Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: SOL-669-15-000022
Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability (FIFES)

Issuance Date: June 26, 2015
Deadline for Questions/Clarifications: July 10, 2015: 1700 hrs. Liberian Time
Closing Date: July 31, 2015
Closing Time: 1700 hrs. Liberian Time

Subject: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) Number SOL-669-15-000022;

Program Title: Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability (FIFES)

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission in Liberia is seeking applications for a cooperative agreement from qualified and eligible organizations to fund a program entitled "Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability (FIFES)" in Liberia. Eligibility for this award is not restricted. See Section C of this NFO for eligibility requirements.

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 Notice of Funding Opportunity and the selection criteria contained herein. While one award is anticipated as a result of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (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 an application are encouraged to read this NFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application 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.

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 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) 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,

Gerald Smith
Supervisory Agreement Officer
USAID Liberia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

a. Program Description

The "Forest Incomes For Environmental Sustainability (FIFES)" Activity is designed to provide broad support to biodiversity conservation and economic growth in Liberia. The goal of the activity is to develop key rural forest-based enterprises which provide inclusive, sustainable economic opportunities for rural farmers and forest- dependent communities that combat drivers of deforestation and biodiversity loss.

1. Background

Liberia is situated in the fragmented band of Upper Guinean Forest that extends from Guinea to Cameroon. In 2008, it was estimated that Liberia accounted for more than half of West Africa's remaining upper Guinean tropical forests and current estimates indicate an amount closer to 40 %. In December 1999, the West African Conservation Priority–Setting Exercise for the Upper Guinean Ecosystem identified Liberia as the "heart of the hotspot"—critical to conservation in the region and in need of immediate conservation action.[1] Liberia's forests provide a range of benefits including: habitat for locally and globally important biodiversity; maintaining ecological services (e.g., oxygen production, soil stabilization); non-timber forest products for local subsistence; and contribution to the national budget through commercial forestry activities.

The Government of Liberia (GOL) has taken concrete steps to establish a policy and legal framework for forestry governance; however, its implementation has been weak. Current GOL forest-related policy and laws reflect a commitment to move away from commercial forestry and the legacy of corruption that went with it (forest and mineral resources helped finance the conflict in Sierra Leone as well as Liberia exacerbating regional instability during the years of continued conflict). As a condition of lifting the UN Security Council sanctions on timber exports, the GOL passed the National Forestry Reform Law (NFRL) of 2006, emphasizing transparency, accountability and civil society empowerment with respect to regulation and oversight of the forestry sector. A national policy with the objective of balancing commercial and community forestry (CF) while integrating conservation was adopted. This "three Cs" approach was intended to develop community forestry as a source of income and jobs for communities traditionally dependent on the forests and increase the economic benefits of the country's forests for Liberia's rural population while at the same time improving prospects for sustainable forest management and the maintenance of biodiversity. In 2009 the Community Rights Law with Respect to Forest Lands passed, allowing communities usufruct rights to forest resources. Unfortunately there are numerous constraints to the firm implementation of the "three Cs" approach to sustainable forest management and to sustainable natural resources management in Liberia in general.

External interests are driving extractive industries and markets that are operating unsustainably—forestry, iron ore and palm oil concessions most notably. Concessions overlap and are being granted without proper land use planning, environmental assessments, or free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of local communities. GOL regulatory agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) lack the technical capacity, manpower, and laboratory/analytical facilities to provide proper oversight of natural resources use, concessions and

[1] 2008 Liberia ETOA

general environmental health. Most civil society organizations (CSOs) are weak and struggle to impact policy and regulations. Better positioned CSOs are heavily influenced and supported by international environmental advocacy groups. Investigative journalism, especially which relates to environmental reporting, is also weak. The obstacles of low human and institutional capacity and patronage in social, political and economic systems identified in the CDCS hold true for the natural resources and environment sectors. The extractive economic systems of the past endure. These systemic weaknesses will continue to be a major issue as the GOL identifies Liberia's abundant natural resources as a driver of economic growth. Thus, long-term sustainable management of natural resources is critical to achievement of long-term, sustained development.

Value chains and enterprises for community-based domestic wood, non-timber forest products (NTFP), and tree crop production and processing are poorly developed. The GOL's focus has largely been on the export of unprocessed timber, mineral resources, palm oil and rubber. The majority of these raw products are exported unprocessed and are thus of lower economic value on external markets. The domination of elite and foreign interests in exporting raw products inhibits the potential for local processing enterprises and more inclusive economic opportunities for communities and smallholders. Other constraints to low-impact sustainable domestic wood, NTFP, and tree crop value chains' development include: difficulty accessing credit; limited markets and limited access to existing markets; poor infrastructure; and the absence of value added in-country for wood. Sustainable management of these forest resources is vital to long-term economic development. The benefits provided by these resources must be available to local communities and not just large concession holders.

Liberia faces many environmental challenges such as forest degradation due to natural resource extraction, and habitat destruction and biodiversity loss whose cumulative effects have the potential to derail development efforts. Environmental monitoring, trend analyses, and regulatory oversight are necessary components of sustainable management. The GOL has taken some steps, for instance it identified environment management as a crosscutting issue of concern in the Agenda for Transformation (AfT). The success of the GOL's economic growth strategy necessitates sound natural resources management and monitoring to ensure that the natural resource base is managed sustainably and continues to provide basic ecosystem services and products that support the food security and health of local communities; and to ensure that economic and social benefits are available over the long-term for concessions and communities.

2. Problem Statement

As part of the USG's efforts to conserve globally important biodiversity and to reduce poverty, this activity intends to develop key rural forest-based enterprises which provide inclusive, sustainable economic opportunities for rural farmers and forest- dependent communities and communities that combat drivers of deforestation and biodiversity loss in Liberia. FIFES will work in targeted geographical areas to improve forest conservation and poverty alleviation. It melds biodiversity conservation and economic growth objectives, in accordance with USAID's Biodiversity Policy.

Forest enterprises are central to maintaining forests and biodiversity especially where revenues streams from ecotourism, government subsidies for protection and Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes are not forthcoming. But benefits from enterprises need to contribute to broad-based development and regeneration. Liberia has a checkered history of commercial timber exploitation that generated neither of these benefits. Economic growth models in Liberia privilege the agricultural, extractive, and plantation sectors and as such there are few models for forest-based economic growth. Forest enterprises can add jobs to communities with few opportunities beyond low value agriculture—and higher value but illegal or unregulated exploitation of natural resources.

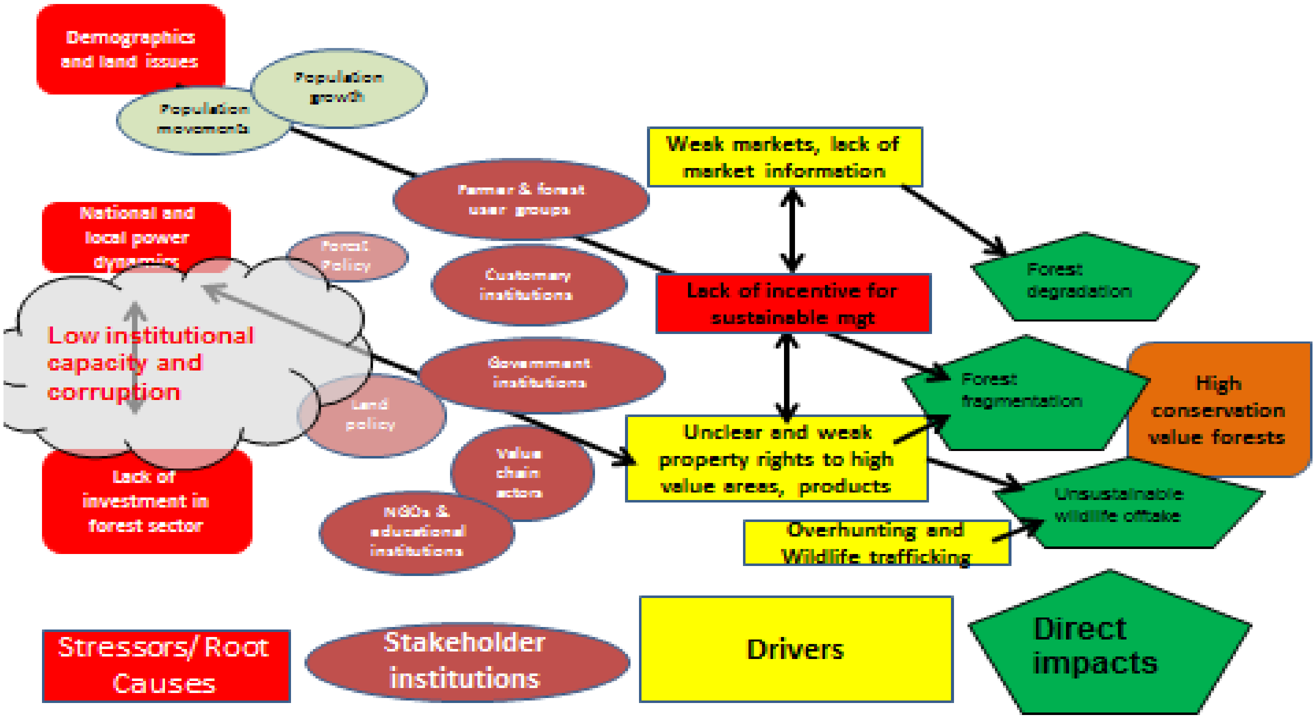

Figure : Systems Model

3. Activity Goal and Objectives

The overall goal of FIFES is to develop key rural forest-based enterprises which provide inclusive, sustainable economic opportunities for rural farmers and forest-dependent communities that combat drivers of deforestation and biodiversity loss. The development hypothesis is that if Liberia has effective, accountable, data-driven natural resources management and oversight and alternative sustainable forest-based livelihoods through forest enterprise development, then sustainable natural resources management will improve, thereby supporting sustainable, market-driven economic growth to reduce poverty and promote biodiversity conservation.

FIFE's objectives are to: 1) strengthen selected forest value chains; 2) establish legal and management frameworks for forest enterprises; and 3) enhance knowledge and skills for forest enterprises and landscape management.

Under USAID Liberia's Country Development Assistance Strategy (CDCS), FIFES supports the Mission's Economic Growth (EG) Development Objective of "Sustained, Market-Driven Economic Growth to Reduce Poverty" and overall Mission objectives in poverty alleviation, food security, capacity building, educational development and increased participative governance. Importantly, FIFES contributes to climate change mitigation strategies through reduced deforestation and increased resilience of rural farmers and forest-dependent communities. FIFES will support sub-Intermediate Result #2.2.2, under Intermediate Result #2.2 Natural Resources Managed Sustainably.

FIFES will complement the Mission's other activities and support the Liberian forestry sector and other beneficiaries working in biodiversity conservation and along forestry, agro-forestry, and agricultural value chains. These activities include Peoples, Rules and Organizations Supporting Protection of Ecosystem Resources (PROSPER), Food and Enterprise Development (FED), Investing for Business Expansion (IBEX), and Smallholder Oil Palm Support II (SHOPS II), as well as future USG investments in biodiversity conservation, agriculture, economic growth and democracy and governance. Considerable investments are being made in the Liberian forestry sector by the GoL, USAID, and other donors such as the European Union, United Kingdom (DFID), the World Bank and the Kingdom of Norway. These investments have varied focus in terms of conservation, commercial and climate change objectives. The Activity complements these efforts by supporting community forest management and forest enterprises, including tree crops. It is important that the Activity coordinate closely with other USG programs, GOL, other donors, CSOs, and private sector actors to avoid duplicative efforts, leverage the investments of other stakeholders and respond creatively and flexibly to opportunities that emerge in community forestry governance and forest enterprises.

