USAID | KYRGYZ REPUBLIC
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Issue Date:	September 16, 2019
Deadline for Questions:	October 2, 2019, 09:00 am (Almaty time)
Applications Due Date:	November 1, 2019, 17:00 (Almaty time)
Subject:	Notice of Funding Opportunity 72011519RFA00010
Program Title:	Nonpartisan Domestic Observation of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections in the Kyrgyz Republic

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 98.001

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications for a Cooperative Agreement from qualified entities to implement the Nonpartisan Domestic Observation of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections in the Kyrgyz Republic Program. Eligibility for this award is restricted to local organizations registered in the Kyrgyz Republic as noted in Section C of this RFA.

USAID intends to make an award to the applicant(s) who best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity based on the merit review criteria described in this NOFO subject to a risk assessment. Eligible parties interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements and selection process.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NOFO and meet eligibility standards in Section C of this NOFO. This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity and to ensure that the NOFO has been received from the internet in its entirety. 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 NOFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section D.6.g. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration as soon as possible.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section D. The deadline for questions is shown above. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted to www.grants.gov.

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

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Brian LeCuyer
Agreement Officer

Table of Contents

SECTION A: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION	4
SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION	13
SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION	16
SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	17
SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION	36
SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION	38
SECTION G: ANNEXES	49

SECTION A: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

NONPARTISAN DOMESTIC ELECTION OBSERVATION IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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

Background and Context

Over the past eight years, the Kyrgyz Republic has successfully held two presidential elections, two parliamentary elections, and two constitutional referenda. A landmark presidential election in 2017 marked the country's first peaceful transfer of power from one popularly elected president to another without significant incident. President Sooronbay Jeenbekov has emphasized the importance of democratic elections, stating that "all stages of the 2020 parliamentary elections should be held openly, honestly and fairly...It is necessary to eliminate any possibility of vote buying and ensure justice during the campaign."[1] These commitments reflect the position the Kyrgyz Republic holds in the region, as a model for elections that strive to meet democratic standards.

In 2020, the Kyrgyz Republic will hold municipal and parliamentary elections. Members of Parliament are elected through a party list system.[2] Recent changes to the law stipulate that parties are required to win a minimum of 9 percent of votes cast in each oblast and the cities of Bishkek and Osh in order to take seats in Parliament, however no single party can hold more than 65 seats of the 120-member parliament. Candidate and party registration for the parliamentary elections concludes generally 60 days prior to the election. Independent candidates are not allowed to register for the parliamentary elections. In their party lists, parties are required to include at least 30 percent of candidates from each gender, 15 percent from national minorities, and 15 percent under the age of 35.

In the 2015 parliamentary election, 14 parties registered their candidate lists and six parties won seats in the Parliament. This was the first time the country used biometric registration and identification of voters and smart ballot boxes for increased transparency of elections.

According to official Central Election Commission (CEC) data, parties spent $7,665,219.8 in 2015 and $6,795,200 in 2017. Prior to the Presidential election in 2017, the limits for candidate contributions and for donations to election campaigns were significantly increased - candidates may contribute KGS 15 million, while an individual or legal entity may donate up to KGS 50 million. No spending can be in the form of cash and parties or candidates are required to report all campaign spending to the CEC.

---

[1] President's address to the Parliament on June 27, 2018 https://24.kg/vlast/89024_sooronbay_jeenbekov_vyiboryi-2020_doljnyi_byit_provedenyi_otkryito_ichestno/
[2] Current quota for female candidates to the Parliament and local councils is set at 30 percent.

There are more than 2300 electoral precincts in the Kyrgyz Republic, serving over 3 million registered voters. For the first time in 2015, the CEC opened supplementary polling stations in Bishkek and Osh for internal migrants, and roughly 10 percent of voters changed their electoral address a few months prior to elections, which some cite as helping parties to overcome the then-threshold of 7 percent.[3] Voter turnout has been moderate with 57.56 percent and 55.93 percent in the 2015 parliamentary and 2017 presidential elections, respectively.[4] Young voters (ages 18-30) are increasingly participating in elections representing 41.5 percent of total turnout in 2017 elections.

The Kyrgyz Republic's legislation guarantees gender equality and allows equal opportunities for men and women to exercise their rights to elect and be elected. Recent changes to the law were designed to promote gender equity in elected office. In addition to the requirement that 30 percent of parliamentary candidates on party lists must be from another gender, and if removed must be replaced by someone of the same gender, the Parliament has also included a 30 percent gender quota for local councils, a significant increase from the 19 percent currently recorded in local *keneshes*. The changes also allow for employees of Kyrgyz Government-funded offices or entities to run for local elections, allowing individuals such as school or health clinic directors, who are disproportionately female, to seek elected office.

Election observation is allowed under Kyrgyz law. Candidates, nongovernmental organizations (NGO), and international organizations can register observers. Observation is allowed at all stages of the electoral process, although there have been attempts to limit it. For example, in 2015 the CEC limited the number of international observers. In 2017, NGOs' ability to observe and to challenge voting results was limited by amendments to election laws.

USAID Support for Nonpartisan Election Observation

In partnership with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, USAID has supported nonpartisan domestic election monitoring and voter education in the Kyrgyz Republic for almost two decades. USAID provides such support in order to increase the transparency of the electoral process, support the accountability of those administering and participating in elections, and increase citizen trust in the democratic process, with the ultimate goal of strengthening Kyrgyz democracy. Nonpartisan domestic observation has played a critical role in ensuring the integrity of recent

[3] https://24.kg/vybory/16670_k_vyiboram_v_jogorku_kenesh_tsentrizbirkom_otkroet_v_jilmassivah_gorodov_bishkeka_i_osha_vremennyie_uik_/ CEC Chair Abdraimov on 23 July 2015 stated that, "According to the recent electoral law changes there is regional threshold, which poses a problem – parties are dividing their voters by regions, and are encouraging their constituents that reside in Bishkek without registration to vote by electoral address. E.g. At Bashy residents are encouraged to register at polling station near Dordoi market. We can state that this is the start for Great Migration of voters." In addition in the the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report for the Kyrgyz Republic Presidential Election 15 October 2017, published on March 8, 2018, page 9, OSCE/ODIHR stated, "In a step to facilitate the exercise of their right to vote, voters are allowed to change their registration to a temporary address where they would be on election day; PECs received a total of 316,064 such requests".

[4] Demographic statistics for elections from 2015 to the present are available through the State Registration Service at https://data.srs.kg/

elections. For example, in the 2017 Presidential Election, the USAID-supported Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society (Coalition) challenged the results at eight polling stations as a result of recorded discrepancies between the number of voters registered and the number of ballots issued. As a result, the CEC annulled the results in those stations. Investment in the transparency and inclusion of the electoral process is critical to ensuring that the legitimacy of Kyrgyzstan's hotly contested elections are not questioned. USAID has supported efforts to strengthen citizen participation in political and electoral processes in over 80 countries around the world.

Opportunity Statement

Election administration by the CEC has strengthened considerably. Despite early skepticism, the introduction of automated ballot scanners and biometric identification in 2015 provided greater transparency to the voter identification and vote count processes and helped eliminate so-called "carousel voting," whereby individual voters cast multiple votes in several polling stations. Voter confidence mirrored these advancements; the percentage of citizens that believe that the elections are generally free and fair is steadily increasing – from 17 percent in the 2009 Presidential elections to 44 percent in the 2015 Parliamentary elections and 49 percent in the 2017 Presidential elections.[5] However, while the appropriate authorities have improved the management of election day and made it more transparent, voters are becoming less convinced that their votes matter.[6] Even more noteworthy, while voters believe elections are "generally" free and fair, a 2018 public opinion poll conducted by the International Republic Institute (IRI) noted that a small majority of voters still question the validity of the process.[7] This suggests that while voters see the electoral process as improving, work remains to instill voter confidence in democratic processes. As a result, stakeholders identified gaining citizen trust in the electoral system as a key priority of electoral reform leading into the 2020 elections.[8]

Part of the lack of voter confidence stems from how voters are engaged by political campaigns and how parties and those aligned with candidates seek votes. As the Central Election Commission highlights in its *Strategy for Reforming Election Legislation in the Kyrgyz Republic 2018-2020,* "One of the problems is vote buying which started massively spreading recently mainly due to the fact that it is no longer possible to falsify election results at the major stages of electoral process or to influence citizens' choices through election organizers."[9] According to recent polling, voters may be aware of some of the challenges. The same poll by IRI noted that, 21 percent of respondents admitted that they or someone they knew were offered money, gifts, or other incentives during the Presidential campaign. This percentage was even higher in the 2015

---

[5] According to the International Republican Institute (IRI) Public Opinion Poll, released 2019 and Coalition's telephone poll 2017 from 11% (IRI) to 19% (Coalition) of voters believe that their votes do not matter, this percentage is higher among older age group reaching 59.5%.
[6] http://center.kg/article/244 "absenteeism of voters from exercising their right to vote is a natural reaction to the situation when elections outcome does not change much in the country".
[7] IRI Public Opinion Poll conducted from November 22 to December 4, 2018. Available at www.iri.org
[8] The CEC's working group, "Strategy for improving the electoral legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018–2020" identified improving citizen trust as one of the main priorities of the group. http://platforma.kg/our-priorities/election/rabochaya-podgruppa-obsudila-klyuchevye/
[9] Strategy for Reforming Election Legislation in the Kyrgyz Republic 2018-2020, Central Election Commission, https://shailoo.gov.kg/media/anarbek/2019/06/06/wnbyjv.pdf

Parliamentary elections (26 percent). USAID-supported research outside of the Kyrgyz Republic found a direct link between vote-buying and a lack of willingness by voters to discipline the subsequent (elected) politician, suggesting that in general the poor accountability practices that start with vote-buying follow those individuals into governance.[10] In the Kyrgyz Republic, vote-buying is a crime but is a matter of "private prosecution," which means only the person offered the bribe can file a claim, effectively meaning that vote-buying is neither investigated nor prosecuted by law enforcement bodies.

