

At its discretion, Applicant may propose a cost share in cash, in-kind, or a combination of both. Leveraged non-USAID resources from private firms and institutions (such as equipment, training, level of effort and any in-kind contributions) may be considered part of cost share. USAID will make the final determination and assess whether or not the Applicants cost share contributions (e.g. categories or items) meet the standards set in 2 CFR 200. All cash and in-kind contributions committed by partners must be documented in accordance with 2 CFR 200.306. For guidance on cost sharing in grants and cooperative agreements see ADS 303.

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

A notice of award signed by the AO is the authorizing document for the award resulting from this NFO. USAID will provide it electronically to the authorized individual identified by the Recipient in the application.

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

2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

The award will be administered as follows:

Agreement Office:

Office of Acquisition and Assistance
USAID/Central Asia
41, Kazibek Bi Street
Almaty, Kazakhstan

Technical Office:

USAID/Kyrgyz Republic
Democracy and Governance Office

For U.S. organizations, 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 700 will apply, and ADS 303maa, Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental Organizations are applicable.

For non-U.S. organizations, ADS 303mab, and Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations will apply.

Full copies of the 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700 are incorporated hereby by reference. Please refer to ADS 303.4 and 303.5 for guidance. However, the applicable standard provisions will be attached to the final award document.

3. Reporting Requirements.

The Recipient must provide the following reports to the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) and to the Agreement Officer at AlmatyAAReporting@usaid.gov, as specified below, in

accordance with 2 CFR 200.328 and 200.327 and the Substantial Involvement provisions.

Financial Reporting:

The Recipient must submit the Federal Financial Form (SF-425) on a quarterly basis within 30 calendar days after the end of each USG fiscal quarter (i.e. October 30, January 30, April 30, July 30) via electronic format to the USAID/CA Office of Financial Management at CARInvoices@usaid.gov, and to the Agreement Officer at AlmatyAAReporting@usaid.gov and the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR).

The Recipient must submit the original and two copies of all final financial reports to USAID/CA/FMO, the Agreement Officer, and the AOR. The Recipient shall submit the final financial report no later than 90 calendar days from the end of the agreement.

Electronic copies of the SF-425 can be found at: www.grants.gov

Performance Reporting:

The Recipient will use the standard form Performance Progress Report (SF-PPR) to report performance progress for the program under the award.

A) Implementation Plan:

Within forty five days (45) of the award of the Cooperative Agreement, the Recipient shall develop and submit the first annual work plan to the AOR. Work plans may be submitted electronically. Upon acceptance of the work plan by the AOR, any substantial revisions to the plan shall require the written approval of the AOR. Annual work plans for subsequent years are due to the AOR 30 days prior to the end of the USG's fiscal year or approximately August 30th. The work plan should include a description of the activities to be completed during the year, the expected results, provide quantitative targets for all indicators outlined in the performance monitoring plan (PMP), list of commodities to be procured and key benchmarks to be met throughout the fiscal year and provide a timeline for the implementation of activities. The work plan shall include the detailed budget with a pipeline analysis of costs incurred and projections of costs for the life of the award implementation plan for achieving project outputs.

B) Quarterly/Annual Performance Reports:

Pursuant to 22 CFR 226.51, the Recipient shall submit quarterly performance reports within 30 calendar days after the end of each standard USG fiscal quarter (i.e. October 30, January 30, April 30, July 30) to the AOR. The fourth quarterly report (October 30) shall serve as an annual report summarizing the fiscal year achievements including participant training and indicator data for the fiscal year. Reports may be submitted electronically. Regardless of the start date of the cooperative agreement all reporting will be adjusted to the USG fiscal year calendar.

The report should include the following:

- An analytical description of overall program progress toward results that reflects and

- synthesizes achievements. This should not be a description of activities but rather a broader analysis that examines the progress in the context of program objectives and expected results.
- A summary of activities conducted. This section should highlight conducted activities, and include a description of progress toward results in relevant trends and clippings of press articles that mention the project.
 - Data on all indicators established in the monitoring and evaluation plan for this cooperative agreement. Data should be disaggregated by gender and other historically disenfranchised populations, where relevant. See monitoring and evaluation plan for further guidance on reporting on indicators.
 - A comparison of accomplishments to the goals and objectives established for the period.
 - Problems encountered, reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate, and how challenges or problems will be overcome during the next reporting period.
 - A comparison of actual expenditures with budget estimates, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, and any other pertinent information, as relevant.
 - Priorities for programming during the next reporting period including a quarterly list of public events to be organized by the project during the coming three months, including approximate date, location, and audience. Note: The project will coordinate with USAID about all planned events with press participation, press activities, press releases, as well as inclusion of USAID promotional materials for the participants, participation of USAID/USG representatives.
 - Reports shall also contain, as an attachment, a summary list of sub-grants (if any) issued during the quarter.
 - Reports shall also contain, as an attachment, an indicator data table outlining quarterly indicator achievements.

