



USAID | RWANDA
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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Subject: Request for Application RFA#696-09-009, “Strengthening Civil Society in Rwanda”

Dear Interested Parties,

This is to inform you that USAID has released a statement of work concerning new **strengthening civil society** activities under the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Threshold Program.

The Request for Applications is below and this letter will be posted at www.grants.gov . This Solicitation will be open to all eligible US, Rwandan, and International organizations.

In summary, the purpose of the pending requirement is to secure the services of an implementer tasked with increasing civil society input into national public policy formulation and implementation. The implementer will have a particular focus on supporting other Rwanda MCC Threshold Program activities and increasing civic participation at the national level between citizens, civil society, and government that improves citizen and civil society input into policy formulation, development planning, and service delivery.

The anticipated ceiling price of this agreement is approximately US\$4,300,000 over a maximum two-year period of performance, subject to the availability of funds.

Sincerely,

/s/

Marcus A. Johnson, Jr.
Supervisory Regional Agreement Officer

I. Summary

This Request for Applications (RFA) describes a two-year, \$4,300,000 Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Threshold Program project designed to assist the Government of Rwanda (GOR) to strengthen civic participation in Rwanda at the national level by facilitating effective and meaningful engagement between government, civil society, and citizens. This project aims to address the MCC indicators described below by strengthening the effective engagement between government, civil society, and citizens at the national level in the areas of policy-making, decision-making, and development planning.

For the purposes of this RFA, “national” civil society organizations (CSOs) are defined as Rwandan CSOs that carry out activities at a national level in Rwanda, either directly or on behalf of member CSOs or local affiliates. National CSOs work with their national counterparts in government, such as ministries and Parliament, and conduct analysis, advocacy, monitoring, and/or other activities at this national level and not at a decentralized, or local, level of government. However, this definition is meant to be illustrative in nature and there may be instances where a “local” CSO works at a national level and a “national” CSO works at a local level; the intention is to draw a distinction between CSOs working predominantly at a national level and CSOs working predominantly at a local level for the purposes of implementation of this project and the related MCC Threshold Program – “Strengthening Rwandan Civil Society” Project. Because this RFA does not include capacity building of local Rwandan civil society organizations, close coordination between this project and the MCC Threshold Program – “Strengthening Civic Participation in Rwanda” Project will be essential. There is also a separate RFP to address this aspect of civic participation in Rwanda. In order to promote maximum coordination and synergy between these activities, a summary of this RFP is attached as Annex 1 to this RFA.

This project will be a part of the MCC Threshold Program, which was developed to address Rwanda’s MCC Ruling Justly indicators, specifically Political Rights, Civil Liberties, and Voice and Accountability. The Rwanda Threshold Program has additional activities which this project should actively link with and support. These include the following: strengthen civic participation at the local level in Rwanda; improve the impartiality, efficiency, and independence of the judiciary; facilitate the implementation of Rwanda’s legislative reform agenda; build the capacity of the media sector; and improve the internal investigation functions of the Rwandan National Police. Rwanda’s Threshold Program is being implemented by USAID/Rwanda in partnership with the GOR.

II. Goal

The principal goal of Rwanda’s Threshold Program and of this national CSO project is to positively impact the country’s MCC Ruling Justly indicators, specifically Political Rights, Civil Liberties, and Voice and Accountability. For more information on the MCC indicators, see: <http://www.mcc.gov/selection/index.php>

As conceived in Rwanda’s MCC Threshold Country Plan:

- Civil Liberties will be addressed by creating opportunities for citizens and CSOs to better organize themselves to provide substantive input on national and local policy-making and development decisions;

- Political Rights will be addressed by enhancing: (1) self-determination, self-government, and autonomy; as well as (2) the openness, transparency, and accountability of government, particularly at the local level; and
- Voice and Accountability will be addressed by improving: (1) the responsiveness of government to its constituents; (2) the degree to which civic groups can testify, comment on, and influence pending government policy or regulation; (3) the degree to which citizens have access to public information; (4) budget transparency; (5) existing institutional forums for dialogue between the government and rural organizations; and (6) the degree to which the rural poor are able to enter into dialogue with government representatives and express their concerns and priorities.

This project aims to address these MCC indicators primarily by strengthening the effective engagement between government, Rwandan civil society organizations, and citizens in the areas of policy-making, decision-making, and development planning at the national level.

III. Objective

This project should focus on achieving the following objective:

Objective: Increase civic participation and civil society input into national public policy formulation and implementation, with a particular focus on addressing the Rwanda Threshold Program indicators.

IV. Guiding Principles

In each of the project objectives listed above, the implementer's approach should be guided by the following principles:

- **Begin implementation with high-visibility, low-risk activities with high probabilities of success** to build stakeholder confidence, develop relationships between stakeholders, and create momentum for the project;
- Plan, design, and implement all activities to promote **project sustainability** through widespread buy-in of activities; transfer of critical and relevant skills and knowledge; use of enabling strategies that encourage a learning-by-doing approach; and use of existing talent, resources, and forums for project interventions whenever possible in order to take advantage of and build on Rwandan knowledge and capacities;
- Use an **asset-based approach** in designing and implementing activities for this project (An asset-based approach takes the assets of participants as the starting point, as opposed to their needs, for project assessment, design, and implementation and makes citizens responsible partners in the development process and in planning, prioritizing, and implementing the project.);
- Work in **close coordination and collaboration** with the GOR, other donors, USAID/Rwanda implementing partners, local partners, and other relevant stakeholders;
- **Model the principles and practices of accountability and participation;**
- Support **dissemination of lessons learned and best practices**—as well as the use of networks for exchange, peer learning and problem solving—to all stakeholders as appropriate;
- Promote **gender equity** through the planning, management, and implementation of all project activities; and

- Seek, develop, and maintain **private and/or public sector partnerships** that augment project interventions and/or sustain them beyond the life of the project.

The above guiding principles should be followed within the scope of overall technical direction from the USAID/Rwanda Agreement Officer's Technical Representative (AOTR) managing the project.

V. Background

Rwanda Context

Rwanda's population of more than nine million is concentrated in a land area of 23,336 sq. km., making it the most densely populated country in sub-Saharan Africa at an estimated 349 people per sq km, yet it is also one of the least urbanized countries on the continent.

The state-orchestrated genocide in 1994 has left a disruptive legacy. Today Rwanda has hundreds of thousands of orphaned children and tens of thousands of people in jail. Life expectancy at birth in Rwanda is around 45 years, about the same as the 1970s. Subsistence farming dominates Rwanda's economy, employing 80 percent of the people and providing around 40 percent of the GDP. Tea and coffee are the main cash crops and they generate over half of export earnings. An estimated 95 percent of energy consumed in Rwanda comes from wood, peat and charcoal. Electricity demand is rising fast, but is constrained by the available supply, though there are plans to increase this.

In keeping with the government's liberal orientation, economic policy is intended primarily to ensure macroeconomic stability, conditions for continued rapid economic growth, and poverty reduction. Real GDP growth averaged around six percent from 2004-07. Since 1994 the services sector has been growing at a faster rate than the overall economy, and it now contributes to over 40 percent of GDP.

Government of Rwanda Strategies for Reform

In response to these challenges, Rwanda's government has set an ambitious development agenda that aims to transform the country from a subsistence agriculture-based economy to a middle income and knowledge-based economy characterized by steady growth within the context of effective regional integration. These aspirations are articulated in the GOR's *Vision 2020* and the *Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2008-2012* (EDPRS). To achieve this vision, the GOR has publicly stated its commitment to strengthening the rule of law, civil liberties, and political rights, and to promoting good governance and greater civic participation in political life and policy-making. The GOR has initiated a broad reform strategy that the Rwanda Threshold Program is designed to complement in order to address Rwanda's Political Rights, Civil Liberties, and Voice and Accountability indicators. These reforms are at various stages as described below.