Other types of voter obfuscation are less obvious but equally detrimental to voter confidence and election transparency. The CEC tracks and publishes the expenditure of electoral funds of the candidates but there is no requirement to publish an audit of the contributions. So while voters can identify how candidates spent their money, they cannot know from where the candidates receive their funds, and therefore to whom they may be beholden.

In 2017, domestic and international observers cited concerns of misuse of public resources and involvement of state employees, including government officials, teachers, and university officials, campaigning in favor of certain candidates.[11] Not only do these types of actions violate the Kyrgyz Republic's electoral code, but this provision of resources in the form of people, time, space, and money can help to tip the scales considerably to one candidate or party.

Media plays an important role in most elections and the Kyrgyz Republic is no different. The law requires media to provide unbiased information and to treat candidates equally, yet no provision for media monitoring to ensure compliance exists within the electoral administration. In 2017, media monitoring by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) showed that broadcasters preferred airing paid political advertising, rather than covering the campaign in the news, thereby favoring candidates with deeper campaign funds. Within the limited amount of campaign coverage provided, OSCE/ODIHR assessed that TV stations, including public broadcasters, were "clearly biased".[12] In 2017, media monitoring by the Media Development Center highlighted the need for a clear distinction between campaigning and voter education; the Center noted numerous violations of campaigning by most web, TV, radio and print news outlets.[13] While televised debates provided a welcome opportunity for voters to receive unbiased information about all candidates and to hear from them directly regarding their platforms and policies, the limited number of debates was not sufficient to counterbalance the biased media coverage elsewhere.

---

[10] "Votes-Vote-Buying and Voter Behavior in the Laboratory" page 21. Williams College, 2016. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/Value%20for%20Money%20in%20Purchasing%20Votes--Vote-buying%20and%20Voter%20Behavior%20in%20the%20Laboratory%20%282016%29.pdf

[11] This has been cited by several observation missions. The OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report for the Kyrgyz Republic Presidential Election 15 October 2017, published on March 8, 2018, pages 2, 5, and 12. The Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society "Results of Long-Term Observation for Preparation for the elections of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic October 15, 2017" makes recommendations based on its observation of use of administrative resources that political parties and campaigns to "compete fairly and not to use the administrative resources" page 34.

[12] OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report for the Kyrgyz Republic Presidential Election 15 October 2017, published on March 8, 2018, page 2.

[13] http://medialaw.kg/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Final-Report_MDC_EC_elections_190218.pdf

There have also been occasions when leading candidates have withdrawn from debates at the last minute, depriving voters of an opportunity to hear candidates' policy proposals and to judge their leadership ability.

Campaigns are also showing a higher use of social media and supporters are taking to social media to spread messages and information related to the campaign. While difficult to assess, in recent elections in the region, there appears to be an increase in the use of disinformation as a campaign tactic, particularly on social media. This phenomenon may also surface in the Kyrgyz Republic in the next election, particularly as parties look to cultivate youth voters.

While legislation has made improvements to secure additional female representation, OSCE/ODIHR election observation during the 2017 elections revealed that informal barriers still exist for equal participation of men and women in all aspects of the electoral process. Access to financial resources is one of the biggest challenges for women candidates, as well as media coverage.[14] However other barriers exist for those women who seek to participate in nonpartisan roles including as election observers or election commission members. Although voter turnout is relatively equal between men and women, observers note that voter education and campaign platforms continue to ignore gender issues[15] and specifically many individuals believe that politicians do not listen to the needs and ideas of women.[16]

Theory of Change

USAID's development hypothesis for this activity is as follows:

If citizens have an increased understanding of voter rights; and

If citizens have access to clear, accurate, and unbiased information about campaign practices; and

If elections are transparently administered in accordance with Kyrgyz law;

Then voters will be more engaged in the electoral process and will have higher confidence in the integrity of the vote.

Proposed Approach

USAID proposes to support a nonpartisan civic engagement activity that seeks to inform voters and the general public about the election process and promote the roles and responsibilities of the voter. This activity will have three components: voter education, long- and short-term observation, and electoral administration and legislation monitoring, which together will support

[14] OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report for the Parliamentary Elections 4 October 2015, published on January 28, 2016, page 15.
[15] OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report for the Kyrgyz Republic Presidential Election 15 October 2017, published on March 8, 2018, page 3. Please note, female voter turnout of the 2015 Parliamentary Elections was approximately 53.2 percent. http://ess.shailoo.gov.kg/ServiceJSP.do
[16] IRI Public Opinion Survey 2018, 58 percent of respondents strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement "politicians do not listen to the needs and ideas of women."

the overall goal of increasing citizen involvement in and responsibility for the governance process.

Activity Purpose: ***To increase voter confidence in the citizen-government contract***

SP 1: Increase voter confidence in the electoral process.

In the lead up to the elections, the activity would invest in efforts to empower and educate voters about their role in the democratic process and to incentivize voters to participate in that process. By first educating voters of their rights and responsibilities as well as the rights and responsibilities of other actors participating in the electoral process, such as political parties and government entities, voters will have a better understanding of the duties of each, including where those roles or rights may be infringed upon and/or abused.

In order to incentivize voters to participate in the electoral process, the activity would need to identify voter education messages that resonate with key audiences based on citizen perception of the electoral and political processes. Voter education would also have to take into consideration gender differences in voting experiences. Messages may need to differ for various audiences depending on the needs and challenges of each group. Education efforts should also focus around helping individuals, families, and communities ensure every voter has an opportunity to cast a ballot on election day including ensuring families and communities identify how to allocate time so everyone can participate.

As important as it is to educate voters on rights and responsibilities, it is equally necessary to encourage voters to take their vote seriously and to link their vote to the development of the country and how it is governed. Whether voters are selling their vote or believe the election is pre-determined, there is a need to increase voter confidence in, and support of the integrity of the electoral system. The lack of confidence voters feel in the integrity of the vote directly impacts the legitimacy of those then elected to government. If voters do not think their votes matters, then they will perceive elected officials as representing some other interests, and not their own. This speaks to the need for increased voter education, particularly around the integrity of the vote.

Illustrative activities could include:

- SSP1.1: Increase voter awareness of their rights and responsibilities, political parties, and government bodies in election and campaign administration.
- SSP1.2: Strengthen voter perception of the integrity of one's vote and the ramification of "selling" one's vote.
- SSP1.3: Increase youth voter turnout.
- SSP1.4: Increase transparency and use of election dispute resolution mechanisms.

SP 2: Increase transparency about campaign practices and electoral administration.

A major focus of this activity would be a comprehensive, independent long- and short-term observation of the elections which would provide voters, the CEC, and other stakeholders with a trustworthy assessment of the election's adherence to democratic standards and Kyrgyz law. This activity would look to provide an unbiased and nonpartisan assessment of the campaign practices of those involved in the electoral process, focusing on areas that in the past have raised concerns by domestic and international observation groups, such as the use of administrative resources, media coverage, campaign finance, and the use of social media. It is critical that voters understand how candidates, their parties, and other interest groups adhere to rules and regulations set out in the Kyrgyz Electoral code.

Long-term observation: This activity would look to invest more deeply in efforts that give voters information about the campaign process. Nonpartisan information and observation about how parties and candidates receive funds, support, and other resources will empower voters on election day. The monitoring effort would also look at gender considerations around campaign financing and how different candidates are treated because of their sex. It would also look to strengthen voter confidence in the integrity of the vote, encouraging voters to make decisions based on the voter's individual assessments of candidates' and parties' platforms, not on direction by figures of authority. This in turn, would help to instill confidence in those elected to parliament, that they reflect the will of the voters, not the will of a small group of powerful individuals or actors.

Short-term observation: Domestic observation of the voting and tabulation processes on election day can increase public confidence in elections and provide assurance that the election results reflect the ballots cast. This activity would seek to support nonpartisan domestic observers to monitor and report on election day administration drawing on a representative sample of polling stations in order to adequately and appropriate assess trends and practices of the opening, voting, and counting processes across the entire country. In addition to developing a deployment and observation strategy and plan, the activity should also ensure that observers maintain the highest standard of professionalism and nonpartisanship. This includes training the citizen observers to know their rights and responsibilities as election monitors and appropriate procedures and processes to follow throughout election day including troubleshooting on potential issues that may arise and impact their efforts.

Illustrative activities could include:

- SSP2.1: Increase information available on campaign finance and the use of administrative resources in campaigning.
- SSP2.2: Foster party platform and policy debate in the lead up to elections.
- SSP2.3: Increase public understanding of disinformation practices and their detrimental role in campaigns.
- SSP2.4: Through a representative sample, assess election day administration and vote tabulation processes in accordance with Kyrgyz law and international best practices.