As Part of Quarterly Performance reporting the Recipient will address the following:

1. **Participant Training Reports.** The Recipient will collect training data on technical trainings (i.e., conferences and workshops) provided for beneficiaries that were held in the United States, third countries, or in-country under this cooperative agreement. The training data will be entered into TraiNET and submitted to the AOR quarterly no later than 45 days following the end of each fiscal quarter measured from October 1, as relevant. The Participant Training report for the final quarter of the final year of the agreement will be due 30 days prior to the end date of the award. The Recipient will follow ADS 252 policy, which provides detailed information regarding visa compliance guidelines, and ADS 253, which provides guidance on how to implement USAID funded training programs.

TraiNet and USAID Sponsored J-1 Visas

All host country nationals being funded fully, partially, directly, or indirectly by USAID must enter the U.S. on a J-1 Visa, regardless of the type or duration of the activity. In order to secure a J-1 visa, each participant must first secure a DS-2019 form (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor J-1 Status). TraiNet is the only means of obtaining a DS-2019 for USAID-

funded Exchange Visitors.

USAID/CA delegates the TraiNet data entry, verification, and reporting responsibilities to its implementing partner who is responsible for data entry (the R1 role) and verification (the R2 role) of all training programs and participants that are funded by USAID. USAID/Central Asia/SPO is responsible for approval (the R3 role) and the COR/AOR and Program Managers are responsible for working with their implementing partners to obtain the data needed by the R3. USAID/Washington is responsible for submission of the data (the R4 role) to SEVIS.

The DS-2019 approval process is as follows:

- Data is entered into TraiNet by the implementing partner's Data Entry Initiator (R1);
- The R1 submits the information to the Visa Compliance System (VCS);
- The designated Verifier (R2) verifies the accuracy of the data in the VCS, uploads documents, and either submits the information to the R3 if all is correct, or rejects the file if there are errors in the data;
- A designated United States citizen in the Central Asia Mission – the Approver (R3) – reviews the electronic versions of documents and either approves or rejects the files (for missing data or other concerns based on review of the files) sending them back to the R1 with comments;
- When the R3 approves a file, the information is electronically transferred to the Responsible Officer (R4) in USAID/Washington who provides the final approval before the information is submitted to the Department of Homeland Security SEVIS database;
- The DS-2019 form is created, printed and mailed to the R3;
- The R3 gives the form to the USAID AOR who provides it to the implementing partner. The implementing partner is responsible for delivering the form to the participant so that he/she can present it to the Consular Officer during their appointment for a J-1 visa at the U.S. Embassy consular section, or designated Consulate. Exchange visitors apply online at the U.S. State Department's website in each respective CAR countries. When asked to enter a "Program Number", applications should enter USAID's Exchange Visitor Program Number G-2-00263."

2. **Marking and Branding:** As per USAID/CA's Mission Order on Marking and Branding, the Recipient will be requested to provide the following information:

- An updated quarterly list of public events to be organized by the Recipient during the upcoming three months, including approximate date, location, and audience. The Recipient will coordinate with USAID about all planned events with press participation, press activities, press releases, as well as inclusion of USAID promotional materials for the participants, participation of USAID/USG representatives.
- Two success stories a year with an accompanying photograph (see item c. for specifications). The success stories will be provided in a Word Document format, using a standard USAID success story template.
- The fourth quarterly performance report must also include a digital collection of at least 20

photographs a year that are illustrative of project's achievements in jpeg format. The photographs will comply with a guidance provided in the USAID Graphic Standards Manual. Each photograph will have a brief explanation about its subject, and identify: the author and his/her organization, person(s) featured in the photograph, and the location where the photograph was taken.