FIFES intends to support community forestry management as a means to assist the GOL in its efforts to protect the country's extensive natural resource endowment for the betterment of its people; to promote clear and enforceable land tenure and property rights systems to protect the interests of poorer Liberians from elite capture; to increase investment of poorer Liberians in their land and thereby augment their incomes through the sustainable use of their natural resources; to encourage decentralization and greater participation of all Liberians in the governance of the nation; and to reduce the likelihood that the country will return to civil war.

FIFES' priorities align closely with and provide direct support to the GOL's Poverty Reduction Strategy known as the Agenda for Transformation (AfT). One of the sector goals of the Economic Transformation Pillar of the AfT is to "integrate community, conservation and commercial aspects of forestry to sustainably contribute to reducing poverty, improving livelihoods and the quality of rural life, and increasing the ecological services provided by forests"[2] . The FIFES Activity is designed to support this goal. In particular, FIFES assists Liberia to use community forest management as a means to develop viable economic opportunities for communities from forest resources and providing extension and technical assistance in community forest management. A new five-year poverty reduction strategy is in development at this time, but given current discussions with the GOL it is expected that the "3 C's" approach will be maintained as a priority for the forest sector in future national planning exercises.

Close collaboration with GOL entities such as the FDA, EPA, and the Land Commission, and especially with the Community Forestry Department at FDA to build their capacity to implement community forestry, will be important to reach the Activity objectives. FIFES may also work with the other technical departments of the FDA as appropriate to build their capacity and support the implementation of FIFES. Collaboration with civil society organizations, Liberian universities, local communities, entrepreneurs, private sector entities and microenterprise credit institutions will also be

[2] Agenda for Transformation, Government of Liberia

important for the success of the Activity. FIFES may actively explore partnerships with domestic and international private sector firms to promote the marketing of forest products and tree crops.

4. Geographic Focus

As community forestry is still relatively new in Liberia, it will be important to consider the current community forests and the ongoing efforts to create new community forests throughout the process of FIFES site selection. This will need to be done in close collaboration with the Community Forestry Department of the Liberian Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and the Community Forestry Working Group, chaired by the FDA. The choice of community forests and type of support in each site will depend on existing and potential market demand for the products available in these CFs, viability of forest enterprises, and governance of the CFs. FIFES may locate its sites within USAID Liberia's focal counties (Nimba, Bong, Lofa, Grand Bassa, Margibi, Montserrado) or non-USAID focal counties, provided that the sites chosen are the most appropriate for meeting the two overarching criteria below. USAID has worked on community forestry in Sinoe County and is currently working on community forestry in Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties.

The applicant should consider two overarching criteria in their selection of FIFES field-based sites:

1) Areas where FIFES can have the most positive impact on the most important and threatened forest biodiversity in Liberia
2) Areas where FIFES can link forest enterprises to markets and create the most significant economic incentives for conservation and improved forest management

5. Activity Approach/Principles

Principle 1. Build capacity at all levels. All activities under FIFES will be conducted in such a way as to capitalize on experiential learning to strengthen the capacity of forest dependent communities, training institutions, private sector actors and the FDA in Liberia. Specifically, FIFES increases stakeholder knowledge in key activity components to actors along targeted forest enterprise value chains. FIFES will liaise closely with the FDA on the establishment and management of community forests as well as regarding the sustainable management and harvesting of forest products.

Principle 2. Build in sustainability. A business plan describes the products and services of the institution, customers for those products and services, sources of funding and revenue and gaps in capacity to implement the business plan. Gaps could include lack of fundraising, accounting, marketing or customer service expertise. Business plans will be benchmarked and jointly monitored throughout the life of the activity. The business plan is the foundation for benefit and financial sustainability. Environmental and social sustainability will also be considered in all of the tools and guidance produced for FIFES. For instance, recommendations will incorporate best practices for environmental assessment and community engagement.

Principle 3. Take a systems approach. Human institutions and ecologies share common systems features. Understanding these features enables more effective activities and policies. Systems concepts include:

Leverage—identifying leverage points and partnerships to catalyze actions and achieve wide-scale impacts. For instance, working at the level of an “industry” such as the cocoa or mining industries enables larger scale impacts than working with individual companies. A leverage point for influence that affects many industries could be climate change adaptation planning. Protection of a top predator or keystone species can leverage protection of larger habitat for multiple species and ecosystem services.

Tipping points—are when systems dramatically change, or move from one state to another, due to incremental shifts that may be difficult to perceive. For instance, wetlands can become permanently degraded and lose function due to climate change and anthropogenic stresses. Institutions can become catalysts for mass change if they are in the right place at the right time with the right resources.

Feedback—identifying impacts of policies and investments on a system. Every action generates a reaction. Enabling communities to manage forests, trees or wildlife may improve environmental and livelihood outcomes but can also produce backlash from the existing power structure and even accelerate exploitation if the political economic system is not well understood. Reducing deforestation may impact agricultural output hence food security if secondary forests and fallows are closed off.

Principle 4. Promote a holistic landscape level approach. FIFES will operate at the landscape level so that all productive land uses in a given area can be assessed and the management of forest resources can be placed in the proper developmental and socio-economic contexts. FIFES will take an approach, which assigns realistic weights to timber products and NTFPs in the economic valuation of Liberia’s forests. When promoting alternative livelihoods, the relationship of community members to their forests needs to be seen in the overall context of their local economy and land use strategies. Impacts on other donor activities and GOL investments (including development corridor approaches) should be assessed in order to optimize the success of this activity.

Principle 5: Promote USAID’s Biodiversity Policy. Interested, eligible organizations are encouraged to propose innovative activities to meet the Activity objectives described above. Activity outcomes will be aligned with USAID’s newly launched Biodiversity Policy. USAID and its partners view biodiversity as a foundation for human welfare, intricately connected to other development sectors and fundamental to meeting USAID’s development goals. The goal of USAID’s Biodiversity Policy, approved in 2014, is to advance biodiversity conservation as an essential component for human development. Under the new USAID Biodiversity Policy, all activities funded with biodiversity funds must meet these criteria:

1. The activity must have an explicit biodiversity objective and stated Theory of Change (TOC).
2. Activities must be based on an analysis of drivers and threats to biodiversity loss and the corresponding Theory of Change.
3. Site-based activities must have the intent to positively impact biodiversity in biologically significant areas.
4. Activities must monitor indicators associated with the stated Theory of Change for biodiversity conservation.

Principle 6. Empower women, youth and disadvantaged populations. USAID has a mandate to empower women and also to attack extreme poverty, which is often associated with gender, ethnicity, locality and exposure to hazards and risks, including exposure to infectious diseases. Greater and more strategic investments in skill development, especially among women and youth, are needed. As for the forestry sector, both the public and private sectors suffer from a lack of technical and managerial competency. Such capacity that may still exist is often in older professionals who are nearing retirement age while training for new professionals is sub-standard. To achieve these goals, it is critical to understand the social context shaping policies and practices. Some contextual factors—such as historical relations among groups with different land uses and occupations—are very broad while some are specific to localities and sectors. For instance, restrictions on fuel wood gathering to reduce carbon emissions could negatively impact poor women. In general, support for wide-ranging engagement in policy processes including leveling the playing field for disadvantaged stakeholders, and improving transparency and accountability, are enabling steps to empowerment. Drawing on the knowledge and skill base of different stakeholders is also critical as is constructing fora for policy deliberation and exchange that welcome diverse viewpoints.

Principle 7. Apply a Collaborate, Learn and Adapt (CLA) approach. The concept of adaptive management is grounded in environmental management—the attempt to understand and intervene in complex and often rapidly changing ecosystem processes. In development, adaptive management requires understanding and modeling systems (Principle 2) and building in multiple sources of and opportunities to gather and share information. A formal monitoring plan is one piece of CLA.

Collaboration: Ensuring that information flows from local to national and back down. Collaborating across sectors to capture synergies and disconnects.

Evidence-based implementation: collecting, synthesizing and applying scientific and practitioner evidence to policies and approaches. For instance, many studies have shown that domestication of wild animals for bushmeat is an ineffective strategy to combat the trade. Approaches that depend on women's labor must ground truth with women and not make assumptions about benefit flows. Also, many decision makers in Liberia tend to overestimate both the availability and value of Liberia's timber resources.

Flexibility in funding and structure is needed to insure the ability to change in response to new situations and new knowledge. For instance, a national institution could take on a new mandate and expertise is needed for situation analysis and developing guidance materials.

Principle 8: Utilize appropriate communication and outreach strategies to strengthen results. FIFES will integrate communications and outreach strategies throughout the components and results to attain maximum results. Communication and outreach may target field based FIFES beneficiaries, county and national level decision makers and the general public, as appropriate to ensure that FIFES reaches its goals. Communication and outreach strategies will ensure that message content and type of media are appropriate for the target audiences, with special attention to the marginalized and vulnerable populations such as rural forest dwellers, youth and women.

Principle 9: Respect cultural diversity. FIFES will focus on a market driven approach to forest enterprises in order to generate economic incentives for forest conservation. However, in doing so, FIFES needs to ensure that respect for cultural diversity is included in all components and results. Liberia's people are diverse and have different perceptions of what is valuable about a forest and the products that a forest contains. What might be seen as a marketable commodity by some could be perceived as sacred inalienable resource by others. FIFES will ensure that the forest management strategies and forest enterprises respect the diversity of cultural views of the target populations.

Principle 10. Create robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to measure activity success. FIFES focuses on behavior change that leads to improvements in environmental awareness, sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, environmental compliance, enterprise development and security of land tenure and property rights in forest-dependent communities. To this end robust and effective M&E systems will be required for the activity to measure its impact.

<u>Theory of Change</u>

The proposed Theory of Change for the FIFES activity is that forest and forest species will be conserved when:

- They have recognized market and non-market values, and
- There is clarity about benefit from the use, sale and transformation of forest areas and species, and
- Rules for use, sale, transformation and conservation are widely enforced, and
- Actors in conservation and enterprise are able to generate, access, analyze and use and use good quality information and develop relevant skills.

NB: USAID Liberia encourages potential applicants to propose additional and/or alternative innovative ways of achieving the final goal of FIFES.

6. Activity Components

This activity includes components that are tightly linked to the FIFES Theory of Change—valuing forests and forest products, rules and management systems, and knowledge and skills development.

Component 1: Selected forest value chains strengthened

In Liberia, value chain approaches have been successful in promoting agricultural commodities. A recent market analysis concluded that there was market demand for the development and strengthening of some forest enterprise value chains[3]. Strengthening of forest enterprise value chains may provide a pathway to increased economic growth among rural farmers and forest-dependent communities, however, further and complementary work is needed to avoid overexploitation of forest resources. The Applicant will need creativity and adaptability to identify both the value chain and the entry-point into strengthening that value chain that can achieve the objectives of the activity, support the community, and strengthen livelihoods for smallholders. Forest value chains, for example, could focus on both timber and select products from key timber species. A sustainable approach to timber harvesting and the production and commercialization of NTFPs is essential to prevent the overexploitation of forested areas and any rare tree species. Strengthening community capacity to develop and implement forest management plans is also important for sustainability, so the broader awareness of these community and governance dynamics and an appreciation and ability to meet capacity building needs is essential.