SP 3: Support electoral processes that adhere to international democratic standards and the laws of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Election legislation and its implementation by electoral bodies are key pillars of any democratic election. This activity would look to provide recommendations to the Parliament, the CEC, and others involved in the electoral process regarding its adherence to the Kyrgyz Constitution, the Electoral Code, and international best practices with a focus on ensuring enfranchisement and inclusion of all voters. The recommendations would look at current legislation and its implementation and how it supports a free and fair electoral process. Recommendations would be based on Kyrgyz law, international best practices, and the organization's own expertise in transparent and inclusive governance processes.

It would also provide assessments of, and recommendations about, the work of the CEC, particularly around areas that have previously weakened citizen confidence in the election administration, such as voter list management and the publication of results by local election commissions.

Illustrative activities could include:

- SSP3.1: Assess electoral administration for adherence to Kyrgyz law.
- SSP3.2: Provide recommendations to improve the CEC's election administration, including voter list management and precinct level results publications.
- SSP3.3: Provide recommendations on improving electoral legislation, election administration, and campaign practices to adhere to best practices.

Key Programmatic Considerations

A. Nonpartisanship

Nonpartisanship is the bedrock of this activity. While the issues addressed may be political, the organization must adhere to the highest standards of nonpartisanship. Given the lack of confidence voters have in the political process, this activity must outline in its approach how it will maintain nonpartisanship, transparency, and equal treatment of all parties or entities. Any sign of partisanship or bias will delegitimize the entire activity, which could result in its termination. It is critical that the efforts under this activity speak for Kyrgyz citizens, not for a select group of interested parties.

B. Coordination and Partnership

In the lead-up to and following the elections, it will be important to communicate and coordinate with government stakeholders, political parties, CSOs, and voters, in order to implement this activity. It is expected that coordination should ensure there is no unnecessary duplication of efforts across multiple donors or civic actors, and look for opportunities to leverage common goals or approaches. In addition, the activity should look to facilitate dialogue with the CEC, TECs, and PECs, as well as other stakeholders in order to facilitate discussions around successes, challenges, and lessons learned.

C. Gender Considerations

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

This activity intends to strengthen political processes by ensuring that male and female citizens of the country are free to choose their representatives at all levels of governance. Gender integration in a political processes activity means considering differences in needs, interests, views, and experiences of men and women in the electoral process. Balanced gender participation and representation in elections and ensuring that men and women can exercise their rights equally is essential. Lack of political representation can lead to social and economic exclusion. The activity should take a gender-sensitive approach by addressing the systemic barriers that often restrict female participation and thus decrease women's engagement in public decision-making. Interventions should aim at facilitating equitable participation of male and female citizens in election processes in different roles that women and men take (administrators, candidates, voters, etc.). Simply stating that the project will ensure X percentage of women/girls are included in all project activities does not constitute gender-sensitive approach. The implementing partner should identify the main gender gaps and ways these gaps will be addressed. In addition, the implementing partner should provide a clear set of results it will achieve and measurement it will use to demonstrate their progress.

Gender and Performance Indicators: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pdacp778.pdf "Reflecting Gender Issues in Performance Indicators" sets forth USAID's requirements for performance indicators in projects/activities regarding gender. In order to ensure that USAID assistance makes the optimal contribution to gender equality, performance management systems and evaluations at the activity levels must include gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data, where relevant. The implementing partner is also encouraged to disaggregate data by age, by region and by ethnic group to ensure traditionally marginalized groups are being reached.

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

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACT200.pdf
https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Youth_in_Development_Policy_0.pdf
https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/205.pdf

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID intends to award 1 (One) Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide approximately 1,200,000 in total USAID funding over 18-month period.

2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The anticipated period of performance is o/a January 10, 2020 – June 9, 2021. The estimated start date will be determined at the time of the award.

3. Substantial Involvement

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

The initial draft Work Plan and subsequent work plans must be submitted to and approved by the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) per the section F.3(b), "Work Plans" with the application.

b. Approval of Specified Key Personnel:

Key Personnel as designated in the Section F "Key Personnel" must be submitted to USAID for approval.

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

The Activity MEL Plan (also referred to as a MELP or AMELP) and subsequent updates to the MEL Plan must be submitted to and approved by the Agreement Officer's Representative. A description of the MEL Plan is found in section F.7 of the solicitation, "Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL Plan)". The MEL Plan must be submitted no later than three months after the award is made and finalized no later than five months after the award is made.

d. Agency and Recipient Collaboration as follows:

i. Approval of subawards. Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.308(c)(6), prior approval from the Agreement Officer is required for the sub-award, transfer, or contracting-out of any work hereunder, (other than the purchase of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services), unless, it was described in the Recipient's application and funded in the approved budget of the award. In seeking approval, the Recipient must, at a minimum, identify the subrecipient, the amount, and the purpose of the subaward in accordance with 2 CFR 200. Included in the purpose of the subaward should be any description of key issues and/or efforts undertaken by the subawardee, a clear outline of how the subaward will achieve the purpose of the project, and include any specific policy outcomes targeted. In addition, please note the additional requirements of ADS 303.3.21.a "Subawards to PIOs and Partner Government Entities" will apply to this award.

ii. USAID monitoring to permit direction and redirection because of interrelationships with other projects. It is expected that substantial involvement would also include agency and recipient collaboration or joint participation in key elements of the project that may impact or cause unintended consequences to other USAID activities. USAID, in turn, may also redirect or direct efforts based on developments or activities by other implementers.

iii. USAID authority to immediately halt a construction activity, if applicable.

e. No construction is anticipated under this award.

4. Title to Property

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

5. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for this program is Code 937 (the United States, the recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source) and 110 (the United States, the independent states of the former Soviet Union, or a developing country, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source).

6. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the Nonpartisan Domestic Observation of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections in the Kyrgyz Republic, 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.

7. Selection of Instrument

USAID/KR believes that its programmatic needs would be best addressed by engaging in a cooperative agreement for this assistance award. USAID believes its objectives for the activity can be best met by providing funds to an organization to support that organization's own project using its institutional approaches, methodologies, and best practices. Supporting an organization's work in this area provides the organization the flexibility it will need to respond to unforeseen developments and/or needs of those working in the civil society space. Moreover, USAID cannot anticipate a specific approach and believes supporting the activities of another organization will best achieve the public purpose of supporting Nonpartisan Domestic Observation of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections in the Kyrgyz Republic. In addition, a key component of the activity is the importance of local ownership by Kyrgyz citizens for oversight of the electoral process and this is best accomplished through assistance to an organization that represents Kyrgyz citizens and works for the public's benefit, and is already working in the country.

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Only local organizations as defined below are eligible for award. USAID defines a "local entity" as an individual, a corporation, a nonprofit organization, or another body of persons that:

(1) Is legally organized under the laws of the Kyrgyz Republic; and

(2) Has as its principal place of business or operations in; and

(3) Is majority owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the Kyrgyz Republic; and

(4) Is managed by a governing body the majority of who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the country receiving assistance.

For purposes of this section, 'majority owned' and 'managed by' include, without limitation, beneficiary interests and the power, either directly or indirectly, whether exercised or exercisable, to control the election, appointment, or tenure of the organization's managers or a majority of the organization's governing body by any means.

These eligibility requirements apply to the principal applicant only and do not apply to any sub-awardee.

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

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

N/A

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency Point of Contact

Primary:	Ms. Aliya Baioralova Acquisition and Assistance Specialist
Secondary:	Mr. Brian LeCuyer Agreement Officer
Address:	USAID/Central Asia 41 Kazibek Bi Street 050010 Almaty, Kazakhstan
Email:	AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov

2. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this NOFO should be submitted in writing to AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter of this NOFO.

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

3. General Content and Form of Application

Applicants are expected to review, understand and comply with all aspects of the NFO. Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions below.

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

a. “Technical application under #72011519RFA00010, submitted by: [name of Applicant organization]. Part X of X”

b. “Cost application under #72011519RFA00010, submitted by: [name of Applicant organization]. Part X of X”

If your technical or cost application is being sent in more than one email, please highlight the desired sequence of multiple emails. For example, if an Applicant is sending three emails with cost information, include “Part 1 of 3” on the first cost application email submitted.

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.

Preparation of Applications:
Each applicant must furnish the information required by this NOFO. Applications must be submitted in two separate parts: the Technical Application and the Business (Cost) Application. This subsection addresses general content requirements applying to the full application. Please see subsections 5 and 6, below, for information on the content specific to the Technical and Business (Cost) applications. The Technical application must address technical aspects only while the Business (Cost) Application must present the costs, and address risk and other related issues.

Both the Technical and Business (Cost) Applications must include a cover page containing the following information:

- Name of the organization(s) submitting the application;
- Identification and signature of the primary contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address) and the identification of the alternate contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address);
- Program name
- Notice of Funding Opportunity number
- Name of any proposed sub-recipients or partnerships (identify if any of the organizations are local organizations, per USAID's definition of 'local entity' under ADS 303.

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

Applicants may choose to submit a cover letter in addition to the cover pages, but it will serve only as a transmittal letter to the Agreement Officer. The cover letter will not be reviewed as part of the merit review criteria.

Applications must comply with the following:

- USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections. Please ensure that applications comply with the page limitations.
- Written in English
- Use standard A-4 sized paper," single sided, single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1" margins, left justification and headers and/or footers on each page including consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and applicant's name.