Key GOR strategic documents:

- *Vision 2020*, finalized in 2000, formulates long-term development goals for Rwanda. It puts forward development objectives based on the six pillars of good governance, agricultural transformation, private sector development, human resource development, infrastructural improvements, regional and international economic integration, and the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, environmental protection and ICT development, as well as specific targets for a wide range of key indicators relating to

these fields. It also employs a Community Driven Development (CDD) approach for achieving its development objectives. CCD aims to empower communities and local governments with resources and authority to take control of their development, taking a bottom-up approach and treating communities as partners in development.

- The *Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2008-2012* is the GOR's medium-term strategy for economic growth, poverty reduction and human development. As the EDPRS states, "The objectives in governance include maintaining peace and security through defense against external threats and participation in peace keeping missions, preserving and strengthening good relationships with all countries, continuing to promote unity and reconciliation among Rwandans, pursuing reforms to the justice system to uphold human rights and the rule of law, and empowering citizens to participate and own their social, political and economic development in respect of rights and civil liberties." This project complements the EDPRS by addressing a wide range of public sector reforms which include deepening decentralization and enhancing accountability at all levels of government, enhancing public sector capacity, strengthening public financial management and improving procurement, institutionalizing performance-based budgeting and increasing the transparency and predictability of policy-making.

Recent legislative initiatives:

- Local non-governmental organization (NGO), International NGO, and Religious Communities laws: These laws were redrafted, after being submitted to Parliament in 2008, in order to provide clarity regarding what constitutes an NGO and to streamline NGO definition, registration, and oversight. Expert recommendations on the laws were provided to the GOR by the International Center for Not for Profit Law (ICNL). Many of ICNL's recommendations have been incorporated into draft versions of three separate bills that fall under an overall organic law that was passed by Parliament in August 2008. The three bills were recently revised by the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), based on comments received from Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST) and key stakeholders, and are currently in Parliament for final consideration and passage. These laws are likely to be passed prior to implementation of this project. Potential implementers are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with them.
- Political Organizations Law: The law governing political parties in Rwanda was amended in 2007, allowing political parties to establish their headquarters down to the village level. The new law will allow political parties to interact freely with their constituents at all administrative levels. The GOR believes that this law will assist in improving Rwanda's MCC Political Rights indicator score.

Other significant reforms include:

- Administrative/Territorial Reform (i.e., Decentralization) - Phase II (2006-2011): Following up on Phase I (2001-2006), this reform is further decentralizing government and strengthening the districts as the core local authority. The law supports districts to delegate responsibility to the sector level, which is the focus of local service delivery. Cells act as centers for information and community mobilization; and villages involve community members in participatory sustainable community development activities. MINALOC is responsible for development of the policy and regulatory framework governing decentralization, while facilitating capacity building for local governments and monitoring and evaluating the decentralization process.

- Land Law Reform (2005): The 2005 Land Law determines the use and management of land in Rwanda and institutes the principles of legal land rights.

Several of these GOR reform initiatives are closely aligned with the objectives of the Rwanda Threshold Program, thus forming the foundation for a strong productive partnership between the GOR, MCC and USAID/Rwanda focused on making progress on the targeted MCC indicators mentioned above. The Rwanda Threshold Program offers Rwanda an important opportunity to reinforce and extend efforts already underway by the GOR, USAID/Rwanda, and other donors to promote civil rights and civic participation, contribute to the achievement of the GOR's goals for good governance, and accelerate its progress in realizing the objectives of *Vision 2020*. In addition, the goals of the Rwanda Threshold Program will contribute to strengthening other USAID/Rwanda programs, such as health and HIV/AIDS.

The GOR understands that greater access to information and additional mechanisms for civil society to provide feedback on government performance can complement and extend the reforms it has initiated.

Civil Society Organizations*

In Rwanda, civil society has the potential to play a critically important role in promoting good governance, voice and accountability, and civil liberties through the active oversight and informed engagement of government on public policy and development planning. However, many of Rwanda's CSOs lack the technical capacity to conduct effective and consistent monitoring and analysis in order to engage productively and meaningfully with the government and other actors. This is due in part to organizational weaknesses as well as a lack of skills, experience, and resources.

There has been a proliferation of CSOs throughout Rwanda since 1994, initially focusing on post-genocide humanitarian assistance and reconciliation, but more recently involved in promoting development and the provision of social programs to vulnerable populations. According to a 2007 International Rescue Committee (IRC) report, over 37,000 CSOs were identified, with over 85 percent of them defined as local, community-based organizations. According to IRC, a total of 319 national CSOs were officially registered in the country as of 2006.

Women's groups and associations, labor unions, human rights organizations, and churches or religious groups have dominated the composition of civil society in the country. According to a 2005 study, despite the tremendous growth of CSOs during the post-genocide period, they face numerous challenges to their ability to serve their target populations in a sustainable way. The challenges include "a weak social fabric with deep scars left by the war and genocide," a culture of centralized authority, and a lack of capacity, both in terms of labor skills and finance. (Mukamunana and Brynard 2005, p. 675.)

There are currently approximately fifteen CSO umbrella organizations that represent over 700 local and national CSOs country-wide. These umbrella organizations cluster around the following themes: the rights of women and children, people living with or affected by

* For reports on CSO development in Rwanda, see "Report on the Sustainability of the Rwandan Civil Society", prepared by the International Rescue Committee, July 2007; "The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Policy Making Processes in Rwanda", by R. Mukamunana and P.A. Brynard, *Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 40, No. 1, December 2005; and "USAID/Rwanda Civil Society in Rwanda: Assessment and Options", prepared by ARD, Inc., Burlington, Vermont, 2001.

HIV/AIDs, workers rights, genocide survivors, media freedom, farmers, the handicapped, private higher education, the elderly, and marginalized groups.

Most of the larger Rwandan CSOs join umbrella organizations, usually based in Kigali. These umbrella organizations enable CSOs with a particular focus (e.g., HIV/AIDS, human rights, youth, labor) to discuss common issues, exchange information, coordinate activities, and represent their members' concerns in discussions with the GOR, international NGOs, and the international donor community. The umbrella organizations tend to lack financing because their members are not well funded and are reluctant to pay member fees.

The larger Rwandan development-focused NGOs are members of the *Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base* (CCOAIB), which claims to reach over 500,000 people. The CCOAIB has 29 member organizations, including several women's organizations, and it is one of the better organized and funded CSO umbrella organizations. Trade unions and private sector associations also have their own umbrellas. *Centrale des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Rwanda* (CESTRAR) is the main union body in Rwanda with 17 affiliated unions and a total membership of 72,000, of which 39,600 are women. Before the war, CESTRAR had as many as 300,000 members. The Rwanda Private Sector Federation (PSF), created in December 1999, encompasses fourteen employer associations from different sectors of the economy.

Other CSO umbrellas include, for example, *Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe*, which began as an umbrella organization for thirteen member associations during the early post-genocide period and now incorporates 38 different women's associations. The *Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Défense des Droits de l'Homme* (CLADHO), founded in 1991, is the main umbrella group for five human rights member organizations, while the *Maison de la Presse* (Press House) brings together various media associations. The GOR is also encouraging the establishment of cooperative unions, federations, and confederations that will represent the entire cooperative sector.

At the other end of the spectrum are grassroots associations organized at the village level. These associations are generally small, locally based, and formed by neighbors and kin who know each other. They include rotating credit and micro-credit associations, youth and women's groups, and local church groups. Thousands of grassroots associations exist at the local level, which account for the high density of associational life in Rwanda. Their relationships with national and regional-level civil society associations differ considerably. For example, *tontines*, small rotating credit groups in which all individual contribute a certain amount of money once a month with one person each month receiving the funds, usually have few contacts outside their own membership. National human rights groups rarely have direct connections with village-level associations. Some national women's groups have been successful in connecting with locally based women's groups in the area of micro-credit and aid to widows and orphans. The Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim religious institutions are the only nationally-based organizations to reach down to their constituents at the grassroots level. Historically, the village-level grassroots organizations have exerted little or no influence on national decision-making or on nationally based development-oriented CSOs.