[3] Liberia Market Opportunities for Selected Agricultural Products, July, 2014, Enabling Agriculture Trade (EAT) Activity

Communities may need the ability to exclude outsiders and illegal activities such as unplanned timber harvesting, charcoal making and other extractive activities, and the ability to negotiate with "contractors" who may be brought in to extract and monitor those activities. Coordination with other key development actors that are also working on market led approaches and value chain analyses is key. FIFES may consider using outreach and awareness strategies targeting appropriate groups, including potential responsible domestic and international buyers. FIFES is not intended to create market demands for products but builds on existing markets to strengthen the value chains for specific products.

Liberia's forests are rich in both timber and non-timber forest products, including tree crops. In order for communities to benefit economically from these products while also maintaining biodiversity, they need to understand and practice sustainable harvesting techniques. Liberian timber harvesters targeting the domestic market, including pitsawyers, need additional support to develop or strengthen existing forest management plans and to promote sustainable practices in the harvesting of high quality timber to supply various value chains. Rarely are communities and pitsawyers aware of the diversity of tree species in their community forests, nor do they understand the variety of potential value chains for these species. The artisanal furniture value chain may be the one value chain that is sufficiently healthy to allow for the applicant to begin interventions immediately upon the launch of the activity, while other value chains are being identified. One potential source of demand for domestically-produced legal timber is the GOL, which has expressed interest in using Liberian timber to create furniture for government buildings and schools throughout the country. All tree species targeted will be those that can be harvested in a sustainable manner and have not previously been identified as threatened or rare species, in line with USAID's Biodiversity Policy.

In Liberia, some value chains are already established for non-timber forest products and tree crops. The applicant will select value chains to target in key geographic areas. It will be important to pay specific attention to market demand for products, as past non-timber forest products initiatives, overly focused on the supply side, have only be marginally successful. Some examples of non-timber forest products and tree crops are wild honey, charcoal, indigenous tree species, and cocoa. The applicant is encouraged to choose the most appropriate products to achieve the overall goal of FIFES. FIFES will work with forest managers, producers, and entrepreneurs to promote sustainable practices in harvesting and cultivation of forest products. Bushmeat may be considered as a "non-timber forest product". The applicant may want to pay special attention to the bushmeat value chain to better understand and manage the harvesting, consumption, and marketing practices of bushmeat. Bushmeat consumption patterns in Liberia differ between rural and urban areas, and bushmeat may have its own type of "value chain". Some community forests have wildlife management plans, including no-take zones, however these may need support to effectively identify the range of species to be managed, a methodology to exclude outsiders from hunting, and the seasonality of legal bushmeat hunting. Little is known at present about bushmeat sales, species, and the sustainability of the trade however there is no doubt that some species taken as bushmeat are more vulnerable than others and that better and sustainable management resources has the potential to be both an value in terms of income generation and an avenue for better management that protects biodiversity.

Sustainable value chains depend on how socially and environmentally responsible the value chain actors are. Sustainability is possible when the market demand grows in a parallel manner to the supply of forest products, both timber and NTFPs. One strategy to ensure both supply and demand are growing sustainably would be to establish a forum for communication between community producers/cultivators and buyers. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) may also be useful to address the socio-economic development needs of forest communities by encouraging responsible collaborative management of forest resources. PPPs might include capacity building and direct investment in locally-owned forest-based enterprises that actively promote and practice sustainable management of natural resources for economic growth.

Component 2: Legal and management frameworks for forest enterprises established

Community forestry (CF) has been an important avenue for clarifying rights to forest resources in Liberia. With the development and strengthening of forest enterprise value chains, further effort is needed to avoid overexploitation and to assure that benefit flows support community development needs as well as regeneration. In terms of management, forest value chains might focus on products from key timber species, some of which may be common and some of which may be threatened. Current rules and regulations address overall management but are not likely to delve into rights to specific areas or species, which may be communal or may be allocated to families or households, even to individuals. In addition, landscape management is needed to encompass the diverse options and land uses needed to support community development and conservation.

For forest enterprises, *de facto* rights regimes may emerge with artisanal use—pitsawyers and artisanal loggers may divide up the territory and make informal deals for exploitation—but these situations are unregulated and do not guarantee benefit flows that sustain the resource and the community. In addition to rights to use and benefit from species, rights to process/transform and sell products may need to be articulated, for instance to avoid flooding the market or to impose quality standards that meet demand.

Forest enterprises can be undertaken by community groups or entrepreneurs but for communities to partake as actors and/or beneficiaries, they need to be organized and skilled. The Forestry Development Authority (FDA) has the overall responsibility for CF development and regulation, often working with donors and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to tailor to specific needs of the community and locale. FIFES will work closely with the FDA, especially the Community Forestry (CF) Department, to support current CFs and to create new CF management areas and plans. By working collaboratively, FIFES builds the capacity of FDA CF Department in the central Monrovia office as well as of the CF Departments of the regional FDA offices in the FIFES intervention zones. FIFES sustains this technical capacity building throughout the activity with the goal of ensuring that the FDA CF Department is empowered to manage community forestry in Liberia without donor support. FIFES may also build the technical capacity of the other FDA Departments as it directly relates to the successful implementation of FIFES. One area of concern is externally-initiated "community forestry" which is either elite or private sector driven and may result in uneven benefits, creating the potential for conflict and overall lack of development. FIFES works closely with FDA to be especially vigilant regarding the broad representation of community interests on the community forestry management committees and measures to ensure transparency and accountability in order to reduce the possibility of elite capture of benefits.

Community forestry thus far in Liberia has focused more on the governance of small community forests rather than the landscape level management or forest enterprise development aspect. FIFES works with existing CFs as well as with the FIFES supported new CFs to extend outward to landscapes managed or used by communities for enterprises and livelihoods and inwards with the intention of clearly defining off-limits areas and/or timeframes to allow fauna and flora to regenerate. Additionally, the CF management plans should describe methods for excluding outsiders from exploiting community resources. The aim is to balance ecological integrity with a critical mass of resources that can economically sustain the forest, noting that not all resources to sustain a community will come from the forest. Commercial and non-commercial (e.g., fragile habitats, spawning grounds) areas within community forests need to be identified and zoned. Landscapes outside of the forest need to be identified for tree crops (such as cocoa), plantation rehabilitation, nurseries, and mixed crop systems. This zoning cannot be static; there is a need for multiple possibilities and options. These zoning determinations should be reinforced by rules and regulations enforced by local and regional authorities as communities are often not empowered enough to prevent encroachment from outsiders. The goal is to develop a business plan for the landscape. This process could consider best practices from Guinea's commercial timber harvesting in CFs as well as other reviews of the economics of community forestry[4].

There is a need to include forest inventory information to the CF Management Plans. One possibility would be to establish permanent plots for observation over time. This could be done through a partnership with a scientific institution such as the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. Forest health is not only about maintaining forest cover but about diversity and structure within the forest. Forest degradation has been identified as a more serious problem than deforestation in West and Central Africa. But it is often a hidden problem as lack of regeneration of flora and fauna is hard to detect in short timeframes. Over time the value of the forest diminishes and its local users and owners lose their assets. Enrichment planting has been attempted in Guinea and Cameroon but it is not sustained unless there are clear rights to use and benefit from the trees—planting, nurturing and protecting saplings is time-consuming. The higher the value of the tree, the more it is in demand and hence under threat. Information on the management of specific high value trees, including intercrops of tree crops (such as cocoa), should be incorporated into CF management plans in such a way that there is a clear link between sustaining these species and the associated benefits. Certain shrubs and other forest products such as rattans, mushrooms or housing materials may also need attention as there is significant harvesting pressure. Support for peer learning events or larger community forestry enterprise forums will bring together a broad range of actors to improve trade linkages and support the exchange of effective approaches for the integration of landscape and business plans into CF management plans.

FIFES will need to be flexible in landscape planning, carefully considering the context of the implementation of the new land rights policy and how this will intersect with resource rights. There will be a matrix of regulations governing different ownership, use and access to lands and resources and this has to be navigated to develop resource-based enterprises.

FIFES should also consider what types of licensing and benefit sharing will lead to the most sustainable and profitable community forestry management and enterprises. At present there are few models for licensing and benefit sharing within the artisanal sector, and little or no premium for higher quality products. At the artisanal level, tools for licensing and benefit sharing have to be simple and

[4] Lessons Learned from Community Forestry and their Relevance for REDD+ (fcmcglobal.org/documents/CF_Synthesis.pdf)

clear. When commercial entities enter into agreements with CF managers, it is critical to incorporate lessons from benefit sharing in commercial forestry zones. FSC “smallholder” group certification for cooperatives could be considered as well as implementation and improvements to FDA NTFP regulations. FIFES might help forest entrepreneurs register as businesses and ensure that all enterprises are legal and registered, following forestry laws including those for benefit sharing. Since access to finance is a common constraint for small businesses, especially in rural areas, FIFES might support forest entrepreneurs to access loans for their businesses. FIFES itself would not provide loans or establish credit unions, but could facilitate the connection among forest enterprises and entrepreneurs and existing and appropriate financial institutions (such as community based credit associations). FIFES could also partner with ongoing USAID activities such as IBEX and Building Markets that are already engaged in supporting MSMEs.

Note that USAID may not support the expansion of industrial scale logging into previously unexploited areas, including the contracting by communities of industrial scale logging firms.

Component 3: Knowledge and skills for forest enterprises and landscape management enhanced

This Component underpins Components 1 and 2, as without reliable information and the capacity to use it there can be little progress in sustainable enterprise development that incorporates conservation. In turn, information management and learning are best undertaken in practical contexts, where real-world results stimulate uptake and innovation. Learning needs to take place at all levels, from artisans and enterprise managers to students and researchers. Skills need to be tied to forest enterprise occupations that bring employment and thus development to marginalized and poor forest communities. This activity will promote basic business skills and understanding of market dynamics and the value of forest products.

Information is needed at all levels and on diverse topics, such as commercial tree species and markets and value chains in order to guide sustainable community forest management. Government regulatory institutions such as the FDA and EPA, educational institutions such as the FTI, as well as forest entrepreneurs and community forestry could benefit from improved information. It will be up to the Applicant to describe and meet the need for information, as well as develop a strategy for adaptive information management that may include outreach and awareness strategies and identify the appropriate institutions and actors and their roles.

In terms of biodiversity and forestry, community forestry and landscape management plans do not currently include sufficient information to effectively identify and monitor the forest resources. There is a need to improve both knowledge and capacity, including the collection and utilization of spatial and forest information, in order to effectively establish and monitor community forestry resources and biodiversity. On the business side, the GOL, CSOs, communities, entrepreneurs, and microenterprise credit institutions do not have sufficient training in business planning, management, and entrepreneurial skills to effectively manage and regulate forestry enterprises.

Liberian higher education institutions such as the Liberian universities and the Forestry Training Institute may be the appropriate institutions to target in order to develop improved curricula and implement trainings for students along with the wide range of actors in the forest enterprise value chains. In order to ensure that the trainings are effectively put into practice, it will be important to link trainings to opportunities in existing and new forest enterprises, and encourage entrepreneurship.