- 10 point font can be used for graphs and charts. Tables however, must comply with the 12 point Times New Roman requirement.
- Submitted via Microsoft Word or PDF formats, except budget files which must be submitted in Microsoft Excel.
- The estimated start date identified in Section B of this NOFO must be used in the cost application.
- The technical application must be a searchable and editable Word or PDF format as appropriate.
- The Cost Schedule must include an Excel spreadsheet with all cells unlocked and no hidden formulas or sheets. A PDF version of the Excel spreadsheet may be submitted in addition to the Excel version at the applicant's discretion, however, the official cost application submission is the unlocked Excel version.

Applicants must review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to do so may be considered as being non-responsive and may be evaluated accordingly. Applicants should retain a copy of the application and all enclosures for their records.

4. Application Submission Procedures

Applications in response to this NOFO must be submitted no later than the closing date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Late applications will not be reviewed nor considered. Applicants must retain proof of timely delivery in the form of system generated documentation of delivery receipt date and time.

Applications must be submitted by email to AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov. Email submissions must include the NOFO number and applicant's name in the subject line heading. In addition, for an application sent by multiple emails, the subject line must also indicate whether the email relates to the technical or cost application, and the desired sequence of the emails and their 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 that states: "[NOFO number], [organization name], Cost Application, Part 1 of 2".

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

After submitting an application electronically, applicants should immediately check their own email to confirm that the attachments were indeed sent. If an applicant discovers an error in 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.

Applicants are reminded that e-mail is NOT instantaneous, and in some cases delays of several hours occur from transmission to receipt. Therefore, applicants are requested to send the application in sufficient time ahead of the deadline. For this NOFO, the initial point of entry to the government infrastructure is the USAID mail server.

There may be a problem with the receipt of *.zip files due to anti-virus software. Therefore, applicants are discouraged from sending files in this format as USAID/Central Asia cannot guarantee their acceptance by the internet server. File size must not exceed 8 MB per e-mail.

5. Technical Application Format

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

(a) Cover Page (not included in the 20-page limit)

The Cover Page should include the following:

A. Program title
B. Request for Applications reference number
C. Name of organization(s) applying for the agreement
D. Any partnerships
E. Contact person, telephone number, email address, address, and name(s) and title(s) of person(s) who prepared the application, and corresponding signatures
F. DUNS number of the Applicant

(b) Table of Contents (not included in the 20- page limit)

The Table of Contents must list all parts of the technical application, with page numbers and attachments/annexes.

c) Executive Summary (included in the 20-page limit, not to exceed 2 pages)

Provide a concise summary of the Applicant’s program description, program methodology an expected results.

d) Technical Approach (included in the 20-page limit)

In this section, the Applicant is not to merely repeat what is already described in the NOFO. The Applicant is expected to demonstrate an approach reflecting the guiding principles outlined in the activity Funding Opportunity Description (FOD), which are central to achieving the purpose and sub-purposes, and should be well described throughout the application. The program description provides illustrative expected results but the Applicant is encouraged to develop its own results that reflect the interventions outlined in its approach and that it believes are best suited to achieving the activity purpose. Expected results should be concrete and measurable and within the scope and parameters of the activity.

The funding opportunity description set forth in this NOFO is not meant to describe all of the issues related to nonpartisan observation of the electoral process in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Applicant should describe in its technical application the key challenges to supporting the citizen-government contract and the role that elections play in supporting that contract. The Applicant must outline how it will support a nonpartisan civic engagement activity that seeks to inform voters and the general public. The Applicant must also outline how it will promote the roles and responsibilities of the voter in order to increase citizen involvement in and responsibility for the governance process. Applicants are encouraged to raise and justify other technical issues that may or may not be raised in the program description but are nevertheless related to achieving the overall objectives.

The approach must outline specific activities, what are the expected results from those activities, and how they will contribute to the overall objectives. For example, simply stating that the organization will "conduct a nonpartisan voter education campaign" will not adequately outline where the campaign may be implemented, who might assist with the campaign, the format that would be used to spread messages, targeting which audiences, and over what time period.

Activities should clearly outline the role of key partners and any additional technical assistance that the Applicant may draw on to meet its goals. In outlining additional technical assistance needed, the Applicant should clearly state the partner or type of partner that would provide the assistance to the Applicant, and how it will contribute to the capacity of the Applicant to meet its objectives.

The role and responsibilities of long- and short-term observers should reflect the priorities the Applicant sees for the observation effort including key issues expected to be important during this election period. The Applicant should have a clear understanding of how it will use the observers and their contribution to the overall activity.

The Applicant should include an understanding of effective strategies in the operational context as it relates to working with the Central Election Commission, government entities, political parties, civic organizations, and voters. This must exhibit the Applicant's familiarity with the operational context.

The Applicant will be expected to articulate how programming interventions will adapt to a dynamic and rapidly evolving environment and what consideration may need to be taken at various times in the activity to ensure the legitimacy of the activity and ensure continued progress toward anticipated results.

The Applicant must also outline how it will maintain and promote a nonpartisan approach throughout the entire activity in order to facilitate dialogue and trust between and amongst citizens and other electoral stakeholders.

The approach must:

- Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the programming context including potential challenges implementing the program in a dynamic environment.
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of the role and responsibilities of key local and national stakeholders, including government, non-governmental entities, and voters. This should include how the Applicant will engage these actors and foster partnerships with and between these entities.
- Demonstrate an approach for and commitment to ensuring nonpartisanship.
- Clearly outline the three components of the activity: voter education, long- and short-term observation, and electoral administration and legislation monitoring, and demonstrate a systematic and clear approach to achieve the expected results under each component.
- Identify key partnerships and technical assistance required to achieve goals in order to strengthen the Applicant organizational capacity and technical expertise in key programmatic areas.

Gender Equality and Female Inclusion

The activity should take a gender-sensitive approach by addressing the systemic barriers that often restrict female participation and thus decrease women's engagement in public decision-making. Interventions should aim at facilitating equitable participation of male and female citizens in election processes in different roles that women and men take (administrators, candidates, voters, etc.). Simply stating that the project will ensure X percentage of women/girls are included in all project activities does not constitute gender-sensitive approach. Interventions implemented by the Applicant must be responsive to gender considerations, and seek to ensure that the assistance provided and the results achieved are beneficial to both genders.

The Applicant should conduct a gender analysis within the first three months after the start of the project to identify the main gender gaps and ways these gaps will be addressed. The findings from the gender analysis should inform the Work Plan and the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (MELP). None of the interventions must inhibit the active participation of either men or women. Men and women must be treated as equal partners in their roles as partners of USAID.

e) Management Structure and Staffing Plan (included in the 20-page limit)

The Applicant should propose a staffing/organizational structure that demonstrates effective means for managing program resources and working with partners and organizations under the major objectives of this program.

This section must address at a minimum the following:

- Composition and organizational structure of the proposed team (including an organizational diagram for the program as an annex) and a description of each long/short-term key or non-key team member's role, technical expertise, and estimated amount of time to be devoted to the activity. This should include any proposed institutional partners (subawardees or other arrangements) along with their expertise and relevance to the program including roles and responsibilities.

- Description of roles and responsibilities of long- and short-term observers. It should clearly outline and initial scope of work for the long- and short-term observers. This should include reporting responsibilities and level of effort.
- Identify five positions that will be filled by key personnel. For each key personnel position, briefly highlight why the roles and responsibilities justify the position being designated as "key".
- Effective management systems and procedures for personnel, volunteers, contractors, commodities, training, and information technology solutions. If subawardees are proposed, a demonstrated ability to issue, manage, and monitor subawards and subaward activities.
- A proposed plan for an effective start-up and timely launch of activities, minimally including a demonstrated ability or understanding of: organizational and project registration procedures in the Kyrgyz Republic; recruitment and hiring of non-key personnel.
- A proposed plan for the oversight of long- and short-term observers including channels of communication, technical support, and other relevant oversight issues.
- Ways in which the structure will ensure effectiveness and efficiency in order to achieve maximum benefits and results at minimum cost.

USAID neither requests nor desires exclusivity agreements between the Applicant and any proposed subawardee.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Organigram (up to 2 pages; not included in the 20 page limit)

An organigram should be provided as an annex to support the manage structure and staffing plan narrative.

Annex 2: CVs for Key Personnel (up to 10 pages; not included in the 20 page limit)

CVs for key personnel must be submitted as an annex to demonstrate how the Applicant intends to fill the Key Personnel and illustrate the experience and expertise of each individual identified as Key Personnel. The CVs should highlight the experience related to the individual's key personnel position.

Annex 3: Draft Work Plan (up to 2 pages; not included in the 20 page limit)

The Draft Work Plan should follow the guidelines in Section F.3.b. "Work Plan" and illustrate how the Applicant will sequence activities to ensure a realistic approach to implement the Program Description and achieve the results. Each activity should be clearly linked to an outcome or impact.

The plan must provide a detailed explanation (narrative, graphic, or both) of proposed activities and their sequencing for the entire 18-month period. The sequencing of activities must follow the three components, with sub-activities outlined under each to achieve the sub-purposes. The Draft Work Plan should clearly outline each step required to achieve each expected result, when that step will be implemented, and who will be responsible for its implementation. If outside partners are required to complete a step in implementation, they should be identified in the work plan at the appropriate stage.