- Clippings of press articles that mention the project.
 - At least 2 copies of all public communications materials produced by the project. In addition, the Recipient must submit all final documents to USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse.
3. **Gender Reporting.** As part of its regular reports, the Recipient must collect, analyze and submit sex-disaggregated data and propose actions that will address any gender-related challenges that might arise from that data. The Recipient will report any challenges to the AOR who, in turn, will work with the USAID/CA Mission's gender specialist to find reasonable solutions.
4. **The Final Report** must be submitted no later than 90 calendar days after the expiration of the award. The final report shall also consolidate activities and analyses of all partners into one document and their activities and progress towards results. The final performance report must contain the below information, as relevant:
- An executive summary of the accomplishments and results achieved;
 - An in-depth analysis of progress and results that synthesizes achievements that contributed towards program objectives. This section will clearly describe activities, major accomplishments and results achieved, including results for all of the activities under the cooperative agreement;
 - Final data, compared to baseline data, for all indicators included in the monitoring and evaluation plan. This section should include disaggregated data by gender, historically disenfranchised groups and other relevant groups identified.
 - A summary of problems/obstacles encountered during the implementation, and how those obstacles were addressed and overcome if appropriate;
 - Lessons learned best practices, sustainability and institutionalization issues, and other findings, along with recommendations for future programming in this sector.
 - A comparison of actual expenditures with budget estimates, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, and any other pertinent information, as relevant.

Development Experience Clearinghouse Requirements

a. Submissions to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC).

- 1) The Recipient must provide the Agreement Officer's Representative one copy of any Intellectual Work that is published, and a list of any Intellectual Work that is not published.
- 2) In addition, the Recipient must submit Intellectual Work, whether published or not, to the DEC,

either on-line (preferred) or by mail. The Recipient must review the DEC Web site for submission instructions, including document formatting and the types of documents to submit. Submission instructions can be found at: <http://dec.usaid.gov>.

3) For purposes of submissions to the DEC, Intellectual Work includes all works that document the implementation, evaluation, and results of international development assistance activities developed or acquired under this award, which may include program and communications materials, evaluations and assessments, information products, research and technical reports, progress and performance reports required under this award (excluding administrative financial information), and other reports, articles and papers prepared by the Recipient under the award, whether published or not. The term does not include the Recipient's information that is incidental to award administration, such as financial, administrative, cost or pricing, or management information.

4) Each document submitted should contain essential bibliographic information, such as 1) descriptive title; 2) author(s) name; 3) award number; 4) sponsoring USAID office; 5) development objective; and 6) date of publication.

5) The Recipient must not submit to the DEC any financially sensitive information or personally identifiable information, such as social security numbers, home addresses and dates of birth. Such information must be removed prior to submission. The Recipient must not submit classified documents to the DEC.

b. In the event award funds are used to underwrite the cost of publishing, in lieu of the publisher assuming this cost as is the normal practice, any profits or royalties up to the amount of such cost must be credited to the award unless the schedule of the award has identified the profits or royalties as program income.

Program Income

If Program Income is generated under this program, it will be added to the award in accordance with the provision "Program Income."

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) Part 204 (<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/204.pdf>) 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.

The Recipient's environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this NFO. In addition to complying with the obligations below, 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 will govern.

No activity funded under this award will be implemented unless covered by the environmental threshold determination documented in a Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE), Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), or Environmental Assessment (EA) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO).

A programmatic IEE (PIEE) Amendment #6 for Democracy and Governance programs (DCN: Asia 11-131) was approved on 8/12/2011. It establishes environmental compliance screening, mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements. A PIEE Amendment #7 (DCN: Asia 14-68), approved on February 26, 2014, raises the PIEE Amendment #6 budget ceiling and extends the environmental compliance requirements through September 2020. These PIEE amendments cover the Youth Program in Kyrgyz Republic. They are included as an Annex H (1 and 2). Per these PIEE amendments, USAID has determined that program activities for technical assistance, training, analyses, studies and information transfers qualify for a Categorical Exclusion under 22 CFR Part 216.2(c)(2) (no effect on the natural or physical environment) and, therefore are excluded from environmental review.

It is anticipated that the program solicited in this NFO will fall entirely within the description of activities described as qualifying for a Categorical Exclusion. Furthermore, is not anticipated that the program solicited in this NFO will include any component that qualifies for a Negative Determination with Conditions (which, for example, includes procurement of electric and electronic equipment or small-scale building renovations). However, should such a component be approved, then implementing partner must screen, mitigate, monitor and report to USAID in accordance with terms established in the PIEE Amendment #6.