The initiative of organizing grassroots associations has often come from external forces. During the colonial period, churches were the main force behind organizing grassroots associations in the countryside. The number of grassroots associations increased sharply during the 1970s and 1980s, thanks to initiatives and support provided by the state and donors. Rather than lobbying the government to support local priorities and concerns, these

associations generally were expected to implement policies and agendas set by the state and donors.

During the 1980s, local-level associations involved in economic activities as cooperatives and pre-cooperatives expanded rapidly while national-level NGOs were created to provide training and technical assistance. Their activities were funded largely by the international donor community and international NGOs. Economic crisis, war, and genocide disrupted development activities initiated and implemented before 1994. After a period of post-conflict reconstruction and recovery, there are currently a large number and a wide range of national CSOs based in Kigali, along with local CSOs across the country, as there were before 1994. The challenge now is to improve the capacity of these organizations to take more initiative and to learn how to manage their own affairs.

This project aims to build the capacity of national CSOs, and CSO umbrella organizations, to interact effectively with the government, private sector, media, and the public. The project will provide support these national CSO entities to enable them to advocate for the formation and implementation of policies that positively impact the lives of Rwandans in rural and urban settings. At the same time, this project should help the national government to develop the capacity and mechanisms necessary to engage productively and proactively with citizens and civil society to improve the design and implementation of policies, regulations, and laws. This will enhance Rwanda's development efforts by ensuring that all of the country's citizens are fully engaged in the decision-making and oversight processes relating to the policies, programs and services that impact them.

Avenues for Civic Participation

National level participation

While there has been a shift toward greater civic participation in Rwanda, the GOR has tended to focus on providing information to the general public about government policies, plans and programs. Opportunities for civic participation on key issues at the national level often happen on an *ad hoc* basis and established regulations for soliciting input and guiding public processes have not yet been established. Where there are established participation processes, as in Parliament, they are not always followed consistently, and citizens and CSOs often do not understand their role in the process or how to engage effectively. Due often to limited capacity or other constraints in government and civil society, opportunities remain limited for citizens and civil society to fully engage government on their priorities and concerns.

In both houses of Parliament, the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, the public is invited to submit written comments on specific legislation in person or by email, fax, or surface mail. These comments are presented to the relevant parliamentary committee working on the legislation under review. There are currently 16 functioning committees in Parliament (12 in the Chamber and 4 in the Senate). Committee members review all written comments and may invite those who presented written comments to appear before the committee to further discuss and/or elaborate on their comments. Parliament formally informs the public about this process through advertising in the local media, along with more informal channels of communication.

The general public can also present a "petition" to Parliament, which is a way of bringing a grievance or an issue of public concern to the attention of Parliament to take action within its

authority and in accordance with the Constitution. There are generally two types of petitions that can be submitted to Parliament: a special petition and a general petition. A special petition is presented by an individual who is requesting action on a specific matter, and a general petition is submitted by an individual or group of individuals on more general matters of public concern. Petitions go directly to Members of Parliament, who then formally present them to Parliament for consideration.

There are opportunities to strengthen public input into this legislative process, specifically by: improving the quality and frequency of public input; structuring parliamentary committee hearings in ways that solicit productive public input on a regular basis; and developing ways for the public to determine if their comments on a piece of legislation were accepted by Parliament before the legislative body votes formally considers the law for adoption. National CSOs are well positioned to engage Parliament on strengthening public input into the overall legislative process.

The process of developing the EDPRS document, finalized in September 2007, offers another example of public input into government decision-making. During this process, the government facilitated extensive consultations with key stakeholders in Rwanda, including CSOs, donors, and the private sector. These consultations lasted for approximately eighteen months. Each technical ministry set up its own Sector Working Group that solicited and collected input into the development of the final document.

Local-level participation

A greater range of opportunities for civic participation and engagement by citizens and civil society exist at the decentralized level. Local officials and particularly village, cell, sector, and even district leaders serve a wide variety of important civic engagement functions, including direct mediation of disputes, listening to local concerns, and communicating about government plans and activities. These responsibilities are expected of local leaders. In addition to these expectations of local authorities, the central government also has continued or created several mechanisms for communicating with citizens about government policy, plans, and activities and for obtaining citizen input on them. Generally speaking, these mechanisms have so far been more successful for communicating policies than for obtaining substantive citizen input, but they offer potential for the latter. These mechanisms include *Ubudehe*, *Umuganda*, *Imihigo*, District Development Plans, Joint Action Development Forums, and regular village and cell-level meetings in rural areas (generally held on a monthly basis). A short description of each follows:

- *Ubudehe* is a participatory rural appraisal process intended to nurture citizens' collective action in partnership with government. In some cells, *Ubudehe* has been used to facilitate access to water, transport, credit, or livestock. The relative success of the program may be credited to the government's training of trainers, whereby local NGOs have trained one or two members of the community who in turn train other members to plan, budget and prioritize in a collective way. *Ubudehe* projects generally have included a decentralized financing mechanism that operates relatively quickly as compared to disbursements from line ministries. In addition, the services delivered can be relatively cost-effective.
- *Umuganda* is a monthly local public works program for projects that benefit the overall community. Citizens are expected to contribute to this process the last Saturday of every month at the *Umudugudu* or village level and often receive messages or news from the central government through their *Umudugudu* leader.

Umuganda is intended to serve as a forum for social interaction, developing community cohesion, rebuilding social capital, and serving as a way for communities to participate in solving their own development challenges.

- District Development Plans (DDPs) are five-year development plans for each administrative district in Rwanda. DDPs are developed by soliciting needs and priorities from the citizens, starting at the *Umudugudu* level. At each successive level these needs and priorities are reviewed and prioritized. District officials ensure that these priorities are in line with the EDPRS. These priorities are then converted into goals that are presented as a logical framework developed using the *Planification des Interventions Par Objectifs* (Intervention Planning by Objectives) approach. DDPs are intended to focus on poverty reduction through the control of population growth, reduction of mortality rates, efficient land management, increases in agricultural productivity, and maximization of the use of material and financial resources available.
- Joint Action Development Forums (JADFs) were launched in 2007 to enhance the coordination and cooperation of all actors involved in Rwanda's economic development at the district level. JADFs function now at both the district and sector level and include representatives from government and stakeholders (i.e., representatives from the provincial administration, sectors, donors, international NGOs, faith-based organizations, cooperatives, the private sector, and local civil society organizations). Most JADFs meet on a quarterly basis. District-level JADFs are chaired by district mayors and are mandated to coordinate the activities of development actors at the district level, promote participatory planning processes, and evaluate implementation of development activities. Sector-level JADFs were launched in 2008 in most sectors of the country, but many are just getting under way. Challenges to the successful implementation of JADFs include a lack of resources, experience, and skills at the district and sector levels on the part of local governments, local civil society organizations, and other actors.
- *Imihigo* refers to performance management contracts signed between the President of Rwanda and district mayors on behalf of their constituents. The process is recorded publicly in a written contract that presents a list of development targets backed by specific performance indicators over a one-year period. Sectors and cells are solicited to develop their own action plans and targets and they are expected to mobilize their populations to meet these local development targets. *Imihigo* are also signed locally between districts and sectors to reinforce the importance of harmonizing local and national government development objectives. *Imihigo* is currently being implemented at the cell, *Umudugudu*, and household levels to encourage grassroots participation in meeting development objectives. The GOR is interested in using *Imihigo* as a mechanism for holding local officials accountable. According to the GOR, the main goals of *Imihigo* are to:
 - speed up local and national development;
 - promote results oriented performance;
 - reward innovation and competitiveness;
 - encourage public participation, voice and accountability;
 - promote dialogue with civil society and citizens in policy formulation;
 - promote zeal and determination to achieve set goals; and
 - encourage regular evaluation.