7. Crosscutting Issues

Apply a Collaborate, Learn and Adapt (CLA) approach

The CLA approach, part of a USAID Mission's broader learning effort, including monitoring programs and evaluating their impact, facilitates collaboration within USAID and with external stakeholders; feeds new learning, innovations, and performance information back into the strategy to inform decision regarding program/Activity design and management. It translates new learning information about changing conditions into iterative strategic and programmatic adjustments. Through these processes, CLA helps to create the conditions for development success. The approach ensures that progress toward activity or development objectives is guided by continuous learning and iterative adaptation of program implementation and, where relevant, strategy. The intent is to continuously assess the causal pathway to desired outcomes and adjust activities as necessary to yield the most effective course of action.

Youth

Recent estimates suggest that over 80 percent of the world's 1.5 billion youth aged 15-24 live in developing countries. In Liberia, people under age 35 are included in the youth category and they make up over 70 percent of the population. Economic opportunities including access to quality education and training, employment, or entrepreneurship are not growing at pace to catch up with the rapid youth population growth in the country. Unemployment rates are much higher for youth than for adults. In many cases, the combination of the above problems and underemployment and dubious informal sector employment activities leave much insecurity for the youth as well as for the communities where they live. Thus there is need for greater attention to youth and their economic prospects.

USAID is committed to supporting innovative approaches to tackling this complex challenge. Therefore applicants are encouraged to include activities that have the greatest potential to engage youth and to result in creating sustainable economic opportunities for Liberian youth.

Gender

Gender is a social category that refers to the roles, responsibilities, motivations and voice of both men and women in a given society. It is one of many categories that shape social behavior. Men and women typically access, manage, and control biodiversity and natural resources in different ways due to traditions, status, and responsibilities. Any activity that seeks to affect the use of natural resources should recognize the different behaviors, roles, and responsibilities of men and women.

Men and women may be involved in different aspects of land and resource management, as well as household livelihood. Often women have less secure land and resource tenure and are thus less able to effect long-term improvements in management unless other changes are made. On the other hand, women may be more active in the production or market spheres than men are. There may be a need to address inequality in gender roles if it poses a threat to biodiversity. For instance, women may be the major collectors and users of forest products but uninvolved in decision-making about forest management.

At a basic level, incorporating gender aspects into an activity requires disaggregated data on the roles and actions of women and men and on differential benefits and risks to men and women from a given action. Thus, households are not treated as uniform units with a male "household head" but rather as composites of men, women, and dependents whose needs and interests must be considered independently.

Operationally, USAID activities require that implementers keep track of benefits to men and women, including training opportunities. Interviewing men and women separately for assessment, monitoring, and evaluation is critical to getting good information and ensuring that sensitive issues are addressed appropriately.

FIFES should be more proactive, however, rather than just meeting basic requirements, both because gender integration and women's empowerment are priorities for the Agency and because such an approach is likely to yield better results. Some proactive steps include:

- Seek out women's groups that may not be involved in biodiversity conservation or climate change but have legitimacy and purpose within the community. Build their technical capacity and be open to what concerns and motivates them.

- Analyze policies and proposed reforms for gender impacts and discuss implications with government representatives, NGOs, and other stakeholders.

- Take a gender-sensitive approach to training, technology development, and planning. Men and women often differ in their literacy levels, ways of learning, and understanding of technologies. Separating the genders for training and planning may or may not be appropriate. What is essential is that the genuine voices of women and men be heard. This point holds for other social categories too, such as youth, the poor, and ethnic minorities.

Do not assume that because women are involved in an action or decision-making body, or are leading an effort, that gender is automatically addressed. Women sometimes feel pressured to show that they are not concerned about women's empowerment. As well, women appointed to positions due to the power of their husbands or other relatives may not be good representatives for women generally.

Even when activities have a good gender analysis, there is often not a clear plan for how to incorporate gender issues. Failure to follow through may be due to lack of training and understanding, a focus on other priorities, or a feeling that gender is not a significant issue for the activity. Barriers to addressing gender, however, can be overcome with determination. The first step is to show clearly how gender − and other social dimensions − shape activity outcomes. Technical activities, such as species inventories or land use planning, do have gender dimensions. Women and men often access and use such data differently. To engage and hire women for technical work, it is often necessary to be proactive, do wide outreach, and take a mentoring approach.

Even though FIFES focuses on development of policy and governance, it will still need to ensure there is a strong focus on gender. Frameworks developed under FIFES should carefully consider the differentiated roles of men and women in the targeted sector to ensure that all stakeholders benefit from effective governance. This is especially true in areas where women are typically underrepresented in sub-national governance structures.

Achieving FIFES's objective to support improved conservation and economic growth in Liberia is only possible if the energies and knowledge of both men and women are engaged.

Women remain key to success. Women play a critical role in the management of forest resources, fisheries, coastal resources and wildlife management. Investment in women percolates to families and society as a whole. Understanding their role as well as the gender dynamics that shape natural resource management is a necessity for assuring sound outcomes. For rural women, forest conservation is a life and death issue centering on, for example, access to, use and management of forest products, food security, revenue to ensure payment of school fees, health costs and other needs, security in entering forests and going to market, and health impacts of unclean water, malnutrition and loss of diversity.

Vulnerability has to be addressed. In addition to the positive energies created by engaging women, FIFES needs to assure that activities "do no harm." Conservation interventions and policies affect men and women differently especially as women's decision making power is constrained.

It's doable. Rather than despairing that culture change is difficult and inappropriate for outsiders to address, implementers can build on many successful approaches, for instance in integrating gender into forest governance dialogues, to seize entry points and develop clear lines of communication and trust with women. *Men play essential roles in advancing gender equity and women's empowerment.* Male policymakers and practitioners should have the skills to be able to work productively with women, modeling behavior that is respectful, culturally appropriate and empowering.

Gender Analysis Best Practices

In conducting a gender analysis, teams should:

Consider gender at all scales. Do not assume that involvement of a male head of household or a community leader will incorporate women's views.

Likewise, search out women's organizations, as they may be less visible and harder to access, and their concerns may not be represented in decision-making.

Carefully analyze how men and women make a living, both independently and as part of a family or household. This analysis will reveal opportunities and risks in proposed actions. A proposed action may favor one gender at the expense of another or may make households more vulnerable overall. For instance, women and children may be more vulnerable to food insecurity if their livelihood activities are curtailed.

Develop a **gender action plan**, with indicators and a protocol for regular monitoring.

Keep in mind that a gender analysis is not the end – it is the beginning. Teams need to follow through on what they learned in the analysis with clear gender action plans that are monitored and updated.

Gender analysis is embedded in cultural socioeconomic contexts. Understanding how key social categories intersect with gender and accounting for the diversity of women's knowledge, roles and lifestyles adds rigor and depth to analysis. Women are master farmers, traders, merchants, healers, pastoralists, spiritual and clan leaders, teachers and artisans as well as being mothers and wives. They engage with men in their lives—husbands, brothers, fathers and other relatives and associates—and with their communities in multiple ways. Just because there is a woman in a high position of an institution does not mean that gender is integrated or that women's empowerment is a priority. Relations of power as well of trust and alliance exist between men and women as well as among women's groups and institutions.

Policy level entry points to advance gender equality and women's empowerment include:

- **Community-based natural**

resource management (CBNRM) planning and implementation will require underpinning local, national policies and regional policies with respect to rights, access and use. USAID has learned that equitably engaging men and women is an essential factor in policy development for CBRNM and community forestry that will improve outcomes for communities as well as for the resource base.

- **All land use policies** have significant gender dimensions**.** For instance, enforcement around protected areas can fall heavily on women especially where there is a culture of abuse of authority. USAID's and the USG's work on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) can inform the creation of gender-sensitive safeguards and practices.

- **Providing women's ministries and organizations, including gender and women's networks** with information about and a role in biodiversity conservation, forest management and climate change adaptation can open up new avenues for collaboration and constituency building. At the same time much needs to be done to operationalize gender initiatives in line Ministries and technical organizations to avoid ghettoization.

- **Increase collaboration on female empowerment and gender** equality by transferring 'know how' among counterparts and implementing partners via (i) centers of excellence, (ii) joint research, analytical sector analysis, and activity reviews, and (iii) knowledge sharing and dissemination of lessons and best practices.

- **Enhance coordination of female empowerment and gender equality interventions** through (i) campaigns, (ii) public dialogue and (iii) consultations.

- **Connect national and local planning on female empowerment and gender equality** through coordinated action including (i) capacity strengthening for national and local counterparts and implementing partners, (ii) coordinated development of policy and legislative frameworks for gender equality, (iii) coordinated implementation and management of national and local efforts, and (iv) collaboration with other donors.

Sustainability

A critical consideration for the activity is the long-term environmental, financial, and social sustainability and viability of benefits, impacts, and results.

- **Environmental sustainability** requires addressing threats to species and ecosystems. Efforts should address not only current threats to ecological function and diversity but should also focus on increasing ecosystem resilience to future threats.

- **Financial and economic sustainability** requires building or strengthening the financial infrastructure to support long-term conservation. Efforts can focus on analyzing the financial resources needed for priority conservation actions over the long-term and the feasibility and appropriateness of various financial, market, and economic mechanisms.

- **Social sustainability** requires addressing social barriers to and opportunities for conservation action to increase ownership at all levels. At a minimum, social sustainability involves ensuring that efforts do not undermine the livelihoods and wellbeing of key groups for USAID's development investment. In addition, USAID believes that conservation should yield social benefits and build resilience and social capital − trust, capacity, and collective action − while reducing conflict and vulnerability through good governance, transparency, and accountability.

Environmental, financial, and social sustainability elements are interrelated and critical to achieving sustained impact. For example, without sufficient economic resources devoted to conservation and sustainable use, other land uses will often out-compete and undermine environmental sustainability. More specifically, forests may be converted to agricultural use if there is not a system for valuing forest ecosystem services or if there are not profitable enterprises linked to forests. Likewise, there must be a significant social constituency supporting conservation and climate change efforts over time to assure environmental sustainability. Stakeholders must derive *and* perceive benefits from conservation and sustainable use, and they must be able and willing to act when threats emerge.

In addition, the institutional sustainability at the community level and of relevant GoL institutions at multiple levels as well as political sustainability are important for the long term success of FIFES. The sustainability of the community forestry management bodies and associated forest enterprises must be considered from the very beginning of FIFES. Without the sustainability of these community level institutions the results of FIFES will be short-lasting. In addition, the technical capacity of the GOL institutions, especially the FDA, is critical at the national and regional levels. Finally, the political sustainability of community forest management and enterprises will require sustained political support from the executive and legislative branches of the GOL. FIFES will work to maintain continued political support of community level engagement for both the management of forests and the generation of local level benefits.

Information

Effective policies must be based on a strong evidence base. Furthermore, these policies need to be monitored to determine their effectiveness, and allow for changes when the expected results are not obtained. Both the evidence base and the monitoring require detailed, time-sensitive information that currently does not exist in West Africa, or its access is hampered by transmission issues (e.g., slow internet connections). This information needs to be passed up from collection points to county and national-level bodies, at which point it is often turned into products that can then filter back down to decision-makers at the county and local level. This information and products can take the form of spatial maps, biodiversity density and threats, and market information. FIFES will work to ensure that the systems and frameworks for collecting, sharing and analyzing information are in place.

8. Key Personnel

To achieve the objectives of this activity, the applicant will provide long- and short-term technical personnel that are relevant to and appropriate for the activities to be undertaken under each component. The key personnel that will manage these activities should have an extensive background in supporting community forestry and forest enterprise initiatives as well as biodiversity activities.