The work plan should also outline the Applicant's proposed publication dates for any public assessments or reports on its observation efforts.

6. Business (Cost) Application Format

The Business (Cost) Application must be submitted separately from the Technical Application. While no page limit exists for the full cost application, applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible while still providing the necessary details. The business (cost) application must illustrate the entire period of performance, using the budget format shown in the SF-424A.

Prior to award, applicants may be required to submit additional documentation deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to assess the applicant's risk in accordance with 2 CFR 200.205. Applicants should not submit any additional information with their initial application.

The Cost Application must contain the following sections (which are further elaborated below this listing with the letters for each requirement):

a) Cover Page

b) SF 424 Form(s)

The applicant must sign and submit the cost application using the SF-424 series. Standard Forms can be accessed electronically at www.grants.gov or using the following links:

Instructions for SF-424	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424-instructions.html
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html
Instructions for SF-424A	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424a-instructions.html
Budget Information (SF-424A)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html
Instructions for SF-424B	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424b-instructions.html
Assurances (SF-424B)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html

Failure to accurately complete these forms could result in the rejection of the application.

c) Required Certifications and Assurances

The applicant must complete the following documents and submit a signed copy with their application:

(1) "Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient" document found at http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mav.pdf
(2) Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
(3) 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).

d) Budget and Budget Narrative

The Budget must be submitted as one unprotected Excel file (MS Office 2000 or later versions) with visible formulas and references and must be broken out by project year, including itemization of the federal and non-federal (cost share) amount. Files must not contain any hidden or otherwise inaccessible cells. Budgets with hidden cells lengthen the cost analysis time required to make award, and may result in a rejection of the cost application. The Budget Narrative must contain sufficient detail to allow USAID to understand the proposed costs. The applicant must ensure the budgeted costs address any additional requirements identified in Section F, such as Branding and Marking. The Budget Narrative must be thorough, including sources for costs to support USAID's determination that the proposed costs are fair and reasonable.

The Budget must include the following worksheets or tabs, and contents, at a minimum:

- Summary Budget, inclusive of all program costs (federal and non-federal), broken out by major budget category and by year for activities implemented by the applicant and any potential sub-applicants for the entire period of the program. See Section H, Annex 1 for Summary Budget Template
- Detailed Budget, including a breakdown by year, sufficient to allow the Agency to determine that the costs represent a realistic and efficient use of funding to implement the applicant's program and are allowable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E.
- Detailed Budgets for each sub-recipient, for all federal funding and cost share, broken out by budget category and by year, for the entire implementation period of the project.

The Detailed Budget must contain the following budget categories and information, at a minimum:

1) Salaries and Allowances – Must be proposed consistent with 2 CFR 200.430 Compensation - Personal Services. The applicant's budget must include position title, salary rate, level of effort, and salary escalation factors for each position. Allowances, when proposed, must be broken down by specific type and by position. Applicants must explain all assumptions in the Budget Narrative. The Budget Narrative must demonstrate that the proposed compensation is reasonable for the services rendered and consistent with what is paid for similar work in other activities of the applicant. Applicants must provide their established written policies on personnel compensation. If the applicant's written policies do not address a specific element of compensation that is being proposed, the Budget Narrative must describe the rationale used and supporting market research.

2) Fringe Benefits – (if applicable) If the applicant has a fringe benefit rate approved by an agency of the U.S. Government, the applicant must use such rate and provide evidence of its approval. If an applicant does not have a fringe benefit rate approved, the applicant must propose a rate and explain how the applicant determined the rate. In this case, the Budget Narrative must include a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., superannuation, gratuity, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in U.S. dollars and as a percentage of salaries.

3) Travel and Transportation – Provide details to explain the purpose of the trips, the number of trips, the origin and destination, the number of individuals traveling, and the duration of the trips. Per Diem and associated travel costs must be based on the applicant's normal travel policies. When appropriate please provide supporting documentation as an attachment, such as company travel policy, and explain assumptions in the Budget Narrative.

4) Procurement or Rental of Goods (Equipment & Supplies), Services, and Real Property – Must include information on estimated types of equipment, models, supplies and the cost per unit and quantity. The Budget Narrative must include the purpose of the equipment and supplies and the basis for the estimates. The Budget Narrative must support the necessity of any rental costs and reasonableness in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable property, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased.

5) Subawards – Specify the budget for the portion of the program to be passed through to any subrecipients. See 2 CFR 200.330 for assistance in determining whether the sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor. The subrecipient budgets must align with the same requirements as the applicant's budget, including those related to fringe and indirect costs.

6) Construction – If applicable

7) Other Direct Costs – This may include other costs not elsewhere specified, such as report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams and inoculations, as well as any other miscellaneous costs which directly benefit the program proposed by the applicant. The applicant should indicate the subject, venue and duration of any proposed conferences and seminars, and their relationship to the objectives of the program, along with estimates of costs. Otherwise, the narrative should be minimal.

8) Indirect Costs – Applicants must indicate whether they are proposing indirect costs or will charge all costs directly. In order to better understand indirect costs please see Subpart E of 2 CFR 200.414. The application must identify which approach they are requesting and provide the applicable supporting information. Below are the most commonly used Indirect Cost Rate methods:

   Method 1 - Direct Charge Only
   Eligibility: Any applicant
   Initial Application Requirements: See above on direct costs

Method 2 - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)
Eligibility: Any applicant with a NICRA issued by a USG Agency must use that NICRA
Initial Application Requirements: If the applicant has a current NICRA, submit your approved NICRA and the associated disclosed practices. If your NICRA was issued by an Agency other than USAID, provide the contact information for the approving Agency. Additionally, at the Agency's discretion, a provisional rate may be set forth in the award subject to audit and finalization. See USAID's Indirect Cost Rate Guide for Non Profit Organizations for further guidance.

Method 3 - De minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC)
Eligibility: Any applicant that has never received a NICRA
Initial Application Requirements: Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate an indirect rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. The applicant must describe which cost elements it charges indirectly vs. directly. See 2 CFR 200.414(f) for further information.

Method 4 - Indirect Costs Charged As A Fixed Amount
Eligibility: Non U.S. non-profit organizations without a NICRA may request, but approval is at the discretion of the AO
Initial Application Requirements: Provide the proposed fixed amount and a worksheet that includes the following:

- Total costs incurred by the organization for the previous fiscal year and estimates for the current year.
- Indirect costs (common costs that benefit the day-to-day operations of the organization, including categories such as salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting, or that benefit and are identifiable to more than one program or activity, such as depreciation, rental costs, operations and maintenance of facilities, and telephone expenses) for the previous fiscal year and estimates for the current year
- Proposed method for prorating the indirect costs equitably and consistently across all programs and activities of using a base that measures the benefits of that particular cost to each program or activity to which the cost applies.

If the applicant does not have an approved NICRA and does not elect to utilize the 10% de minimis rate, the Agreement Officer will provide further instructions and may request additional supporting information, including financial statements and audits, should the application still be under consideration after the merit review. USAID is under no obligation to approve the applicant's requested method.

e) Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407

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

f) Approval of Subawards

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

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

g) Dun and Bradstreet and SAM Requirements

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier (DUNS number) and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements. Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is exempted from requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

1. Provide a valid DUNS number for the applicant and all proposed sub-recipients;
2. Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. SAM is streamlining processes, eliminating the need to enter the same data multiple times, and consolidating hosting to make the process of doing business with the government more efficient (www.sam.gov).
3. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

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

DUNS number: http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform

SAM registration: http://www.sam.gov

Non-U.S. applicants can find additional resources for registering in SAM, including a Quick Start Guide and a video on how to obtain an NCAGE code, on www.sam.gov, navigate to Help, then to International Registrants.

h) History of Performance

The applicant must provide information regarding its recent history of performance for all its cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs, not to exceed 5 relevant awards as follows:

- Name of the Awarding Organization;
- Award Number;
- Activity Title;
- A brief description of the activity;
- Period of Performance;
- Award Amount;
- Reports and findings from any audits performed in the last 3 years; and
- Name of at least two (2) updated professional contacts who most directly observed the work at the organization for which the service was performed with complete current contact information including telephone number, and e-mail address for each proposed individual.

If the applicant encountered problems on any of the referenced Awards, it may provide a short explanation and the corrective action taken. The applicant should not provide general information on its performance. USAID reserves the right to obtain relevant information concerning an applicant's history of performance from any sources and may consider such information in its review of the applicant's risk. The Agency may request additional information and conduct a pre-award survey if it determines that it is necessary to inform the risk assessment.

i) Branding Strategy & Marking Plan

The apparently successful applicant will work with the USAD/Kyrgyz Republic Mission to develop a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan for approval by the Agreement Officer and incorporated into any resulting award.

Branding Strategy – Assistance (June 2012)

I. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Branding Strategy," describing how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, and how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and host country citizens.

II. The request for a Branding Strategy, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.

III. Failure to submit and negotiate a Branding Strategy within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.

IV. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.

V. The Branding Strategy must include, at a minimum, all of the following:

(1) All estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth.

(2) The intended name of the program, project, or activity.

(i) USAID requires the applicant to use the "USAID Identity," comprised of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline "from the American people" as found on the USAID Web site at **http://www.usaid.gov/branding**, unless Section VI of the RFA or APS states that the USAID Administrator has approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.