There are also several activities designed to enhance service delivery and the accountability of public institutions that are in the planning stages. With the assistance of the World Bank, the government is developing and piloting a system of "citizen guides" designed to ensure

full public knowledge of government services and complaint mechanisms. The guides, which will be developed and rolled out to fifteen districts, fifteen parastatals, and six ministries, will map the service delivery functions of these entities and provide the public with contact information for particular service needs. Parent-teacher associations, health committees, and community-based natural resources contracts also bring communities into partnership with public providers precisely for the purpose of ensuring that services meet user needs.

In line with the sector wide approach underway in Rwanda, each Ministry is in charge of guiding the implementation of its activities at the local level, ensuring that these activities correspond to the country's sector wide approach. Ministries have the role of providing technical support to local officials and building their capacities. This process is planned in a phased and incremental manner, taking into account the scarcity of resources. Several structural arrangements are being institutionalized to facilitate citizen participation in the process of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of delivery of services at the grassroots level. These local sector-based participatory mechanisms led by ministries include: the community-based health insurance scheme (*Mutuelles de Sante*), community health center committees called *Partenariat pour l'Amélioration de la Qualité* (PAQ, created in twelve districts as part of USAID's Twubakane project), Parent-Teacher Associations (*Inaama Rusaange y'Ababyeyi*), District Education Committees, and the General Assembly of Parents.

The GOR is also developing a system of citizen report cards and community score cards that provide quantitative feedback on user observations and perceptions of the quality and efficiency of public services. Through extensive media coverage, public debate, and civil society advocacy, the citizen report cards and community scorecards have the potential to be used as powerful instruments to encourage the accountability and transparency of public institutions and officials. They can serve to generate information on what kinds of services communities want, and what quality levels they expect. Currently, these report cards result from surveys conducted by external consultants, which are then presented to government officials and donors as lengthy reports. The opportunity they present for feedback from citizens or communities more directly to their leaders on the quality or level of service provided has not yet been realized, partly because of the format and the process for collecting and disseminating the information.

Overall, as a result of a national decentralization process that has led to the establishment of local government institutions with increasing decision-making authority, there are now greater opportunities for meaningful public participation in policy and decision making at the district level and below. While there is a trend toward increased civic engagement at the national level, opportunities to engage with government remain limited and the regulations and processes for enabling this further need to be put in place. The Rwanda Threshold Program aims to assist the GOR and CSOs in building on these accomplishments to strengthen Rwandan civil society's ability to engage more actively and productively with government, citizens, the media, and the private sector to reform policy, advocate for change, and address Rwanda's MCC indicators in the areas of Voice and Accountability, Civil Liberties, and Political Rights.

Donor Activities

Civil society is supported by several donors, but is primarily targeted toward specific issues, such as legal aid, human rights monitoring, and monitoring of the provision of justice for crimes of genocide. The European Commission (EC), one of the largest donors, anticipates

providing significant funding to Rwandan NGOs to support human rights and democracy efforts through the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. Likewise, the EC plans to fund both Rwandan and international NGOs in Rwanda for a wide range of development activities through its Non-State Actors budget. The EC and other donors are providing small amounts of capacity building assistance to Rwandan NGOs. The Dutch Government is providing support to CSOs dedicated to promoting human rights, reconciliation, and access to justice.

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) is starting a three year, \$6.4 million "Public Policy Information, Monitoring, and Advocacy Project" this year, designed to promote citizen and civil society participation in public policy formulation, implementation, and management. NPA will provide capacity building technical assistance to CSOs, develop and disseminate guides to key public policies and laws, help to develop and disseminate public policy issue surveys, develop an interactive website for CSOs and citizens to post and share information on key public policies, support public for a to discuss public policies, develop and conduct public expenditure tracking systems, facilitate establishment of anti-corruption youth clubs, and implement a media strategy to increase citizen voice in public policy dialogue. Given the obvious synergies with the "Strengthening Civil Society in Rwanda" project, the implementer will be expected to work closely with NPA to avoid duplication and maximize the impact of both initiatives.

VI. Scope of Project

As noted above, the project's goal is to address three targeted MCC Ruling Justly indicators through achievement of the objective described below. Although this project focuses on strengthening national CSOs and CSO umbrella organizations, the implementer will need to collaborate closely with the MCC Strengthening Civic Participation Project described in Annex 1 of this RFA in order to maximize the potential for collaboration and avoid duplication of effort.

Implementers should propose a comprehensive, realistic, and innovative project that clearly addresses the goals and objectives, takes into account the guiding principles, and is designed to achieve maximum impact, ownership, and sustainability.

"...citizen participation does not just happen, even when the political space and opportunities emerge for it to do so. Developing effective citizenship and building democratic institutions take effort, skill and attention."[†]

Objective: Increase civic participation and civil society input into national public policy formulation and implementation, with a particular focus on addressing the Rwanda Threshold Program indicators.

This should be achieved by building the capacity of national CSOs and citizens to interact effectively with the government, private sector, and media at the national level. Specifically, the project should train CSOs on their legal rights and responsibilities and provide support to CSOs to enable them to understand and analyze public policy and budgets, monitor government performance, engage effectively with government counterparts, and contribute effectively to policy, legal and regulatory reform. The project should also strengthen CSO

[†] Gaventa, John. "Citizen Knowledge, Citizen Competence, and Democracy Building." In Stephen L. Elkin and Karol E. Sotun, eds. *Citizen Competence and Democratic Institution* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press), pp. 49-67, in relation to efforts to promote civic participation in the Appalachian region of the United States.

organizational capacity, independence, and financial sustainability. These capacities are necessary to strengthen citizens' voices in public forums and promote good governance through greater transparency and accountability of government. Strengthening citizens' voices will also be enhanced by assisting the GOR in developing a public process for providing input into and rolling out a civil service code of conduct.

The following results are anticipated to flow from this objective:

- a. Targeted national-level CSOs will have the demonstrated capacity to analyze and provide input into public policy and budget processes, monitor government performance, advocate for the interests of their members, and more frequently and effectively engage with the government, the private sector, and the media, in policy formulation and execution; CSOs will specifically have improved capacity to represent their members and maintain their independence when interacting substantively with other CSOs, citizens, and the actors listed above;
- b. A mechanism or mechanisms is/are developed or strengthened to ensure for the sustainability of CSO capacity building in core areas, such as strategic planning, budgeting, financial management, proposal writing, advocacy, public relations, government relations, policy analysis, and budget analysis;
- c. National CSOs in Rwanda will be more viable and sustainable organizations with increased capacity to fulfill their roles effectively;
- d. Citizen participation opportunities in policy formulation and implementation will be increased, be more meaningful, and have greater impact;
- e. Targeted national-level GOR officials will have increased awareness of the benefits of public participation and demonstrated capacity to design and oversee public participation processes that solicit, facilitate, and encourage public and CSO participation in public policy formulation and implementation; and
- f. A civil service code of conduct will be finalized with the benefit of public input and disseminated so that both civil servants and citizens will have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of public service.

Strengthening National CSOs

Initially, the implementer should identify a minimum of 40 national CSOs that should be targeted for capacity building and/or grants under this project by conducting organizational capacity assessments of national civil society organizations operating in various areas, with a focus on areas relevant to the targeted MCC indicators and to the other Rwanda Threshold Program activities. Targeted CSOs should be independent, have a national reach or scope, and have the potential to engage effectively with government and other stakeholders. The implementer should propose a methodology and scope of work for this activity.