The Applicant must have the ability to field qualified, local professionals and technical experts who possess significant professional expertise directly related to the activity. Key personnel should include: Chief of Party (COP), Deputy COP (DCOP), and Biodiversity Advisor and Private Sector Advisor. At least one of the key personnel should have experience working in Africa.

Chief of Party (COP): The COP supervises and oversees all technical, operational, and financial aspects of the activity. The COP is the primary liaison with USAID/Liberia on all matters pertaining to the award and adjusts activities and operations in response to the AOR and USAID/Liberia Agreement Officer. The COP is responsible for ensuring overall quality control for the assistance provided under the award.

Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP): The DCOP supports the COP in the overall administration and financial management of the activity including management of personnel, reporting, budgeting and procurement. In the absence of the COP, on a temporary basis, the DCOP assumes responsibilities for coordinating award management and implementation tasks, liaises with USAID/Liberia on technical matters, and responds to the USAID AOR and USAID/Liberia's Agreement Officer.

Private Sector Advisor: The Private Sector Advisor serves as the principal advisor to the COP on forestry enterprises, private sector, and small enterprise development. The Private Sector Advisor provides technical leadership for activities that cover identification of potential forestry enterprise products, harvesting, processing, and marketing of forestry products, including value-added manufactured products. The Private Sector Advisor works closely with forest communities, entrepreneurs, relevant partners and line ministries to enhance and engage private sector development and investment in activity field sites

Biodiversity Advisor: The Biodiversity Advisor serves as the principal advisor to the COP on all matters related to best practices in biodiversity conservation including ensuring that the activity activities are in line with USAID's new Biodiversity Policy. The Biodiversity Advisor will ensure that activity activities and locations are chosen to have the most positive impact on the conservation of Liberia's forest biodiversity.

9. Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation

(a) 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 activities. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapter 204 (http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/agency-policy/series-200) which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities. Recipient compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs.

(b) In addition, the recipient must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter shall govern.

(c) No activity funded under this Agreement will be implemented unless an environmental threshold determination, as defined by 22 CFR 216, has been reached for that activity, as documented in a Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE), Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), or Environmental Assessment (EA) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO). (Hereinafter, such documents are described as "approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.")

(d) As part of its Work Plan, and all subsequent Annual Work Plans thereafter, the Recipient, in collaboration with the USAID Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) and Mission Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.

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

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

(g) The approved Regulation 216 documentation covers activities expected to be implemented under this Agreement. USAID has determined that a **Negative Determination with conditions** applies to one or more of the proposed activities. This indicates that if these activities are implemented subject to the specified conditions, they are expected to have no significant adverse effect on the environment. The recipient shall be responsible for implementing all IEE conditions pertaining to activities to be funded under this solicitation.

Upon award, the Awardee shall develop a detailed EMMP, including the elements above, as part of the first workplan/inception report. This will be revisited annually and included in annual work plans as value chain activities are further developed. The original EMMP and annual updates to the EMMP require AOR and MEO approval.

Cost and technical applications must reflect Regulation 216 documentation preparation costs and approaches. Applicants should ensure that they budget for requirements such as required testing of water quality. Please refer to the Sector Environmental Best Practices (http://www.usaidgems.org/bestPractice.htm) for more detailed information on these requirements.

The Recipient will be expected to comply with all conditions specified in the approved Regulation 216 documentation.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

The FIFES Activity shall have a robust monitoring and evaluation system capable of tracking and documenting performance against indicators. Indicators should be developed jointly with GOL partners and in close collaboration USAID/Liberia and M&E implementing mechanisms. The system also must be responsive to any adjustments to performance indicators or introduction of "custom indicators" as agreed by USAID. Any custom indicators selected should provide more detailed understanding of the impact the FIFES activity's interventions have toward achieving the stated objectives. It is expected that there will be rigorous and periodic monitoring of biodiversity in the field sites, in addition to collection of biodiversity baseline data.

The system must be capable of generating the following:

- Indicators, associated data and descriptive indices for activities;

- Baseline conditions at the start of the activity, this is an especially critical requirement for measurements required in the use of earmarked biodiversity funds;
- Reports required to provide valid activity assessments by the implementing partner
- Reports required by USAID that meet the agreement and Agency requirements.

The Awardee will develop a results framework and annual monitoring and evaluation plans for AOR approval. The Framework and M&E plan will contribute to measuring progress in reaching the Development Objective of sustained economic growth for poverty reduction and include indicators related to USAID's Biodiversity Code and Private Sector Development. The Applicant will report against the Development Objective and associated indicators including, but not limited to, the following outcome indicators:

- Number of hectares of biological significance and/or natural resources under improved natural resource management as a result of USG assistance;
- Number of people with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable natural resource management and conservation as a result of USG assistance.

The FIFES M&E plan must comply with USAID Policy Directives, the Automated Directives System (ADS) 203 series, on Assessing and Learning for monitoring results and data quality. Specifically, the Awardee shall consider data quality issues for all indicators reported by the Mission to Washington. The FIFES implementer shall work in collaboration with USAID Liberia and M&E management and services contractors in preparing and finalizing the M&E plan and other monitoring and evaluation requirements.

The FIFES Activity's annual work plans will be a basis for joint annual management reviews by USAID and the implementer to review activity directions, achievements of the prior year objectives, any major management and implementation issues, and to make recommendations for changes as appropriate. Site visits may occur any time after activity start-up.

b. Authorized Legislation

This is a discretionary Cooperative Agreement opportunity to be completed and awarded pursuant to the authority of the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act, as amended, and the applicable sections of the Uniform Guidance - 2 CFR 200 and 700

c. Program Eligibility Requirements

Type of entity which may apply is described in Section C.

d. Award Administration

For US organizations, USAID Regulation 2 CFR 200 and 700, OMB Uniform Grant Guidance issued December 26, 2013 (which supersedes OMB Circulars), and USAID Standard Provisions for U.S.

Nongovernmental Recipients will be applicable. For non-U.S. organizations, the Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental Recipients and the applicable cost principles (found in the OMB Uniform Grant Guidance issued December 26, 2013) will apply. The OMB Uniform Grant Guidance issued December 26, 2013 is available in the following link: https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_docs. For both U.S. and non U.S. for-profit organizations Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 will be applicable. Please refer to Section VI of this NFO for more information on the standard provisions. While 2 CFR 200 and 700 do not directly apply to non-U.S. applicants, the Agreement Officer will use the standards of 2 CFR 200 and 700 in the administration of the award. Further information including the referenced documents may be obtained via our agency website http://www.usaid.gov directly or via links in USAID Automated Directive System (ADS) Chapter 303: http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf. Copies may also be obtained from the listed agency points of contact for this NFO.

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.401(g) and 2 CFR 700.13, it is USAID policy not to award profit under federal assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, direct and indirect, which are related to the Cooperative Agreement and are in accordance with applicable cost standards, may be paid under the Award.

[End of Section A]

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID intends to provide approximately $23,000,251.00 in total USAID funding for the life of the activity. The ceiling for this program is $23,000,251.00. Actual funding amounts are subject to availability of funds.

USAID intends to award One (1) 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 the Federal Award

The anticipated period of performance is five years. The estimated start date will be upon signature of the award.

3. Substantial Involvement

USAID desires to be substantially involved in the implementation of the selected program that is consistent with USAID policy contained in ADS Chapter 303, 2 CFR 200 and other applicable regulations or provisions concerning nongovernmental assistance activities. The intended purpose of the substantial involvement during the award is to assist the recipient in achieving the supported objectives of the agreement.

A Cooperative Agreement implies a level of "substantial involvement" by USAID through the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR). The intended purpose of the AOR involvement during the award is to assist the recipient in achieving the supported objectives of the agreement. USAID will be substantially involved during the implementation of this Cooperative Agreement in the following ways:

1. Approval of the Recipient's Implementation Plans
2. Approval of Specified Key Personnel
3. Agency and Recipient Collaboration or Joint Participation. Agency involvement when specifically tailored to support identified elements in the program description may be included. When these conditions are met, the AO may include appropriate levels of substantial involvement such as the following:

    - Collaborative involvement in selection of advisory committee members, if the program will establish an advisory committee that provides advice to the recipient. USAID may participate as a member of this committee as well. Advisory committees must only deal with programmatic or technical issues and not routine administrative matters.
    - Concurrence on the substantive provisions of sub-awards. **2 CFR 200.308** already requires the recipient to obtain the AO's prior approval for the sub-award, transfer, or

contracting out of any work under an award. This is generally limited to approving work by a third party under the agreement.

- Approval of the recipient's monitoring and evaluation plans.

4. Title to Property

(a) *Real Property*. Unless the agreement provides otherwise, the title to property will vest in accordance with 2 CFR 200.311.

(b) *Equipment*. Unless the agreement provides otherwise, the title to property will vest in accordance with 2 CFR 200.313.

5. Authorized Geographic Code

The authorized geographic code for this award is 937 defined as the United States, the Cooperating Country (Liberia), and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, and excluding prohibited sources. For accurate identification of developing countries, advanced developing countries, and prohibited sources, please refer to Automated Directive System (ADS) 310 entitled "Source and Nationality Requirements for Procurement of Commodities and Services Financed by USAID.

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 Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability project (FIFES) 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.

[End of Section B]

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

U.S. and non-U.S. organizations may participate under this NFO. In support of the Agency‘s interest in fostering a larger assistance base and expanding the number and sustainability of development partners, USAID/Liberia encourages applications from potential new implementing partners.

In order for an award to be made, the Agreement Officer (AO) must make an affirmative determination that the applicant is “responsible”, as discussed in ADS 303.3.9. This means that the applicant must possess, or have the ability to obtain, the necessary management and technical competence to conduct the proposed program. Applicants must have established financial management, monitoring and evaluation, 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 AO.

In the absence of an affirmative “responsibility” determination, an award will ordinarily not be made. However, in rare cases, an award can be made with “special award conditions” (e.g., additional nonstandard award requirements designed to minimize the risk presented to USAID of making an award to an NGO for which an affirmative determination of “responsibility” cannot be made), but only where it appears likely that the applicant can correct the deficiency in a reasonable period.

The Recipient must be a responsible entity. The AO may determine a pre-award survey is required and if so, would establish a formal survey team 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:

While applicant is encouraged to propose opportunities to leverage additional funding through partnerships, income generating activities or their own resources, cost sharing is not required for this activity.

3. Other

Applicants may submit under this NFO only one proposal.

Applicant will be screened for minimum technical acceptability. If failed to meet a minimum rating of **Acceptable** for Technical Approach noted in Section E applicant will be eliminated from further review and will be rejected. If found to be in violation of a particular Federal statute, Applicant will be considered as ineligible (Ref: Section VI.3.O).

The authorizing legislation for this Cooperative Agreement is the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as Amended, and the award is subject to Uniform Guidance 2 CFR 200 and 700.

[End of Section C]

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency point of contact

Name:	Edward S. Lamin	&	Mary Wambugu
Title:	A&A Specialist		Senior A & A Specialist
Email:	elamin@usaid.gov		mawambugu@usaid.gov
Phone:	077 677 7138 / 077 555 0702		077 677 7268 / 077 746 5886

Questions and Answers:

All questions regarding this NFO should be submitted in writing via email addresses above, with copy to Cheryl Hodge-Snead at chodge-snead@usaid.gov, by the date listed on the cover page with the subject line "Questions Regarding USAID's FIFES project SOL-669-15-000022".