(ii) USAID prefers local language translations of the phrase "made possible by (or with) the generous support of the American People" next to the USAID Identity when acknowledging contributions.

(iii) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.

(iv) If branding in the above manner is inappropriate or not possible, the applicant must explain how USAID's involvement will be showcased during publicity for the program or project.

(v) USAID prefers to fund projects that do not have a separate logo or identity that competes with the USAID Identity. If there is a plan to develop a separate logo to consistently identify this program, the applicant must attach a copy of the proposed logos. Section VI of the RFA or APS will state if an Administrator approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.

(3) The intended primary and secondary audiences for this project or program, including direct beneficiaries and any special target segments.

(4) Planned communication or program materials used to explain or market the program to beneficiaries.

(i) Describe the main program message.

(ii) Provide plans for training materials, posters, pamphlets, public service announcement, billboards, Web sites, and so forth, as appropriate.

(iii) Provide any plans to announce and promote publicly this program or project to host country citizens, such as media releases, press conferences, public events, and so forth. Applicant must incorporate the USAID Identity and the message, "USAID is from the American People."

(iv) Provide any additional ideas to increase awareness that the American people support this project or program.

(5) Information on any direct involvement from host-country government or ministry, including any planned acknowledgement of the host-country government.

Any other groups whose logo or identity the applicant will use on program materials and related materials. Indicate if they are a donor or why they will be visibly acknowledged, and if they will receive the same prominence as USAID.

VI. The Agreement Officer will review the Branding Strategy to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.

VII. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Branding Strategy will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement

Marking Plan – Assistance (June 2012)

I. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Marking Plan," detailing the public communications, commodities, and program materials, and other items that will visibly bear the "USAID Identity," which comprises of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline "from the American people." The USAID Identity is the official marking for the Agency, and is found on the USAID Web site at **http://www.usaid.gov/branding**. Section VI of the RFA or APS will state if an Administrator approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.

II. The request for a Marking Plan, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.

III. Failure to submit and negotiate a Marking Plan within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.

IV. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking

USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.

V. The Marking Plan must include all of the following:

(1) A description of the public communications, commodities, and program materials that the applicant plans to produce and which will bear the USAID Identity as part of the award, including:

(i) Program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects or other sites physical in nature;

(ii) Technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audio- visual productions, public service announcements, Web sites/Internet activities, promotional, informational, media, or communications products funded by USAID;

(iii) Commodities, equipment, supplies, and other materials funded by USAID, including commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs; and

(iv) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.

(v) Events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences and other public activities. If the USAID Identity cannot be displayed, the recipient is encouraged to otherwise acknowledge USAID and the support of the American people.

(2) A table on the program deliverables with the following details:

(i) The program deliverables that the applicant plans to mark with the USAID Identity;

(ii) The type of marking and what materials the applicant will use to mark the program deliverables;

(iii) When in the performance period the applicant will mark the program deliverables, and where the applicant will place the marking;

(iv) What program deliverables the applicant does not plan to mark with the USAID Identity , and

(v) The rationale for not marking program deliverables.

(3) Any requests for an exemption from USAID marking requirements, and an explanation of why the exemption would apply. The applicant may request an exemption if USAID marking requirements would:

(i) Compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program or materials where independence or neutrality is an inherent aspect of the program and materials. The applicant must identify the USAID Development Objective, Interim Result, or program goal furthered by an appearance of neutrality, or state why an aspect of the award is presumptively neutral. Identify by category or deliverable item, examples of material for which an exemption is sought.

(ii) Diminish the credibility of audits, reports, analyses, studies, or policy recommendations whose data or findings must be seen as independent. The applicant must explain why each particular deliverable must be seen as credible.

(iii) Undercut host-country government “ownership” of constitutions, laws, regulations, policies, studies, assessments, reports, publications, surveys or audits, public service announcements, or other communications. The applicant must explain why each particular item or product is better positioned as host-country government item or product.

(iv) Impair the functionality of an item. The applicant must explain how marking the item or commodity would impair its functionality.

(v) Incur substantial costs or be impractical. The applicant must explain why marking would not be cost beneficial or practical.

(vi) Offend local cultural or social norms, or be considered inappropriate. The applicant must identify the relevant norm, and explain why marking would violate that norm or otherwise be inappropriate.

(vii) Conflict with international law. The applicant must identify the applicable international law violated by the marking.

VI. The Agreement Officer will consider the Marking Plan's adequacy and reasonableness and will approve or disapprove any exemption requests. The Marking Plan will be reviewed to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.

VII. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Marking Plan, including any approved exemptions, will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement, and will apply for the term of the award unless provided otherwise.

j) Funding Restrictions

Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients under this award. See 2 CFR 200.330 for assistance in determining whether a sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor.

Construction will not be authorized under this award.

USAID will not allow the reimbursement of pre-award costs under this award without the explicit written approval of the Agreement Officer.

Except as may be specifically approved in advance by the AO, all commodities and services that will be reimbursed by USAID under this award must be from the authorized geographic code specified in this NOFO and must meet the source and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR 228.

Subawards to government organizations are not eligible for reimbursement.

k) Conflict of Interest Pre-Award Term

A. Personal Conflict of Interest

1. An actual or appearance of a conflict of interest exists when an applicant organization or an employee of the organization has a relationship with an Agency official involved in the competitive award decision-making process that could affect that Agency official's impartiality.

The term "conflict of interest" includes situations in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, the obligations and duties of a USAID employee or recipient employee.

2. The applicant must provide conflict of interest disclosures when it submits an SF-424. Should the applicant discover a previously undisclosed conflict of interest after submitting the application, the applicant must disclose the conflict of interest to the AO no later than ten (10) calendar days following discovery.

B. Organizational Conflict of Interest

The applicant must notify USAID of any actual or potential conflict of interest that they are aware of that may provide the applicant with an unfair competitive advantage in competing for this financial assistance award. Examples of an unfair competitive advantage include but are not limited to situations in which an applicant or the applicant's employee gained access to non-public information regarding a federal assistance funding opportunity, or an applicant or applicant's employee was substantially involved in the preparation of a federal assistance funding opportunity. USAID will promptly take appropriate action upon receiving any such notification from the applicant.

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

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

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

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

- Technical Approach
- Management Structure and Staffing

2. Review and Selection Process

a) Merit Review

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

<u>Technical Approach:</u>

The Technical Approach will be evaluated on the degree to which the Applicant's narrative and work plan describes an approach that achieves all activity sub-purposes and addresses key programmatic considerations identified in the RFA.

<u>Management Structure and Staffing:</u>

Management Structure and Staffing will be evaluated with regards to the extent to which the application's management structure, staffing plan narrative, organigram, and key personnel convincingly demonstrates the ability for effective implementation of the activities, including ensuring the political neutrality of the activity and organization.

b) Business Review

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

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

Proposed cost share, if provided, will be reviewed for compliance with the standards set forth in 2 CFR 200.306, 2 CFR 700.10, and the Standard Provision "Cost Sharing (Matching)" for U.S. entities, or the Standard Provision "Cost Share" for non-U.S. entities.

The AO will perform a risk assessment (2 CFR 200.205). The AO may determine that a pre-award survey is required to inform the risk assessment in determining whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organizational, experience, accounting and operational controls, financial resources, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award. Depending on the result of the risk assessment, the AO will decide to execute the award, not execute the award, or award with “specific conditions” (2 CFR 200.207).

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

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

2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

The resulting award from this NOFO will be administered in accordance with the following policies and regulations.

For Non-US Organizations: Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations.

See Annex 4, for a list of the Standard Provisions that will be applicable to any awards resulting from this NOFO.

3. Reporting Requirements

a) Financial Reporting:

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

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

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

b) Performance Reporting

i. Work Plan (WP):

> Within three months of the award of the Cooperative Agreement, the Recipient must develop and submit an 18-month work plan to the AOR. The Work plan may be submitted electronically. Upon acceptance of the work plan by the AOR, any substantial revisions, including the adding or removing of activities, to the plan must require the written approval of the AOR. The Work Plan is expected to reflect the assessment and/or learning efforts undertaken by the awardee and, as such, is not required until the awardee has the opportunity to conduct those activities. The work plan should reflect the gender analysis

conducted and its inclusion in activities and approaches should be well outlined and documented.

The Recipient must ensure that the WP appropriately reflects activity objectives and the program description. The WP should detail the work to be accomplished during the upcoming year. All work plan activities must be within the scope of the award. The WP will serve as a guide for activity implementation - a demonstration of links between interventions and objectives in accordance with the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan. The WP must outline key activities and the expected results to be accomplished for that year and will be negotiated and shared with key stakeholders for comments as appropriate. The WP will also serve as a basis for budget estimates for that year of program implementation. A budget with sufficient detail to allow the AOR to judge the efficiency of the implementation plan should be included. The WP should delineate an overall budget by line item and a budget per objective and activity. The WP may be revised on an occasional basis in the course of implementation, as needed, to reflect changes on the ground with the concurrence of the AOR.

ii. Quarterly/Annual Performance Reports:

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

Regardless of the start date of the cooperative agreement all reporting will be adjusted to the USG fiscal year calendar.