Capacity-building activities should be proposed by the implementer, incorporating the guiding principles of this project and encouraging knowledge and skills transfer. These activities could include training, coaching, mentoring, peer learning, experiential learning, training of trainers, and/or other methods or a combination thereof, but should emphasize local ownership, partnering, and long-term interventions over one-off, short-term interventions (such as one-time trainings without follow-up) whenever possible. To the extent possible, proposed capacity building mechanisms and methods should emphasize:

- personal and organizational empowerment, through, for example, the development of core skills and knowledge relating to access to information for continued learning, professional peer networking, time management, and other professional skills; and

- sustainability of interventions by, for example, creating local capacity and demand for continued capacity building in targeted areas, such as strategic planning, financial management, proposal writing, budgeting, research, analysis, results-based management, public relations, and monitoring and evaluation.

The implementer should propose mechanism(s) and/or method(s) to develop sustainable local expertise and knowledge to continue capacity building technical assistance and training services to civil society beyond the life of the Rwanda Threshold Program. This could be accomplished in different ways. Building the capacity of Rwandan companies, some of which currently provide services to civil society organizations in the areas of strategic planning, management, and business planning, is one example. The areas in which these companies are proficient could also be expanded to areas of organizational capacity and financial sustainability where civil society organizations are often weak, such as proposal writing, financial management, organizational development, and media relations. Alternately, the training capacity of targeted CSO umbrella organizations or intermediate support organizations could be built so that they are better able to provide support to their CSO members at both the national and local levels.

The implementer shall budget \$900,000 for grant assistance to national CSOs over two years to enable CSOs to put new skills and knowledge from this project into practice. For example, the grants may be used by CSOs for participating in policy dialogue with government and other stakeholders, monitoring government performance, providing recommendations on policy reform or service improvements, monitoring the implementation of relevant laws, supporting other elements of the Rwanda Threshold Program, conducting broader activities that address the targeted MCC indicators, or addressing other organizational priorities, provided that they address the broader goal and objectives of the project.

The implementer should design a process to ensure that CSOs view grants as necessary complements to capacity building and opportunities for deepening learning, rather than as simply an end in themselves. This necessarily implies that the implementer will need to create a demand for their capacity building services with the CSOs that they are working with.

A process and criteria for awarding grants to national CSOs should be proposed by the implementer to ensure that project objectives are achieved. National CSOs that receive Rwanda Threshold Program grant support should, at a minimum:

- Be officially registered and independent organizations;
- Have the capacity to manage and report on grant funds;
- Demonstrate capacity to carry out programming; and
- Have a leadership structure with a track record of being accountable to its members.

Grant recipients will be expected to implement activities that partner with government in productive and sustainable ways, and that can serve as models for other partnerships between the GOR and civil society.

As part of the grant program and to aid national-level policy formulation and assist civil society actors to engage effectively with government on key policy and development planning issues, the project should provide support for specific studies and/or evaluations that will assist CSOs in monitoring government activities, advocating for policy reform or direction, and/or building their capacity in other targeted areas. The topics of the studies or evaluations could include topics such as the implementation of *Vision 2020*, the performance

of the Rwandan National Police, the performance of the judiciary, the state of workers' rights and labor conflicts, and other subjects relevant to the project and which build the capacity of national CSOs and address this project's goal. The studies will be shared with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and results will be made available to the public.

Finalization and Dissemination of the GOR's Civil Service Code of Conduct

Many civil servants lack the capacity to engage effectively with the public and civil society and do not fully understand the role of, and potential for, CSOs in national development. For this reason, the project should facilitate a participatory consultative process for and dissemination and sensitization of a code of conduct for all civil servants. This will provide an important opportunity for CSOs and individual citizens to conduct analysis and provide feedback to government on the conduct of civil servants and make recommendations about code content that will promote public accountability for civil servants. A draft civil service code of conduct has already been drafted by the Ministry of Public Service and Labor (MIFOTRA). This project should ensure that the resulting code is understood and adhered to by civil servants and owned by critical public stakeholders and government officials by being vetted and approved through a participatory process involving multiple civil society actors and a series of public discussions. The process will be led by MIFOTRA.

The code is intended to enhance public trust, guide public servant behavior (in their daily interaction with citizens), and complement existing institutional mechanisms such as *Imihigo*, the "citizen guides" program, and the work of the Ombudsman and the Auditor General's Office. Because the code will contain principles that guide judgment about the appropriate conduct of official duties, it will provide the basis for an environment in which citizens better understand the roles and responsibilities of public servants and their rights in relation to them. This, in turn, will strengthen a culture of transparency, integrity, and accountability among civil servants and the public, and it will make public services and information more accessible to the public. Civil servants that do not adhere to the conduct will be subject to disciplinary sanctions that will be provided for in the regulatory provisions of the code.

Once the code is finalized through the aforementioned public process, the implementer should work in close collaboration with MIFOTRA, in coordination with civil society and media actors, to design and carry out a process for disseminating the code to the public and public servants.

In addition, the implementer should propose a method for implementing the code within the civil service. This could include, for example, a training-of-trainers program to create cadres of civil servant instructors in each major ministry and at the local government level. Support could also facilitate trainings on the code in each ministry for all civil servants whose duties involve significant interactions with the public. Trainings could, for example, focus on the process which led to the code and how to abide by the code in practice.

Optional Activities

An election-related activity may be included in year one of this project. This activity would address the MCC Political Rights indicator by focusing on areas such as elections observation by civil society, voter education, or political party strengthening. A separate line item in the cost proposal of up to \$400,000 should be included to implement this activity.

VII. Linkage to U.S. Government Priorities and USAID Strategy

In Rwanda, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) focuses on health, economic growth, and democracy and governance.

Improving Health Care

In the area of health, USAID/Rwanda programs work to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality; improve the quality and sustained use of family planning; reduce malnutrition among children; provide treatment and prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria; and ensure access to decentralized health care. USAID/Rwanda also supports community-managed pre-paid health insurance schemes (*mutuelles*), in part because a *mutuelle* member is five times more likely to seek modern health care than a non-member.

In 2004, USAID/Rwanda began full implementation of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and the U.S. is Rwanda's largest funder of HIV/AIDS programs. Under PEPFAR, USAID/Rwanda supports prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS; provision of voluntary counseling and testing services, care, and treatment; and provision of psycho-social services to people living with HIV/AIDS, orphans, and other vulnerable people. Under the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), which began in Rwanda in 2007, USAID/Rwanda's program, implemented in close coordination with the GOR, focuses on malaria in pregnant women; indoor residual spraying of homes in designated districts; distribution of long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets; life-saving drug therapy; and case management of malaria at health facilities and the household level.

Promoting Rural Economic Growth

USAID/Rwanda's economic growth program expands agribusiness opportunities in the specialty coffee and the dairy sectors. For example, in 2000 no specialty coffee was exported from Rwanda; in 2007, annual export revenue from this sub-sector has grown from zero dollars to \$8 million. Rwandan specialty coffee has been featured by Starbucks and Green Mountain Coffee as their "best of the best." In the dairy sector, USAID/Rwanda provides technical assistance to the Rwandan dairy industry to enhance its competitiveness through increased efficient and profitable flow of quality milk, dairy products and related inputs and services through the dairy value chain. In addition, the program seeks to expand access to economic opportunities for vulnerable populations through integrating people living with HIV/AIDS, orphans and other vulnerable children into dairy-related income-generating activities. Furthermore, USAID/Rwanda supports eco-tourism in Nyungwe National Park by working to increase the number of visitors to the park, conserve the biodiversity, and improve the livelihoods of Rwandans surrounding the park.

USAID/Rwanda also provides food assistance to food insecure households. The assistance provides a safety net to HIV/AIDS-infected people, orphans and other vulnerable people. Food aid activities contribute to employment, improved agricultural technologies, agribusiness development, incomes, and food security. To date, over 850,000 Rwandans have benefited from the U.S. food assistance.