Questions regarding this NFO should be submitted to the emails above by date and time indicated on the cover page of this solicitation to provide sufficient time to address the questions and incorporate the questions and answers as an amendment to this solicitation. 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

This Notice of Funding Opportunity will be posted on the federal government's World Wide Web Address at http://www.grants.gov. Each Applicant shall furnish the information required by this NFO. Application is to be submitted in two separate parts: (a) Technical application or management plan, and (b) Cost or business application; to Edward S. Lamin, email: elamin@usaid.gov and Mary Wambugu, email: mawambugu@usaid.gov with copies to Cheryl Hodge-Snead at chodge-snead@usaid.gov.

Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of the NFO.

Required Forms:
Applicant is to submit the application using the SF-424 series, which includes the:

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance;
- SF-424A, Budget Information - Nonconstruction Programs; and
- SF-424B, Assurances - Nonconstruction Programs.

The program described in Section I above includes non-construction elements. Therefore, these mandatory forms for non-construction programs must be completed. Costs to non-construction activities should be included on the SF-424A. Copies of these forms may be found in the following website: https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormsMenu?source=agency

Preparation of Applications

i. 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.

ii. 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.

iii. 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.

(A) Application Submission Procedures

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

Applications and modifications thereof is to be submitted with the name and address of the Applicant and the NFO number inscribed thereon, via e-mail, to elamin@usaid.gov, and mawambugu@usaid.gov with copies to chodge-snead@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".

Our 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.

(B) Technical Application Guidance/Format

(a) The technical proposal in response to this solicitation will be specific, clear, and complete, and is to respond to the instructions set forth in this Section. The technical application is to be submitted separately from the cost application

(b) Formatting

Technical proposals should be in English, should not exceed 25 pages and should be printed on standard 8 ½-inches by 11-inch letter size paper. The Cover Page, Table of Contents (that follows the technical application format outlined herein), and Executive Summary will not count against the page limitation. The cover page shall include the following:

a. Program title;

b. Notice of Funding Opportunity reference number;

c. Name of organization(s) applying for the agreement;

d. Any partnerships; and

e. Contact person, telephone number, fax number, address and types names(s) and title(s) of person(s) who prepared the application, and corresponding signatures.

The font size is to be at least 12-point type Times Roman with 1-inch margins and single-spaced. The front and back sides of a single sheet are counted as 2 pages. Pages should be sequentially numbered with the page number on each page. Any page that exceeds the page limitation will not be reviewed.

(c) The technical application will at a minimum include the following:

i. Cover Page

ii. Table of Content

iii. Executive Summary

iv. Technical Approach

v. Institutional Capability

vi. Key Personnel

vii. Past Performance

(d) The following should be presented as annexes not subject to the page limitations:

i. Resumes, references, and table summarizing qualifications for proposed personnel.

ii. Draft Performance Management Plan

iii. Draft Branding Strategy and Marking Plan

It is the premise of this NFO that there is substantial knowledge about approaches, policy dialogue, stakeholder, and community mobilization, application of quality assurance systems, and the utilization of information technology and other tools and skills to improve administrative and financial management and quality of services. It is the intent of this NFO to solicit as much of that knowledge as possible. This NFO is written to allow the Applicant as much as possible to lay out an innovative approach, with special attention given to evidence-based approaches.

The technical proposal will, at a minimum, include the following sections:

<u>1. Technical Approach</u>

USAID will evaluate the quality of the Applicant knowledge of proposed project complexities and results and the quality and feasibility of the proposed plan to achieve those results. USAID will evaluate the quality and comprehensiveness of the proposed strategy and methodology, timelines, and milestones to achieve results; and the extent to which the proposed technical approach and PMP demonstrate a clear understanding of the objectives of the program and a convincing approach to achieve them.

The extent to which the Applicant's approach demonstrates soundness, coherence, and effectiveness of project strategy in accordance with USAID foreign assistance priorities, USAID/Liberia's objectives, and the project's goal to develop key rural forest-based enterprises which provide inclusive, sustainable economic opportunities for small holders and communities that combat drivers of deforestation and biodiversity loss. The extent to which the application's technical approach addresses the project's 10 Key Principles as detailed in Section C of this RFA must be addressed in the application. Particular attention should be paid to describing how the approach will lead to institutional sustainability at the community level and multiple levels of relevant GOL institutions in order to promote sustained forest management for local-level benefits. Critical to achieving project objectives is the Applicant's flexibility, innovation, and creativity in project approach, as well as demonstration of expected tangible results and impacts from project activities over the life of the project.

In addition, the Applicant must ensure a clear approach to integration of gender and youth in project activities with the objective of equitable inclusion of appropriate opportunities for men, women and youth in land use and natural resources management as well as enterprise development. The different behaviors, roles, and responsibilities of men and women in the use and governance of communities' forest and natural resources must be considered in the Applicant's technical approach.

2. Institutional Capability

USAID will evaluate the extent to which the Applicant's institutional capability demonstrates the ability to effectively implement this program.

USAID will evaluate the quality of the Management Plan that describes the organizational structure, staff, volunteers, and NGO implementing partners, as appropriate, that the Applicant will utilize to achieve the results and objectives of the proposed project and the degree to which the Plan is aligned with the Applicant's technical approach. USAID will also evaluate the proposed implementing partners, the description of their anticipated statement of work; and the draft Performance Management Plan (PMP) on the extent to which it demonstrates a clear understanding of the concepts and requirements of a PMP. The PMP should establish clear criteria and indicators for assessing progress, evaluating and monitoring the impact of project activities toward achieving component objectives and five-year targets during the performance period and indicates a plan for collecting baseline data prior to the beginning of project activities. The PMP needs to include, among others, USAID Biodiversity and Private Sector indicators. Finally, USAID will evaluate the Applicant's proposed in-country financial and procurement management systems.

3. Key Personnel

USAID will evaluate proposed key personnel on the quality of their professional/technical qualifications, interpersonal skills, demonstrated experience, and the minimum criteria for the four Key Personnel elaborated in this NFO.

4. Past Performance

The Applicant's past performance information determined to be relevant will be evaluated in accordance with the following elements:

- Quality of product of service.
- Capacity to effectively coordinate and collaborate with Government and other stakeholders.
- Record of controlling costs.
- Record of conforming to cooperative agreement requirements.
- Timeliness of performance.
- Effectiveness of home and field office management.

The Applicant will provide information for at least three past performance references in accordance with the following table.

PD/SOW Summary	Primary Location of Work	Term of Performance	Dollar Value	Contract Type and Number	AOR/COR Name	AOR/COR E-mail and Tel. No.

USAID may use performance information obtained from sources other than those identified by the Applicant. USAID will utilize existing databases of contractor performance information and solicit additional information from the references provided herein and contact the individual(s) indicated as well as others.

(C) Cost Application Format

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

1. 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.).

2. A 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: http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15

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

4. 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.

The cost/business application should contain the budget categories: as shown on the SF-424A

The proposed budget will provide cost estimates for the management of the program (including program monitoring). Applicants should minimize their administrative and support costs for managing the project to maximize the funds available for project activities. A cost share is not expected under this cooperative agreement.

If the Applicant has established a consortium or another legal relationship among its partners, the Cost/Business application must include a copy of the legal relationship between the parties. The agreement should include a full discussion of the relationship between the Applicant and Sub-Applicant(s) including identification of the Applicant with whom USAID will work with for purposes of Agreement administration, identity of the Applicant which will have accounting responsibility, how Agreement effort will be allocated and the express agreement of the principals thereto to be held jointly and severely liable for the acts or omissions of the other.

The following describes the documentation that an Applicant for assistance award will submit to USAID prior to award:

i. Budget

(a) A budget with an accompanying budget narrative that provides in detail the total costs for implementation of the program the Applicant is proposing. The budget must be signed and submitted using Standard Form 424 and 424A which can be can be accessed electronically at www.grants.gov, downloaded from USAID web site, http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/formslibrary.do, or at Federal Offices. The following forms must be completed and included in the Cost Application submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity:

- SF 424.
- SF 424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs.
- Certification, Assurances, Statements and Other Required Forms (per Addendum 1 of the NFO).
- Detailed data to support each cost element (object class categories) as shown below.
- Current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or proposal for Indirect Cost Rate as detailed below (if the Applicant organization does not have a NICRA).

(b) In addition to providing summary cost data in the SF424A format noted above, Applicants are required to provide a detailed budget in cost applications and narratives (Microsoft excel worksheets hyperlinked and unlocked formulas to allow analysis for cost; and Microsoft word for narratives respectively), submitted in response to this solicitation.

(c) The following section provides guidance on budget line items.

- Personnel

(i) Identify, by title and name, each position to be supported under the proposed award.

(ii) For home office support staff, identify who will be compensated by USAID, the percentage of time and briefly specify related duties.

(iii) State the amounts of time, such as months and percent of time that will be expended by each position, their base pay rate and total direct compensation under this program, e.g., Position/Person Time XX Rate = $XXXX.

(iv) Provide rate verification documentation.

- Fringe Benefits

(i) Indicate the rate(s) used and the base of application for each rate.

(ii) Provide a copy of any Government approval of your indirect cost rates.

- Travel

(i) Identify international and domestic travel as separate items.

(ii) Indicate the estimated number of trips, number of travelers, position of travelers, number of days per trip, point of origin, destination and purpose of travel.

(iii) For each trip, itemize the estimate of transportation and/or subsistence costs, including airfare and per diem.

- Allowances

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

- Equipment, Materials and Supplies

(i) Itemize the equipment, materials and supplies and briefly justify the need for the items to be purchased as they apply to the Program Description.

(ii) Indicate the estimated unit cost and number of units for each item to be purchased.

(iii) Provide the basis for the cost estimates, e.g., pro forma invoice, published price lists, etc.

- Contractual

(i) For each proposed sub-award provide a Statement of Work or Program Description and concerned detailed costs for each of the partner.

(ii) Provide complete details of costs that may be incurred.

- Other Direct Costs

(i) Identify other costs and briefly justify the need for each cost item proposed relative to the Program Description.

(ii) Indicate the estimated unit cost and number of units for each item proposed.

(iii) Provide the basis for the cost estimates.

- Indirect Costs

(i) State the percentages and amounts used for the calculation of indirect costs.

(ii) Provide a copy of your latest Government-approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA).

(iii) If indirect costs have not been approved by a Federal agency, state the basis for the proposed indirect cost rates, if any.

(iv) Applicants who do not currently have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from their cognizant agency shall also submit the following information:

1. 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

2. 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.

- If local institutions are proposed for sub-awards, these institutions usually do not have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) letter with the US Government. For this category please refer to 2 CFR 200

- Cost sharing is encouraged but not required. If submitted, it will be treated in accordance with ADS 303.3.10

- Cost implications of the Branding Strategy and Marking Plan must be considered when preparing the cost application

- Required assurances, certifications and representations
  The Applicant shall complete the Required Certifications and sign and date in the signature space provided. The signed and dated printout must then be submitted with the application as an annex to the cost application. Original signed hardcopy of the certifications will be requested from the successful applicant prior to the agreement award.

- Evidence of Responsibility the Agreement Officer can use to determine the Applicant:

  a. Have adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain subject resources as required during the performance of the award.

  b. Has the ability to comply with award conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the Applicant, non-governmental and governmental.

  c. Has a satisfactory record of performance. Past relevant unsatisfactory performance is ordinarily sufficient to justify a finding of non-responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance.

  d. Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics; and

  e. Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a Grant under applicable laws and regulations (e.g., Equal Employment Opportunity).