If a provision for sub-grants is included under a proposed project design, the successful applicant must include environmental compliance language in sub-grant solicitations and awards. It must also use impact assessment tools to screen sub-grant proposals to ensure that funded proposals will result in no adverse environmental impact; develop mitigation measures, as necessary; and specify monitoring and reporting procedures. The prime implementing partner is responsible for ensuring that mitigation measures specified by the sub-grant Recipient are implemented.

If new information becomes available which indicates that activities to be funded by the program might have some adverse effects on the environment, the successful applicant must report to USAID in accordance with requirements outlined in the IEE Amendments 6 and 7. Specifically, they will submit Environmental Review and Assessment Checklists for USAID approval. As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the successful applicant, in collaboration with the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) and the Mission Environmental Officer (MEO), must review all ongoing and planned activities under this award to determine if they are within the scope of the approved IEE with amendments 6 and 7. If the successful applicant plans any new activities outside the scope of these documents, it must assist the AOR to prepare an IEE amendment for USAID review and approval. No such new activities will be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval of the amendment.

The applicant must consider green procurement concepts to eliminate, reduce, or recycle waste as summarized in the “Green Meeting” (See Annex H). Furthermore, when applicable, activities must include principles of environmental and human health protection, impact mitigation, and environmental sustainability. Such inclusion or consideration does not require further environmental review or reporting.

Applicants must include as part of their proposal their commitment to achieving environmental compliance and management, both in principle and by adequately budgeting and planning for all necessary costs and procedures.

NON-FEDERAL AUDITS

In accordance with 22 CFR Part 226.26 Recipients and Subrecipients are subject to the audit requirements contained in the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 (31 U.S.C. 7501–7507) and revised OMB Circular A–133, “Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.” Recipients and Subrecipients must use an independent, non-Federal auditor or audit organization which meets the general standards specified in generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS) to fulfill these requirements.

BRANDING STRATEGY AND MARKING PLAN

After merit review of applications for USAID funding, the apparently successful applicant will be required to submit a Branding Strategy and a Marking Plan by the Agreement Officer in accordance with 2 CFR 700.16. The Marking Plan may include requests for approval of Presumptive Exceptions, defined in 2 CFR 700.16(h). The proposed Branding Strategy and Marking Plan will not be evaluated competitively. The Agreement Officer will review for adequacy the proposed Branding Strategy and Marking Plan, and will negotiate, approve and include the Branding Strategy and Marking Plan in the award. Failure to submit or negotiate a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan within the time specified by the Agreement Officer will make the apparently successful applicant ineligible for award.

ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS SYSTEM

1. Definitions:

- a. “Cash Payment System” means a payment system that generates any transfer of funds through a transaction originated by cash, check, or similar paper instrument. This includes electronic payments to a financial institution or clearing house that subsequently issues cash, check, or similar paper instrument to the designated payee.
- b. “Electronic Payment System” means a payment system that generates any transfer of funds, other than a transaction originated by cash, check, or similar paper instrument, that is initiated through an electronic terminal, telephone, mobile phone, computer, or magnetic tape, for the purpose of ordering, instructing or authorizing a financial institution to debit or credit an account. The term includes debit cards, wire transfers, transfers made at automatic teller machines, and point-of-sale terminals.

2. The Recipient agrees to use an electronic payment system for any payments under this award to beneficiaries, subrecipients, or contractors.
3. Exceptions. Recipients are allowed the following exceptions, provided the Recipient documents its files with the appropriate justification:
 - a. Cash payments made while establishing electronic payment systems, provided that this exception is not used for more than six months from the effective date of this award.
 - b. Cash payments made to payees where the Recipient does not expect to make payments to the same payee on a regular, recurring basis, and payment through an electronic payment system is not reasonably available.
 - c. Cash payments to vendors below \$3000, when payment through an electronic payment system is not reasonably available.
 - d. The Recipient has received a written exception from the Agreement Officer that a specific payment or all cash payments are authorized based on the Recipient's written justification, which provides a basis and cost analysis for the requested exception.
4. More information about how to establish, implement, and manage electronic payment methods is available to Recipients at <http://solutionscenter.nethope.org/programs/c2e-toolkit>.

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

The points of contact for any questions relating to this Notice of Funding Opportunity are:

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Agreement Officer
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SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

ANNEX

1. IEE (PIEE) Amendment #6 for Democracy and Governance programs (DCN: Asia 11-131)
2. PIEE Amendment #7 (DCN: Asia 14-68)
3. Green Meeting
4. Branding Strategy Template
5. Marking Plan Template