Democracy and Governance Program

Health Decentralization

- Twubakane: This five-year project (2005-2010), implemented by Intrahealth, focuses on strengthening the capacity of local governments and communities to improve health service delivery in twelve districts in Rwanda. It has the following components: 1) family planning and reproductive health; 2) child survival, malaria and nutrition; 3) decentralization policy, planning, and management; 4) district-level capacity building; 5) health facilities management and *mutuelles*; and 6) community engagement and oversight.
- Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP): This PEPFAR-funded project (2005-2009) implemented by CHF International receives a small amount of DG funding. It enables Rwandan communities to access HIV and AIDS services in twenty districts through support to local CSOs.

Conflict Mitigation and Reconciliation

- Conflict Transformation Radio: This two-year project (2007-2009) is implemented by Search For Common Ground and supported the production and broadcast of a weekly interactive radio program for the youth of Rwanda, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi, specifically focusing on understanding conflict in the region and finding ways to build lasting peace. USAID also supported development of a new Kinyarwanda-language radio program for Rwandan youth produced by young women. While USAID/Rwanda support for these radio programs recently ended, the programs will continue with support from the European Commission.
- Peacebuilding and Dialogues in Conflict Transformation: This two-year (2008-2010) project is implemented by the Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace and supports the development of permanent debate platforms at the national, provincial, and local levels, as well as the Rwandan diaspora, in post-conflict dialogue.

Justice Sector

- Legal Aid: This four-year project (2008-2013) is implemented by *Avocats Sans Frontières* (ASF) and supports the establishment of a two permanent legal advice centers and mobile legal advice to residents of Rubavu district and prisoners in three prisons.
- Legislative Process Strengthening Project: This 18-month project (2008-2009) is implemented by ARD, Inc. and focuses on improving the quality of legislative drafting, with special reference to PEPFAR target populations. The program primarily targets the executive branch's role in the legislative process by partnering with the Ministry of Justice, other ministries, and civil society.

Elections and Political Processes

- Political Party Strengthening: This one-year project (2008-2009) is implemented by the National Democratic Institute and aims to strengthen political parties in Rwanda by supporting and reinforcing mechanisms that promote inter-party dialogue and building political parties' capacity to organize, communicate and reach out to constituents.

Relevant Mission-Wide Cross-Cutting Projects

- Rwanda Youth Project: This four-year project (2008-2012) will be implemented by Educational Development Center to provide support for young people to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to find jobs or create their own employment, as well as to maintain healthy lifestyles and participate constructively in their communities.

Other USAID Implementers

To the greatest extent possible the implementer should closely coordinate activities with other USAID/Rwanda implementing partners in carrying out the tasks described in this RFA, as noted in the Guiding Principles. The implementer should seek all possible synergies with USAID/Rwanda projects, but particularly the following:

- Other activities being implemented as part of Rwanda's MCC Threshold Country Program;
- Other USAID/Rwanda and/or U.S. Government Democracy and Governance interventions; and
- Other USAID/Rwanda and/or U.S. Government interventions outside of the DG sector and Rwanda's Threshold Program implementation where coordination is needed or could be helpful in achieving the results of both activities, for example activities funded under PEPFAR and other health activities.

USG Foreign Assistance Framework

This project directly addresses the following U.S. Foreign Assistance program areas and program elements:

Program Area 2: Good Governance

Support avenues for meaningful public participation and oversight, as well as for substantive separation of powers through institutional checks and balances. Transparency and integrity are also vital to government effectiveness and political stability.

Program Element 2.2: Public Sector Executive Function: Assist executive offices, ministries, and independent governmental bodies to operate more efficiently and effectively; and assist executive branch offices and citizens to incorporate democratic structures and principles into state building, their ongoing systems of governance, and public administration services. Assist with policies, procedures, and skill sets (including leadership and strategic management) to guide operations; implementation and enforcement of laws, regulations and policies; linkages between and among branches, levels and functions of government; international relations; financial management systems; civil service reforms; public/private partnerships; and working with citizens as customers of the government.

Program Sub Element 2.2.3: Civil Service and Public Administration

Program Sub Element 2.2.4: Oversight of the Executive Branch

Program Element 2.3: Local Government and Decentralization: Provide technical assistance and training to strengthen sub-national government functions, including development of budgets, local revenue raising, provision of local public services, community planning, participation, and implementation of laws, regulations, policies, and programs. Develop and/or strengthen associations of local governments and/or local government officials.

Program Sub Element 2.3.5: Decentralization Enabling Environment

Program Area 4: Civil Society

Provide mediums (media, civil society organizations, advocacy groups/ associations) through which citizens can freely organize, advocate, and communicate with their government and with each other; strengthen a democratic political culture that values citizen and civic engagement, tolerance, and respect for human rights; empower citizens to participate in decision-making on matters affecting them; and mobilize constituencies to advocate for political reform, good governance, and strengthened democratic institutions and processes.

Program Element 4.1: Civic Participation

Strengthen the legal, regulatory, institutional, and information environment which protects and enables the growth in associational life and the development of independent and sustainable CSOs. Build the capacity of civil society organizations to act as agents for reform and support their participation in democratic decision-making through articulating and representing their members' interests, engaging in service

delivery, and advocating for issues which become part of the public agenda and are reflected in public policies. Encourage the strengthening of a civic culture which supports democratic institutions and processes, active participation in political and civic life, and the civic virtues of tolerance, pluralism, compromise, trust, and respect for individual rights, including gender equality.

Program Sub Element 4.1.1: Civil Society Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

Program Sub Element 4.1.2: Civil Society Capacity for Democratic Processes

Program Sub Element 4.1.3: Citizen Participation and Oversight

Program Sub Element 4.1.4: Civic Education and Democratic Culture

VIII. Monitoring and Evaluation

Measuring Success

The implementer is responsible for developing a **cost-effective monitoring and evaluation plan**. The implementer should all also coordinate its M&E with an independent firm or firms hired by either USAID/Rwanda or MCC to track performance during or after the life of this project. A participatory monitoring approach should be strongly considered in communities where it is feasible, cost effective, and has the potential to enhance results and strengthen citizen participation overall.

In addition, successful implementation should be, in part, measured through the following anticipated outcomes and outputs:

1. The majority of national CSOs receiving assistance from the MCC Rwanda Threshold Program undertake new advocacy activities in targeted areas (civil liberties, political rights, voice and accountability);
2. Increased frequency of CSO contact with government officials in and outside of pre-organized forums at the national level;
3. National officials actively plan for and encourage input from CSOs and citizens;
4. Increased number of significant government decisions (policy formulation, development planning, service delivery, or the budgeting process) in which citizen and/or CSO input is taken into account;
5. Percent of national CSOs with leaders that are knowledgeable about the budget, budget process and possible points for CSO involvement in it is increased;
6. CSO capacity to conduct strategic planning, raise funds, budget, engage with citizens, and increase membership is increased;

Monitoring

Surveys of national CSO leaders should be carried out prior to the start of the project and at the end of years one and two, to gather information related to all six outcomes. These surveys will most likely be conducted by an independent firm, but may be required of the implementer of this project. The frequency of data collection may be less for certain indicators depending on costs and the expected timeline of changes. The study sample should include all CSOs, or a representative sample of specific categories of CSOs, preferably including those that do and do not receive support in a given year. To the extent possible, self-reported data from the CSO survey should be verified through the review of documents such as budgets, strategic plans, membership lists, calendars, and meeting notes. Verification of CSO responses and data is particularly important given the tendency of respondents toward positive reporting, which may inflate baselines. The behavior of CSOs and

government officials, and the quality and amount of interactions between the two (outcomes two and three) can also be measured through systematic observation.

The surveys referenced above will be conducted by an independent firm, but the implementer may be responsible for data collection.