<u>Quarterly Reports</u>: The Recipient must submit quarterly reports that include narratives of quarterly achievements, and progress against the work plan and agreed-upon performance indicators. A format for the quarterly report must be approved by the AOR on an annual basis. The Recipient must submit quarterly reports within thirty (30) calendar days of the end of each quarter. The following quarter end dates must be used to determine the date of submission off the quarterly reports: 3/31, 6/30, 9/30, or 12/31. The fourth quarter report must be drafted as an annual report and must cover activities of the quarter as well as overall assessment of performance and progress for the prior 12 months of the program (See Annual Reports below).

The quarterly report must describe and assess the overall progress to date based upon agreed performance indicators. The reports must also describe the accomplishments of the Recipient and the progress made during the past quarter and will include information on key activities, both ongoing and completed during the quarter (e.g. meetings, trainings, workshops, significant events, subcontracts, and grants). The quarterly report should include targets and results for each indicator agreed upon in the MELP. The quarterly report provides the opportunity to discuss impacts of learning on the program; for example, how has implementation evolved as the result of information gathered over the course of the quarter? Also, notification must be given in the case of problems, delays, or adverse conditions which materially impair the ability to meet the objectives of the award or which may have an impact on the development hypothesis or theory of change for the activity, and/or other activities (USG-funded or not) which might be informed by such learning. This notification must include a statement of the action taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The quarterly report will outline how the project has collaborated with host country governments and other USG and other-donor funded projects and efforts. The quarterly reports must utilize photos, maps, tables and other graphical elements useful in communicating performance data and activity implementation and include at least one success story. Any outreach or press reporting about the activity must also be included.

The quarterly report should also include any final versions of public assessments or reports produced during the quarter.

Upon completion of a gender analysis, the following quarterly report must include as an attachment a gender analysis report and action plan which satisfies the criteria described in Section F.

Each quarterly report must also include as an attachment an updated Indicator Performance Tracking Table in Excel format, as detailed in the MEL Plan.

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

Marking and Branding: The Recipient will be requested to provide the following information as needed to ensure implementation of the branding strategy and marking plan:

- An updated quarterly list of public events to be organized by the Recipient during the upcoming three months, including approximate date, location, and audience. The Recipient will coordinate with USAID about all planned events with press participation, press activities, press releases, as well as inclusion of USAID promotional materials for the participants, participation of USAID/USG representatives.

- Two success stories a year with an accompanying photograph. The success stories will be provided in a Word Document format, using a standard USAID success story template.

- The fourth quarterly performance report must also include a digital collection of at least 20 photographs a year that are illustrative of project's achievements in jpeg format. The photographs will comply with a guidance provided in the USAID Graphic Standards Manual. Each photograph will have a brief explanation about its subject, and identify: the author and his/her organization, person(s) featured in the photograph, and the location where the photograph was taken.

- Clippings of press articles that mention the project.

- At least 2 copies of all public communications materials produced by the project. In addition, the Recipient must submit all final documents to USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse.

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

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

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

The DS-2019 approval process is as follows:

Data is entered into TraiNet by the implementing partner's Data Entry Initiator (R1);

- The R1 submits the information to the Visa Compliance System (VCS);

- The designated Verifier (R2) verifies the accuracy of the data in the VCS, uploads documents, and either submits the information to the R3 if all is correct, or rejects the file if there are errors in the data;

- A designated United States citizen in the Kyrgyz Republic Mission – the Approver (R3) – reviews the electronic versions of documents and either approves or rejects the files (for missing data or other concerns based on review of the files) sending them back to the R1 with comments;

- When the R3 approves a file, the information is electronically transferred to the Responsible Officer (R4) in USAID/Washington who provides the final approval before the information is submitted to the Department of Homeland Security SEVIS database;

- The DS-2019 form is created, printed and mailed to the R3;

- The R3 gives the form to the USAID AOR who provides it to the implementing partner. The implementing partner is responsible for delivering the form to the participant so that he/she can present it to the Consular Officer during their appointment for a J-1 visa at the U.S. Embassy consular section, or designated Consulate. Exchange visitors apply online at the U.S. State Department's website in the Kyrgyz Republic. When asked to enter a "Program Number", applications should enter USAID's Exchange Visitor Program Number G-2-00263."

<u>Gender Reporting:</u> The Recipient will report any activities implemented during the period, with progress and results that contributed towards promotion of Gender Equality and Female

Empowerment. As part of its regular reports, the Recipient must collect, analyze and submit sex-disaggregated data and propose actions that will address any gender-related challenges that might arise from that data. The Recipient will report any challenges to the AOR who, in turn, will work with the USAID/Kyrgyz Republic's gender specialist to find reasonable solutions.

iii. Final Report:

The Recipient must submit a final report that summarizes achievements, and progress against the work plan and agreed-upon performance indicators over the life of the project. The Recipient must submit the Final Report within ninety (90) calendar days after the expiration of the award. The Final Report must contain content appropriate for public dissemination. The Final Report must contain the following information:

1. An executive summary of the accomplishments and results achieved;

2. An in-depth analysis of progress and results that synthesizes achievements that contributed towards program objectives. This section must clearly describe activities, major accomplishments, and results achieved, including results for all of the activities under the Cooperative Agreement;

3. Describe reasons why targets were not achieved or were surpassed and why activities were delayed or not carried out, if appropriate;

4. A summary of problems/obstacles encountered during the implementation, and how those obstacles were addressed and overcome, if appropriate;

5. Success stories, including examples of synergy and collaboration with partners;

6. Lessons learned, best practices, and other findings, along with recommendations for future programming in this sector;

7. A summary of progress made in achieving indicator targets during the activity implementation (based on valid data collection and analysis and credible baseline) including final data, compared to baseline data, for all indicators included in the monitoring and evaluation plan. This section should include disaggregated data by gender, historically disenfranchised groups, and other relevant groups identified;

8. A comparison of actual expenditures with budget estimates, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, as relevant;

9. Other pertinent information, including recommendations with-in depth- analysis and lessons learned, related to the overall activity results;

10. The Final Report must also contain an index of all reports and information products produced under the award; and

11. The Final Report must include a professionally formatted, four-to eight page annual summary of achievements, noteworthy activities, lessons learned, changes in the environment, etc.

The Report must be formatted to function as a stand-alone, externally shareable document, designed to keep key project stakeholders (such as USG agencies, other donors, and other USG implementers) up to date on progress. The Final Report must include photos, maps, tables, and other graphical elements as relevant. The Final Report must not directly recycle text, photos or other elements

4. **Development Experience Clearinghouse Requirements**

Consistent with ADS 540, the Recipient must prepare and submit a copy of semi-annual and final performance reports, results of assessments and operational research, if any, required by this award to the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) at:

Online: https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/submit.aspx;
By Mail:
USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse
M/CIO/ITSD/KM/DEC
RRB M.01-010
Washington, DC 20523-6100
Essential bibliographic information must accompany submissions, whenever it is available. The submission page on the DEC identifies the minimum required fields to submit. For questions on DEC submissions, contact:

Email: ksc@usaid.gov
Telephone: +1 202-712-0579

*Note: Mail sent to USAID via the US Postal Service undergoes security and irradiation processing. To send sensitive items, like CDs or DVDs, please contact the DEC team at ksc@usaid.gov to arrange delivery.

5. Program Income

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.400(g), Recipients may not earn profit under assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the cooperative agreement program and are in accordance with 2 CFR 200 Subpart E - Cost Principles may be paid under the award.

USAID does not anticipate any program income under the award.

6. Key Personnel

Recipients must staff the Nonpartisan Domestic Observation of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections in the Kyrgyz Republic activity with five key personnel positions. The key personnel positions are as follows;

TBD

The Key Personnel, as a team, must possess fluency in Russian, English, and Kyrgyz, and the team must possess the following skill sets:

- Demonstrated experience in managing development programs including experience in civil society strengthening, policy advocacy, and/or local governance;
- Experience working on electoral observation initiatives in the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Advanced educational background and knowledge relevant for similar projects;
- Strong leadership, administrative, management, presentation, reporting, and communication skills and the ability to implement projects with diverse subject matter;
- Demonstrated ability to research and analyze state policies and legislation and make recommendations for improvement to relevant stakeholders;
- Ability to coordinate with USG and other donor programs on media and seek synergies and complementarities to maximize results; and
- Ability to perform at a high level and apply diplomacy skills with a wide range of stakeholders (i.e., national, provincial, district and local government officials, NGOs, and beneficiaries).

Preferred:

- Experience integrating gender equality and women's empowerment issues within citizen participation, messaging, and civic engagement;

Political Neutrality:

USAID respects the right of employees of its partners to exercise their political and civil rights, including participating in political processes in their home countries, expressing political opinions and using social media. These are activities we encourage among our partners and value among our colleagues.

At the same time, the sensitive nature of the political environment around elections requires that key personnel and staff remain politically neutral. Each team member must file a recusal letters certifying that they are not and will not have affiliation in any form with any political party, including but not limited to take partisan positions or otherwise support particular candidates, parties or ideologies, membership in political parties, participation in demonstrations, rallies or protests, offering commentary on US foreign policy issues or the foreign policy issues of other countries, offering legal services to any political parties for fee or pro bono, etc.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL Plan)

Within 3 months of award, the awardee must work with the AOR and USAID/Kyrgyz Republic's Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist to develop an Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (MELP or MEL Plan) for the life of the activity. The MELP must satisfy USAID's ADS 201 requirements, as well as the following:

- The MEL Plan must include narrative that clearly articulates the activity's theory of change, describing the causal and logical relationships between different levels of results, along with the associated interventions, indicators and other performance data, and critical assumptions under each result. The MEL Plan should also present a visually represented logic model that illustrates these results, the causal and logical relationships between them, and the indicator and other performance data required to measure each.