- Certificate of Compliance:
  Please submit a copy of your Certificate of Compliance if your organization's systems have been certified by USAID/Washington's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA).

- Applicants that have never received a Grant, Cooperative Agreement or Contract from the U.S. Government are required to submit a copy of their accounting manual. If a copy has already been submitted to the U.S. Government, the Applicant must advise which Federal Office has a copy.

- Statutory and Regulation Certifications
  The Applicant shall complete the certifications in Section IV, B. Required Certifications and sign and date in the signature space provided. The signed

and dated printout must then be submitted with the application as an annex to the cost application. Original signed hardcopy of the certifications will be requested from the successful applicant prior to the agreement award.

(D) Potential Request for Additional Documentation

Upon consideration of award or during the negotiations leading to an award, Applicants may be required to submit additional documentation deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to make an affirmative determination of responsibility. Applicants should not submit the information below with their applications! The information in this section is provided so that Applicants may become familiar with additional documentation that may be requested by the Agreement Officer:

The information submitted should substantiate:

- Bylaws, constitution, and articles of incorporation, if applicable.
- Whether the organizational travel, procurement, financial management, accounting manual and personnel policies and procedures, especially regarding salary, promotion, leave, differentials, etc., submitted under this section have been reviewed and approved by any agency of the Federal Government, and if so, provide the name, address, and phone number of the cognizant reviewing official. The Applicant should provide copies of the same

(E) Required Certifications

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management

USAID may not award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Dun and Bradstreet and SAM.gov Requirements

USAID may not award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. Each applicant 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.

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

3. Funding Restrictions

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.

[End of Section D]

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1) Criteria

The applications will be evaluated as per ADS 303.3.6.3. The criteria are presented by major category in order of descending importance. Applicant should note that these criteria serve as the standard against which all technical information will be evaluated and serve to identify the significant matters which the Applicant must address.

- Rated Merit Review Criteria

Criterion 1: Technical Approach
Criterion 2: Institutional capability
Criterion 3: Key Personnel
Criterion 4: Past Performance

Non-Rated Cost Application Criteria

When combined, all Merit Review Criteria are significantly more important than the cost factors. As applications become more nearly equal in terms of technical factors, the non-rated cost application criterion becomes more important.

These Merit Review Criteria have been tailored to the requirements of this NFO to allow USAID to choose the highest quality applications. These criteria: a) identify the significant areas that the Applicant must address in their applications; and b) serve as the standard against which the Selection Committee (SC) will evaluate all applications. USAID will award to the Applicants whose applications best meet the program description. The Government may evaluate applications and award cooperative agreements without discussions with successful Applicants. However, the Government reserves the right to conduct discussions if later determined by the Agreement Officer as necessary. Therefore, each initial offer must contain the Applicant's best terms from a cost or price and technical standpoint.

The entry into discussion is to be viewed as part of the review process and must not be deemed by USAID or the applicant as indicative of a decision or commitment upon the part of USAID to make an Award to the applicant with whom discussions are being held.

<u>Adjectival Rating:</u>

Applications for the activity will be evaluated based on adjectival ranking for overall application and each section of the application, respectively. The following adjectives will be used in assessing the criteria set forth:

Adjectival	Description
Exceptional	Indicates that the application demonstrates an "outstanding" capacity; exceeds all minimum requirements of the criteria; has a high probability of success; contains no weaknesses or deficiencies and exceeds the fullest expectations of the Government.
Good	Indicates that the application demonstrates a level of effort that fully meets the

	NFO's requirements and that this effort has produced, or could produce, results which should prove to be substantially beneficial to achievement of the strategic objective and intermediate results; exceeds all the minimum requirements of the criteria; has an above average probability of success; contains no significant weaknesses and only minor, correctable weaknesses exist.
Acceptable	indicates that, in terms of the overall application and/or specific sections, the application demonstrates a "good" understanding and ability to fulfill the requirements; meets all the minimum requirements of the criteria; has an average probability of success; no significant weaknesses and any deficiencies can be readily corrected.
Marginal	Indicates that the application demonstrates a shallow understanding of the requirements and approach and marginally meets the minimum evaluation standard; fails to meet one or more of the minimum requirements of the criteria; low probability of success; major weaknesses and/or significant number of deficiencies exist which suggest a moderate risk that the applicant will not be successful.
Unacceptable	Indicates that the application fails to meet any of the minimum requirements of the criteria or contains a major deficiency or major deficiencies; application is incomplete, vague, incompatible, incomprehensible, or so incorrect that Evaluator thinks it is uncorrectable without a major revision; very low probability of success.

2) Review and Selection Process

Technical applications will be reviewed by a Selection Committee in accordance with the Merit Review Criteria set forth below. At the time of NFO issuance, all panel members are anticipated to be USAID employees. However, USAID may include personnel from the Government of Liberia or from other U.S. Government Agencies as appropriate in its sole discretion. The panel may make an award recommendation based on the extent of its evaluation scope. In addition, one or more panel members may be asked to provide input to the cost effectiveness review, any substantial implementation involvement desired by USAID, and on any special provisions that may be included in the award. The terms of the final award decision are made by the Agreement Officer, with consideration of the Selection Committee recommendations.

Once the application is reviewed and an award imminent, additional information and discussion may occur between the applicant and USAID Agreement Officer, before the Agreement Officer makes the final funding decision.

USAID will conduct a merit review of all applications received that complies with the instructions in this NFO. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the criteria stated above.

A. MERIT REVIEW

For this Cooperative Agreement, all evaluation factors other than cost when combined are significantly more important than cost. Technical, cost and other factors will be evaluated relative to each other, as described herein.

The technical proposal will be reviewed by a Selection Committee using the criteria shown in this Section. Applicant is to note that these criteria serve as the standard against which all proposals will be evaluated and serve to identify the significant matters which the Applicant is to address in their application.

1. Technical Approach

USAID will evaluate the quality of the Applicant knowledge of proposed project complexities and results and the quality and feasibility of the proposed plan to achieve those results. USAID will evaluate the quality and comprehensiveness of the proposed strategy and methodology, timelines, and milestones to achieve results; and the extent to which the proposed technical approach and PMP demonstrate a clear understanding of the objectives of the program and a convincing approach to achieve them.

The extent to which the Applicant's approach demonstrates soundness, coherence, and effectiveness of project strategy in accordance with USAID foreign assistance priorities, USAID/Liberia's objectives, and the project's goal to develop key rural forest-based enterprises which provide inclusive, sustainable economic opportunities for small holders and communities that combat drivers of deforestation and biodiversity loss. The extent to which the application's technical approach addresses the project's 10 Key Principles as detailed in Section C of this RFA must be addressed in the application. Particular attention should be paid to describing how the approach will lead to institutional sustainability at the community level and multiple levels of relevant GOL institutions in order to promote sustained forest management for local-level benefits. Critical to achieving project objectives is the Applicant's flexibility, innovation, and creativity in project approach, as well as demonstration of expected tangible results and impacts from project activities over the life of the project.

In addition, the Applicant must ensure a clear approach to integration of gender and youth in project activities with the objective of equitable inclusion of appropriate opportunities for men, women and youth in land use and natural resources management as well as enterprise development. The different behaviors, roles, and responsibilities of men and women in the use and governance of communities' forest and natural resources must be considered in the Applicant's technical approach.

2. Institutional Capability

USAID will evaluate the extent to which the Applicant's institutional capability demonstrates the ability to effectively implement this program.

USAID will evaluate the quality of the Management Plan that describes the organizational structure, staff, volunteers, and NGO implementing partners, as appropriate, that the Applicant will utilize to achieve the results and objectives of the proposed project and the degree to which the Plan is aligned with the Applicant's technical approach. USAID will also evaluate the proposed implementing partners, the description of their anticipated statement of work; and the draft Performance Management Plan (PMP) on the extent to which it demonstrates a clear understanding of the concepts and requirements of a PMP. The PMP should establish clear criteria and indicators for assessing progress, evaluating and monitoring the impact of project activities toward achieving component objectives and five-year targets during the performance period and indicates a plan for collecting baseline data prior to the beginning of project activities. The PMP needs to include, among others, USAID Biodiversity and Private Sector indicators. Finally, USAID will evaluate the Applicant's proposed in-country financial and procurement management systems.

3. Key Personnel

USAID will evaluate proposed key personnel on the quality of their professional/technical qualifications, interpersonal skills, demonstrated experience, and the minimum criteria for the four Key Personnel elaborated in this NFO.

4. Past Performance

The Applicant's past performance information determined to be relevant will be evaluated in accordance with the following elements:

- Quality of product of service.
- Capacity to effectively coordinate and collaborate with Government and other stakeholders.
- Record of controlling costs.
- Record of conforming to cooperative agreement requirements.
- Timeliness of performance.
- Effectiveness of home and field office management.

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 has not been assigned a weight but will be evaluated for realism, reasonableness, allocability, allowability and cost-effectiveness. 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 by a responsibility determination.

Cost Sharing

Cost sharing is not required for this program, but encouraged. Applicant may propose cost share at its discretion. However, if cost share is proposed, information regarding the proposed cost share shall be included in the SF 424 and the budget as indicated on those documents. The cost sharing plan shall be discussed in the budget notes to the extent necessary to demonstrate its feasibility and applicability to the program. USAID/Liberia encourages applicants to demonstrate their commitment to program success by addressing the issue of cost-sharing. The amount of cost sharing, i.e. cash and/or in-kind contributions, will be evaluated in accordance with 2 CFR 2200.306 AND 2 CFR 700.1.

If at the end of any funding period, the recipient has expended an amount of non-Federal funds less than the agreed upon amount or percentage of total expenditures, the Agreement Officer may apply the difference to reduce the amount of USAID incremental funding in the following funding period. If the award has expired or has been terminated, the Agreement Officer may require the recipient to refund the difference to USAID.

[End of Section E]

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1) Federal Award Notices

The Notice of Award (ADS 303.3.7.1.a) signed by the Agreement Officer is the authorizing document that you have an agreement with USAID. USAID shall provide this Notice electronically to the person designated to receive this information in the application. The notice shall be transmitted to the Recipient electronically for countersignature. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified the same way when their application is no longer considered for the next step.

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

Grantees who are US Nongovernmental recipients, the Standard Provisions for US Nongovernmental recipients will be included in any final agreement. Grantees who are non-US Nongovernmental recipients, the Standard Provisions for non-US Nongovernmental recipients will be included in any final agreement. Standard Provisions for both US Nongovernmental and non-US Nongovernmental can be found at the following link: http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303maa.pdf

The final award will include any deviations to the standard provisions.

3) Reporting Requirements.

- Financial Reporting. Financial reports will be due quarterly and no later than 10 days after the end of each quarter and shall be submitted using the SF425 as a financial reporting requirement. They will include budgeted versus the actual expenditures, along with a brief analysis of any variance. Accrued expenditures will be reported on a quarterly basis – ten days prior to March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31.
- Performance Reporting. The successful Applicant will use the standard form Performance Progress Report (SF-PPR) to report performance progress for the program under the award when the program exceeds $100,000 or more per project/grant period.
- Development Experience Clearinghouse Requirements. The successful Applicant will use ADS 540 for detailed guidance on the submission of copies of reports and other information to USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC).