Other Expected Outcomes

Other expected outcomes include; increased substantive dialogue between national CSOs, the GOR, private sector, media, public, and other CSOs in key sectors; increased opportunities for citizen and civil society engagement on government decision and rule making; and increased public participation in policy formulation.

IX. Key Personnel

The implementer should provide a management and staffing plan which best meet the needs of the project. The following skills and experience should be possessed by qualified key personnel, which should include, at a minimum, a Chief of Party, a senior technical advisor, and a grants manager:

- Relevant advanced degrees from accredited universities.
- A minimum of five years of progressive experience, depending on the responsibilities and scope of the position, in the following areas:
 - Manager of a large and complex civil society capacity building or related project(s) in Africa or a comparable setting;
 - Expertise and experience in implementing capacity building activities for CSOs including, but not limited to, trainings;
 - Grants program management experience for USAID or other international organization in Africa or similar environment;
 - Previous experience in Rwanda or a similar setting; and
 - University level French speaking, reading and writing proficiency (required for select staff).

Senior and project level staff should have the following additional skills or experience:

- Fluency in Kinyarwanda;
- Substantive experience in qualitative and quantitative M&E methodologies; and
- For all professional staff: knowledge of and ability to effectively use word processing and data management systems and applications, including Microsoft Word and Excel and relevant internet and email applications, as well as any specialized software systems necessary for project implementation.

Short Term Technical Advisors

The implementer should provide the services of expert technical advisors on short-term bases as required, and as the budget allows, provide expertise in areas not possessed by long-term advisors. Such advisors should have high technical and professional qualifications and experience. It is anticipated that a limited number of short-term advisors should be required to support the work of long-term advisors.

Supervision

The Agreement Officer will designate an AOTR, and his/her alternate, for the agreement from the USAID/Rwanda Democracy and Governance Team.[‡]

X. Reports and Deliverables or Outputs

Annual Work Plans

Within the first 30 days after the award of the agreement, the implementer should submit the first draft of the annual work plan to the USAID/Rwanda AOTR for approval. This work plan should be for the first year of performance and should be updated on a quarterly basis with the previous quarter's progress, challenges, and proposed activities towards achieving outputs and, as appropriate, outcomes. Annual work plans for subsequent years should be submitted on or before the anniversary date of this agreement. Work plans should be developed collaboratively with USAID/Rwanda, the GOR, and other project beneficiaries, and should describe the activities and interventions required to meet the agreement deliverables, including:

- Proposed activities for the given year;
- Corresponding time frame for implementation of proposed activities;
- Detailed budget for implementation;
- Information on how activities will be implemented in a collaborative and coordinated manner with other relevant USG Agencies, USAID implementing partners, and GOR counterparts;
- Proposed annual accomplishments and progress towards achieving outputs, including regularly updated information on project baselines and targets.

Quarterly, Annual, and Intermittent Progress Reports

Annual Reports: The implementer should submit Annual Performance Reports and Expenditure Reports to USAID/Rwanda for the year covered within 30 days of the close of the year. The implementer should submit one original to the AOTR, with a copy to Mr. Marcus Johnson, Regional Agreement Officer, USAID East Africa Regional Mission (USAID/EA). Electronic submissions are acceptable, and the performance reports should contain information in accordance with the monitoring and evaluation plan approved by the AOTR.

Quarterly Narrative and Financial Reports: Quarterly narrative and expenditure reports are due within two weeks of the end of the quarter.

Periodic or Special Reports: The implementer will be expected to prepare periodic reports on areas or themes as needed by USAID/Rwanda or MCC to document processes and results.

Trip Reports: The implementer should submit the scopes of work for all consultants conducting business in Rwanda for the project one week prior to arrival in country for initiation of work. The implementer should also submit a draft report prior to the departure of the consultant and a final report is due within two weeks of the last day of the TDY or assignment.

[‡] In addition, the GOR and USAID/Rwanda will establish a coordination mechanism that will facilitate regular communication among all Threshold Program implementing partners, USAID/Rwanda, the Government of Rwanda, and MCC.

Meetings and Communication: The implementer is responsible for attending regular and specially called meetings with USAID/Rwanda, GOR stakeholders, MCC representatives, and possibly Embassy officials; on occasion they will be expected to provide updates, or respond to specific questions regarding project implementation. All projected-related communications should be made with the Democracy & Governance Team Leader, AOTR, and other relevant personnel at USAID/Rwanda as directed by the AOTR.

All reporting under this agreement will be in English.

XI. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO OFFERORS

(a) The offeror must submit the proposal electronically either

(i) through the internet email to (askebede@usaid.gov and marcusjohnson@usaid.gov) with up to 4 attachments (2MB limit) per email compatible with MS WORD, Excel, in a MS Windows environment. Only those pages requiring original manual signatures must be sent in scanned PDF format; or

(ii) via regular mail (on Compact Disks), however the issuing office receives regular international mail only once a week. All mail is subject to US Embassy electronic imagery scanning methods, physical inspection, and is not date and time stamped prior to receipt by USAID and the Contracting Officer; or

(iii) hand delivery (including commercial courier) of compact disks to the physical location of the issuing office – USAID/Rwanda, 2657 Avenue de la Gendarmerie, Gasabo, Kigali, Rwanda

(iv) Regardless of the method used the Technical Proposal and Cost Proposal must be kept as separate files from each other. Technical Proposals must not make reference to pricing data in order that the technical evaluation may be made strictly on the basis of technical merit.

(b) Government Obligation

The US Government is not obligated to make an award or to pay for any costs incurred by the offeror in preparation of a proposal in response hereto.

Instructions to Offerors Proposal Preparation

Technical Proposal Format

The technical proposal should be organized by the technical evaluation criteria.

The outline for the technical proposal is specified below. All proposals **MUST** conform to the guidance below in terms of order, content, and page limitations.

1. *Executive Summary*: 2-page maximum.
2. *Technical Approach*: 25-page maximum total. This section should address the project goal, objectives, guiding principles, and scope, as described in this RFA.
3. *Monitoring and Evaluation Plan*: 5-page maximum. This preliminary plan should include explicit targets, benchmarks and proposed indicators to be monitored. The plan should describe the process and methods for data collection and monitoring as well as a description of the proposed interaction with USAID/Rwanda and implementing partners.
4. *Staffing Plan*: 5-page maximum. (Annex to include each resume/CV 3-page maximum) Overall staffing plan should be provided, with proposed qualifications and experience of Key Personnel (including a Chief of Party, a senior technical advisor, and a grants manager) along with proposed additional staffing capable of carrying out the project and ensuring long term success by building capacity of Rwandan nationals.
5. *Past Performance*: 3-page maximum.

The required past performance references should be included as an annex or attachment of the technical proposal. The offeror (including all partners of a joint venture) must provide performance information for itself and each major sub-implementer (One whose proposed cost exceeds 10 % of the offeror's total proposed cost) in accordance with the following:

1. List in an annex to the technical proposal not to exceed three (3) of the most recent and relevant agreements for efforts similar to the work in the subject proposal. The most relevant indicators of performance are agreements of similar scope and complexity.
2. Provide for each of the agreements listed above a list of contact names, job titles, mailing addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and a description of the performance to include:
 - Program description or complexity/diversity of tasks,
 - Primary location(s) of work,
 - Term of performance,
 - Skills/expertise required, and
 - Dollar value.

(USAID recommends that you alert the contacts that their names have been submitted and that they are authorized to provide performance information concerning the listed agreements if and when USAID requests it.)

(b) If extraordinary problems impacted any of the referenced agreements, provide a short explanation and the corrective action taken.

6. *Grants Administration Strategy*: 5-page maximum.

Note: Additional information provided in Annexes is not part of the 45-page limitation of the technical proposal (inclusion of number 1-6 above).

Evaluation Criteria

The criteria below are presented by major category, so that offerors will know which areas require emphasis in the preparation of proposals.