- If the activity incorporates specific steps to address identified inequalities in participation or achievement, the MEL Plan should describe the approach to assessing whether the root causes of inequalities and the proposed approach to mitigating them are appropriately identified and effectively pursued.

- The MEL Plan must include an appropriate set of quantitative and/or qualitative indicators, which maximizes validity, reliability, integrity, precision, timeliness, and cost effectiveness. The MEL Plan should contain only indicators with a clear use in management decision-making or reporting. No non-mandatory indicator should be proposed without a clear analytic or communication purpose. USAID will provide a list of required indicators for reporting. Preference should be given to all relevant standard indicators (https://www.state.gov/f/indicators/) before proposing custom indicators. For each indicator, the MEL Plan must include a Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) whose content and format follows a template to be provided by USAID. PIRS for required indicators will also be provided.

- The MEL Plan must also include, in consultation with USAID, agreed-upon planned internal and external evaluations and evaluation questions that are salient to the implementation, adaptation or review of the activity in line with the USAID Evaluation Policy. The MEL Plan should demonstrate how the timing and of evaluations and content of evaluation questions is appropriate.

- The MEL Plan must include a narrative description of how data collection will be managed, including the planned staffing structure and resources needed to carry out the MEL Plan.

- The MEL Plan should also include a Performance Indicator Tracking Table (PITT) template, an excel-based file that tracks all quantitative performance data, including: baseline figures, quarterly and/or annual performance figures, quarterly and/or annual targets, life of project totals, and life of project targets, disaggregated as appropriate. USAID may provide a specific reporting format for the PITT.

- Proposed indicators must, at minimum, include these disaggregates: sex disaggregates for all people level indicators, numerators and denominators for all ratios and percentages, and geographic locations. Sex and ratio disaggregates must be included in the PITT. For geographic disaggregation, all indicators associated with a discrete project site must be disaggregated by the decimal GPS coordinate associated with that site. All indicators associated with an area-wide activity must be disaggregated by province and district name. Geographic disaggregates should not be included in the PITT unless otherwise directed.

8. Environmental Compliance

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) Part 204 (https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/204.pdf) which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities.

The Recipient's environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in this section. In addition to complying with the obligations below, the Recipient must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter will govern.

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

A programmatic IEE (PIEE) Amendment #6 for Democracy and Governance programs (DCN: Asia 11-131) was approved on 8/12/2011. It establishes environmental compliance screening, mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements. Further, this activity will be covered by CAR DG IEE amendment #8 (Asia 18-076) approved on May 29, 2018 and valid through FY2025. These PIEE amendments cover the "Nonpartisan Domestic Election Observation Program in Kyrgyz Republic"

It is anticipated that the program solicited in this RFA will fall entirely within the description of activities described as qualifying for a Categorical Exclusion. Furthermore, is not anticipated that the program solicited in this RFA will include any component that qualifies for a Negative Determination with Conditions (which, for example, includes procurement of electric and electronic equipment or small-scale building renovations). However, should such a component be approved, then implementing partner must screen, mitigate, monitor and report to USAID in accordance with terms established in the PIEE Amendment #6 and Amendment #8.

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

If new information becomes available which indicates that activities to be funded by the program might have some adverse effects on the environment, the Recipient must report to USAID in accordance with requirements outlined in the IEE Amendments 6 and 8. Specifically, they will submit Environmental Review and Assessment Checklists for USAID approval.

As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the Recipient, in collaboration with the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) and the Mission Environmental Officer (MEO), must review all ongoing and planned activities under this award to determine if they are within the scope of the approved IEE with amendments 6 and 8. If the recipient plans any new activities outside the scope of these documents, it must assist the AOR to prepare an IEE amendment for USAID review and approval. No such new activities will be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval of the amendment.

The recipient must consider green procurement concepts to eliminate, reduce, or recycle waste. Furthermore, when applicable, activities must include principles of environmental and human health protection, impact mitigation, and environmental sustainability. Such inclusion or consideration does not require further environmental review or reporting.

Climate risk screening: Most of activity components are rated as Low Climate Risk as they are not expected to materially affect the implementation or outcomes of the activity. The Recipient is encouraged to evaluate climate related risks and vulnerabilities for NDC activities and adjust them based on relevant analysis. To do that the Recipient may use sources referenced in the Central Asia Climate Change Risk Profile at https://www.climatelinks.org.

9. Non-Federal Audits

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

10. Electronic Payments System

I. Definitions:

a. "Cash Payment System" means a payment system that generates any transfer of funds through a transaction originated by cash, check, or similar paper instrument. This includes electronic payments to a financial institution or clearing house that subsequently issues cash, check, or similar paper instrument to the designated payee.

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

II. The Recipient agrees to use an electronic payment system for any payments under this award to beneficiaries, subrecipients, or contractors.

III. Exceptions. Recipients are allowed the following exceptions, provided the Recipient documents its files with the appropriate justification:

a. Cash payments made while establishing electronic payment systems, provided that this exception is not used for more than six months from the effective date of this award.

b. Cash payments made to payees where the Recipient does not expect to make payments to the same payee on a regular, recurring basis, and payment through an electronic payment system is not reasonably available.

c. Cash payments to vendors below $3,000, when payment through an electronic payment system is not reasonably available.

d. The Recipient has received a written exception from the Agreement Officer that a specific payment or all cash payments are authorized based on the Recipient's written justification, which provides a basis and cost analysis for the requested exception.

IV. More information about how to establish, implement, and manage electronic payment methods is available to Recipients at http://solutionscenter.nethope.org/programs/c2e-toolkit.

11. Police and Prisons

Under this award, assistance may not be used to provide training, advice, or any financial support for police, prisons, or other law enforcement forces.

12. Salary Supplemental for Host Government Employees

Any payments by the Recipient to any host government's employee at any level is subject to the USAID policy guidance on criteria for payment of salary supplements for host government employees dated April 1988 (or as amended). When this issue arises during the life of the cooperative agreement, the Recipient must consult with the AO on any questions regarding the applicability of the policy.

SECTION G: ANNEXES

1. GJD IEE Asia 11-131 Amendment 6
2. IEE CAR DG Amendment 8 Asia 18-076

ANNEX 3 - STANDARD PROVISIONS

(Note: the full text of these provisions may be found at: https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303maa and https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab). The actual Standard Provisions included in the award will be dependent on the organization that is selected. The award will include the latest Mandatory Provisions for either U.S. or non-U.S. Nongovernmental organizations**.** The award will also contain the following "required as applicable" Standard Provisions:

REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS FOR NON-U.S. NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Required	Not Required	Standard Provision
TBD		RAA1. ADVANCE PAYMENT AND REFUNDS (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA2. REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENT AND REFUNDS (DECEMBER 2014)
TBD		RAA3. INDIRECT COSTS – NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA) (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA4. INDIRECT COSTS – CHARGED AS A FIXED AMOUNT (NONPROFIT) (JUNE 2012)
X		RAA5. UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM OF AWARD MANAGEMENT (July 2015)
X		RAA6. REPORTING SUBAWARDS AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION (DECEMBER 2014)
X		RAA7. SUBAWARDS (DECEMBER 2014)
X		RAA8. TRAVEL AND INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORTATION (DECEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA9. OCEAN SHIPMENT OF GOODS (JUNE 2012)
X		RAA10. REPORTING HOST GOVERNMENT TAXES (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA11. PATENT RIGHTS (JUNE 2012)
X		RAA12. EXCHANGE VISITORS AND PARTICIPANT TRAINING (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA13. INVESTMENT PROMOTION (NOVEMBER 2003)
	X	RAA 14. COST SHARE (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA15. PROGRAM INCOME (DECEMBER 2014)
X		RAA16. FOREIGN GOVERNMENT DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA17. STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED IN USAID ASSISTANCE AWARDS INVOLVING CONSTRUCTION (SEPTEMBER 2004)
	X	RAA18. PROTECTION OF HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECTS (JUNE 2012)
		RAA19. STATEMENT FOR IMPLEMENTERS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES ON LACK OF SUPPORT FOR PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA20. ELIGIBILITY OF SUBRECIPIENTS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA21. PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS TO PROMOTE, SUPPORT, OR ADVOCATE FOR THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA22. VOLUNTARY POPULATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES –

		SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIREMENTS (JANUARY 2009)
	X	RAA23. CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IMPLEMENTATION (ASSISTANCE) (FEBRUARY 2012)
	X	RAA24. CONDOMS (ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA25. PROHIBITION ON THE PROMOTION OR ADVOCACY OF THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION OR SEX TRAFFICKING(ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
X		RAA26. LIMITATION ON SUBAWARDS TO NON-LOCAL ENTITIES (JULY 2014)
X		RAA27. CONTRACT PROVISION FOR DBA INSURANCE UNDER RECIPIENT PROCUREMENTS (DECEMBER 2014)
X		RAA28. CONTRACT AWARD TERM AND CONDITION FOR RECIPIENT INTEGRITY AND PERFORMANCE MATTERS (April 2016)
	X	RAA29. PROTECTING LIFE IN GLOBAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE (MAY 2017)