- Program Income: Program income is not expected to be generated by the Recipient implementing the Cooperative Agreement. However, any program income that is generated under the resulting award shall be in accordance with 2 CFR 200.307 and shall account for Program Income earned under this award and shall be added to the project as follows:

  In accordance with 2 CFR 200.307, program income earned during the project period shall be retained by the recipient and, in accordance with USAID regulations, other implementing guidance, or the terms and conditions of the award, shall be added to funds committed by USAID and the recipient to the project or program, and used to further eligible project or program objectives."

- Branding and Marking. In accordance with ADS 303.3.6.3.f and 2 CFR 700.16, applicant must submit a Branding Strategy and a Marking Plan for evaluation and approval by the Agreement Officer before an award under this solicitation will be made. "Marking Plan" and "Marking of USAID-funded Assistance Awards" are contained in 2 CFR 700.16. Please note that in contrast to "exceptions" to marking requirements, waivers based on circumstances in the host country must be approved by Mission Directors or other USAID Principal Officers, see 2 CFR 700.16. USAID approved Branding Strategy and Marking Plan is required for award execution. Additional guidance can be found at the following hyperlinks: USAID Branding (http://www.usaid.gov/branding/)

  The Agreement Officer will review the Marking Plan for adequacy and reasonableness, ensuring that it contains sufficient detail and information concerning public communications, commodities, and program materials that will visibly bear the USAID Identity. The Agreement Officer will evaluate the plan to ensure that it is consistent with the stated objectives of the award; with the Applicant's cost data submissions; with the Applicant's actual project, activity, or program performance plan; and with the regulatory requirements of 2 CFR 700.16. The Agreement Officer will approve or disapprove any requested Presumptive Exceptions on the basis of adequacy and reasonableness. The Agreement Officer may obtain advice and recommendations from technical experts while performing the evaluation.

  A. Final program and budget plans.

  B. Payment terms.

  C. Procedures concerning administrative reporting and logistical requirements for program including training components.

  D. Initial Environmental Examination

  E. Other award terms including audit, special provisions and/or special award conditions.

- 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 Part 204 (http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/agency-policy/series-200) that requires the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities be identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities.

If any new activities are planned outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation, an amendment to the documentation for USAID review and approval shall be prepared. No such new activities shall be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval of environmental documentation amendments. If an IEE, as developed and approved by USAID, includes a Positive Determination for one or more activities, the grantee will be required to develop and submit an EA addressing these activities.

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

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

- Quarterly and Annual Progress Reports. Quarterly Progress Reports will be submitted within thirty days after the end of each quarter, with Annual Progress Reports at the end of the fourth quarter, and will include details of actual achievements against agreement targets.
- Final Completion Report. A final performance report will be submitted sixty days after the completion date of the award and will include: (a) an executive summary; (b) an overall description of the Grantee's activities during the life of the project; (c) an assessment of progress made toward achieving overall objectives, results, expected outcomes and targets; (d) issues, problems, and constraints that emerged during program implementation and actions taken to address them; (e) lessons learned and recommendations; and (f) a fiscal report describing how the Grantee's funds were used. Annexes should include: an index of all reports and information products produced under the project.

[End of Section F]

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

1. The Agreement Officer for this Award is:
   Cheryl Hodge-Snead
   Agreement Officer
   chodge-snead@usaid.gov
   Phone: +231 77 677 7042

2. The Senior Acquisition and Assistance Specialist for this award is:
   Mary Njeri Wambugu
   Senior Acquisition & Assistance Specialist
   mawambugu@usaid.gov
   Phone: +231 77-677-7426 /

3. The Acquisition and Assistance Specialists for this award are
   Edward S. Lamin
   A&A Specialist
   elamin@usaid.gov
   Phone: + 231 77 677 7138 / 077 555 0702

   &

4. The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist for this award is:
   Thomatta C. Cooper
   Acquisition & Assistance Specialist
   tccooper@usaid.gov
   Phone: +231 77-677-7426 / 077 601 0928

[End of Section G]

SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

(a) In accordance with 2 CFR 200.400(g) and 2 CFR 700.13, no funds under the award(s) resulting from this NFO shall be paid as profit to any recipient or sub-recipient. Profit is any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. This does not preclude payment of profit to the recipient's or sub-recipients' vendors (contractors) under procurement contracts and subcontracts for the acquisition of goods and services, which are subject to 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700, as well as the USAID standard provision entitled "USAID Eligibility Rules for Goods and Services." Also see http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303sai.

(b) FUNDING APPLICANT

Issuance of this NFO 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 the preparation and submission of an application. Further, USAID reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. In addition, final award of any resultant Cooperative Agreement(s) will not be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal USAID procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, applicant is hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award. All application preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's own expense.

(c) AWARD

The Government will award one Cooperative Agreement resulting from this NFO.

(d) AUTHORITY TO OBLIGATE THE GOVERNMENT

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

(e) E**XTERNAL EVALUATIONS**

At any time during program implementation, USAID/Liberia may conduct one or more external assessments/process evaluations to assess and substantiate performance and overall achievements of the project's activities. The external mid-term and final performance evaluations may be funded directly by USAID in keeping with Agency Evaluation Policy and will not be included in the funding of this Agreement.

[End of Section H]

Addendum One CERTIFICATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

AFFIRMATION OF CERTIFICATIONS

The undersigned affirms that the following certifications provided in connection with the Leader grant (enter Grant or Cooperative Agreement number) remain valid, or any updated information or new certifications are signed and attached:

"Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing
Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs";

“Certification Regarding Lobbying."

“Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals (ADS 206)”

“Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing Implementing Executive Order 13224”

“Key Individual Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking” (as applicable)

“Participant Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking” (as applicable)

“Certification of Compliance with the Standard Provisions entitled ‘Condoms’ and ‘Prohibition on the Promotion or Advocacy of the Legalization or Practice of Prostitution or Sex Trafficking’” (as applicable).

By: ___________________________ Title: _____________________

Typed Name: ________________________ Date: ___________

Addendum Two – COST PROPOSAL ILLUSTRATIVE BUDGET WORKSHEET

COST PROPOSAL ILLUSTRATIVE BUDGET WORKSHEET

Budget summary breakdown by year for Prime and for Subcontractors

Item	*Year 1*	*Year 2t*	*Year 3*	*Total Budget for Year 1-Year 3*
Salaries and Wages				
Fringe Benefits				
ST Expatriate Consultants				
ST Local Consultants				
Travel, Transportation and Per Diem				
Equipment and Supplies				
Subcontracts				
Allowances				
Participants Training				
Other Direct Costs				
Indirect Costs:				
Overhead				
Material Overhead				
G&A				
Total Estimated Cost				

Addendum Three – BRANDING STRATEGY AND MARKING PLAN TEMPLATE

[THIS IS A SAMPLE/TEMPLATE BASED ON ADS 320.3.3 BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR ASSISTANCE AWARDS. BY RESPONDING TO THE QUESTIONS IN ITALICS, THE RECIPIENT WILL BE ABLE TO SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLY WITH THE ADS REQUIREMENTS]

"USAID BRANDING STRATEGY"
AWARD TITLE
AWARD NUMBER
DATE OF PLAN

1) Positioning

What is the intended name of this program, project, or activity?

Guidelines: USAID prefers to have the USAID Identity included as part of the program or project name, such as a "title sponsor," if possible and appropriate. It is acceptable to "co-brand" the title with USAID's and the Grantee's identities. For example: "The USAID and [Grantee] Health Center."

Will a program logo be developed and used consistently to identify this program? If yes, please attach a copy of the proposed program logo.

Note: USAID prefers to fund projects that do NOT have a separate logo or identity that competes with the USAID Identity.

2) Program Communications and Publicity

Who are the primary and secondary audiences for this project or program?

Guidelines: Please include direct beneficiaries and any special target segments or influencers. For Example: Primary audience: schoolgirls age 8-12, Secondary audience: teachers and parents– specifically mothers.

What communications or program materials will be used to explain or market the program to beneficiaries?

Guidelines: These include training materials, posters, pamphlets, Public Service Announcements, billboards, websites, and so forth.

What is the main program message?

Guidelines: For example: "Be tested for HIV-AIDS" or "Have your child inoculated."
Please indicate if you also plan to incorporate USAID's primary message – this aid is "from the American people" – into the narrative of program materials. This is optional; however, marking with the USAID Identity is required.

Will the recipient announce and promote publicly this program or project to host country citizens? If yes, what press and promotional activities are planned?

Will the recipient announce and promote publicly this program or project to host country citizens? If yes, what press and promotional activities are planned?

Guidelines: These may include media releases, press conferences, public events, and so forth. Note: incorporating the message, “USAID from the American People”, and the USAID Identity is required.

Please provide any additional ideas about how to increase awareness that the American people support this project or program.

Guidelines: One of our goals is to ensure that both beneficiaries and host-country citizens know that the aid the Agency is providing is "from the American people." Please provide any initial ideas on how to further this goal.

3) Acknowledgements

Will there be any direct involvement from a host country government ministry? If yes, please indicate which one or ones. Will the recipient acknowledge the ministry as an additional co-sponsor?

Note: it is perfectly acceptable and often encouraged for USAID to "co-brand" programs with government ministries. Please indicate if there are any other groups whose logo or identity the recipient will use on program materials and related communications.

Guidelines: Please indicate if they are also a donor or why they will be visibly acknowledged, and if they will receive the same prominence as USAID.

“USAID MARKING PLAN”
AWARD TITLE
AWARD NUMBER
DATE OF PLAN

(1) Describe the public communications, commodities, and program materials that the recipient will produce as a part of the grant or cooperative agreement and which will visibly bear the USAID identity.

Guidelines: This description should include the following four sections:

(i) program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects or other programs, projects, or activities that are physical in nature;

(ii) technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audiovisual productions, public service announcements, websites/Internet activities, and other promotional, informational, media, or communication products funded by USAID;

(iii) events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences, and other public activities; and

(iv) all commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs, and all other equipment, supplies and other materials funded by USAID, and their export packaging.

A. Table of Deliverables expected to be produced in the conduct of this program:

All deliverables will be marked in a visible manner with the USAID identity; below is an indication of what type of marking will be used and where on the deliverable the USAID identity will be placed.

Deliverable	Type of marking	Where and when the marking will be placed
Reports?	USAID printed identity	Front cover when delivered
Publications (brochures)?	USAID printed identity	Front cover when produced
Website?	USAID web identity	Front page at project startup

B. Table of Deliverables expected to be produced in the conduct of this program that will not be marked:

Deliverable	Rational for not marking

C. Sub-recipient: As specified in the standard provisions, the marking requirements will “flow down” to sub-recipients or sub-awards, and will include the USAID-approved marking provision in all USAID funded sub-awards, as follows:

"As a condition of receipt of this sub-award, marking with USAID identity of a size and prominence equivalent to or greater that the recipient's, sub-recipient's, other donor's or third party's is required. In the event the recipient chooses not to require marking with its own identity or logo by the sub recipient, USAID may, at its discretion, require marking by the sub recipient with the USAID Identity."

(5) Any "public communications," as defined in 22 C.F.R. 226.2, funded by USAID, in which the content has not been approved by USAID, will contain the following disclaimer:

"*This study/report/audio-visual/other information/media product (specify) is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of [insert recipient's name] and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government*."

(6) As specified in the standard provisions, ___________ will provide the Agreement Officer's Representative or other USAID personnel designated in the grant or cooperative agreement with two copies of all program and communications materials produced under the award. In addition, ____________ will submit one electronic or one hard copy of a