Offerors should note that these criteria: (1) serve as the standard against which all proposals will be evaluated, and (2) serve to identify the significant matters which offerors should address in their proposals.

A review panel established under the direction of the Regional Agreement Officer will evaluate proposals. The review panel and the Regional Agreement Officer will use “Best Value” criteria to determine the proposal most advantageous to the U.S. Government. All evaluation factors other than Cost/Price, when combined, are significantly more important than Cost/Price factors.

A. Technical

The “Technical Approach” factor is twice as important as all other significant technical factors, when combined. The other significant factors – “Key Personnel,” “Partnerships, Coordination and Project Management,” “Monitoring and Evaluation,” and “Past Performance and Institutional Capacity” – are listed in descending order of importance relative to each other. For example, “Key Personnel” is relatively more important than “Partnerships, Coordination and Project Management.”

The subfactors under “Technical Approach” are of equal weight relative to each other.

The subfactors listed under “Key Personnel” are listed in descending order of relative importance.

The subfactors under “Partnerships, Coordination, and Project Management,” “Monitoring and Evaluation,” and “Past Performance and Institutional Capacity,” are of equal weight relative to each other.

1. Technical Approach

The proposal:

- a. Is technically feasible, coherent, and systemic in approach;
- b. Clearly demonstrates an understanding of the relevant context in Rwanda, reflected in the proposal background, situational analysis, and proposed interventions;
- c. Describes project activities that directly address the project’s goal and objectives and are informed by the guiding principles presented in this Request for Applications;
- d. Provides compelling and suitable criteria for awarding sub-grants to national CSOs, and a clear plan for managing them; and
- e. Offers project interventions and/or outcomes that are clearly sustainable, for example by proposing knowledge and skills transfer approaches that go beyond training and encourage learning-by-doing.

2. Key Personnel

- a. Proposed Key Personnel (Chief of Party, a senior technical advisor, and a grants manager) should have the experience and qualifications described in the “Key Personnel” section of this Request for Applications;
- b. Senior or project level staff should have the additional skills and/or experience described in the “Key Personnel” section of this Request for Applications; and
- c. The proposed staffing plan articulates how the capacity of Rwandan national staff will be built to ensure the long-term success of project outcomes.

3. Past Performance

- a. Demonstrated success in providing similar services in a context comparable to Rwanda’s on past donor awards; and
- b. Demonstrated past capacity to provide adequate technical support across sectors.

4. Partnerships, Coordination, and Project Management

- a. Proposal clearly articulates how the offeror will coordinate project activities with and between USAID/Rwanda partners, Rwanda MCC Threshold Program implementers, other relevant donor initiatives, and in particular the MCC Threshold Program -- Strengthening Civic Participation in Rwanda Project;
- b. Public-private or other partnerships are proposed that augment project resources and/or increase project sustainability; and
- c. Activities are designed to capture innovation and lessons learned.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

- a. The offeror proposes a detailed participatory M&E Plan that demonstrates a clear link between project activities and the overall project goal of positively impacting the three MCC indicators described in this Request for Applications; and
- b. The offeror proposes a detailed results framework that reflects the M&E plan, with targets, benchmarks, and proposed indicators to be monitored.

B. Cost/Price

The estimated cost, including fee should not exceed \$4.3 million for the entire two-year activity and is subject to availability of funds. Implementers should provide a complete budget by cost element, by year. While Technical is significantly more important than Cost/Price, Cost/Price nonetheless remains an important element of the Government’s final selection for the award. The implementer should propose costs that it believes are realistic and reasonable for the work in accordance with the implementer’s technical approach. Cost/Price proposals should be evaluated as part of a best value determination for the award. The implementer should also, wherever possible and appropriate, maximize projected costs incurred in Rwanda.

Annex 1: Planned MCC Threshold Program – Strengthening Civic Participation in Rwanda Project Statement of Work Summary

Summary

This Annex summarizes a three-year project designed to assist USAID/Rwanda and the Government of Rwanda (GOR) to strengthen civic participation in Rwanda at the local level by facilitating effective and meaningful engagement between government, civil society, and citizens in Rwanda at the local level, particularly in the areas of assessment, monitoring, and advocacy within the context of service delivery, planning processes, and capital project implementation.

This project is a part of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Threshold Program, which was developed to address Rwanda's MCC Ruling Justly indicators, specifically Political Rights, Civil Liberties, and Voice and Accountability. The Rwanda Threshold Program has additional activities which this project will actively link with and support. These include the following: strengthen the capacity of national level civil society organizations (CSOs); improve the impartiality, efficiency, and independence of the judiciary; facilitate the implementation of Rwanda's legislative reform agenda; build the capacity of the media sector; and improve the internal investigation functions of the Rwandan National Police. Rwanda's Threshold Program is being implemented by USAID/Rwanda in partnership with the GOR.

Objective and Scope of Project

Objective: Increased civic participation at the local level that improves citizen and civil society input into local government policy formulation, development planning, and service delivery.

This project is intended to strengthen the capacity of local officials to solicit, facilitate, and encourage public participation to improve the quality and quantity of their interactions with civil society actors and citizens. This will make local officials more accountable to the communities they serve and strengthen the capacity of local CSOs to contribute to local development efforts, monitor and evaluate local service delivery, represent the interests of citizens, and interact effectively with local officials in order to participate in policy dialogue, provide recommendations, and increase voice and accountability.

The project will also strengthen the capacity of local Rwandan civil society organizations to represent the interests of citizens; monitor local government performance; coordinate with other stakeholders; and give effective input into local government policy, planning, and budgeting. Likewise, citizens will better understand local government plans, budgets, and processes; avenues for participation; and how to more effectively participate and provide substantive input on local issues.

All activities proposed by the contractor shall be mutually supportive and integrated within and between objectives. Likewise, proposed activities should support GOR strategies, plans, and structures, as well as planned and existing donor interventions, including USAID/Rwanda interventions, and particularly other MCC Threshold Program activities.

In order to achieve this objective, ensure ongoing and meaningful partnerships with key stakeholders at the local level, and to avoid providing a series of one-off interventions, the contractor shall establish field staff and/or field office(s) in the local area(s) where the project is operating. The type of ongoing field presence should be determined by programmatic and budgetary considerations. Deep and productive relationships between local governments and their CSO counterparts can best be nurtured and developed by the contractor when it has a presence in the communities. To the extent possible, the project shall go to participants, rather than the other way around.

The following results are anticipated to flow from this objective:

- a. There will be more opportunities for more meaningful and substantive information on, input into, and feedback from citizens to their local governments and officials on issues that affect their lives, such as service delivery, local development planning, local budgets, and government performance;
- b. Local CSOs will be better able to analyze and provide input into public policy, development planning, and budget processes, as well as monitor and give feedback on government performance at the local level; CSOs will be able to represent their members' interests, and interact substantively with other CSOs, citizens, the private sector, media, and local government officials;
- c. Local government officials will be able to solicit, facilitate, and encourage public participation in policy formulation, development planning, budgeting, and service delivery in ways that add value to final outcomes by creating greater stakeholder buy-in, improving the flow of information to and from citizens, and increasing commitment to the development process;
- d. Local government officials will be more directly accountable to the citizens and communities they serve;
- e. Citizens and civil society will have increased access to and knowledge of Rwanda's national budget and their district and local budgets; and
- f. Project interventions will be incorporated into the government's decentralization process and plans so that key activities continue to be implemented by government, with the support of donors.

The project's local government and local CSO interventions shall be implemented in all thirty of the country's districts over the life of the project. Contractors shall propose an implementation plan that they believe would lead to the most successful outcomes and allow countrywide coverage over the life of the project. Additional considerations should include equity between districts, cost effectiveness, sustainability, and impact.

An important component of this project will be district government and CSO grants programs in the districts where the project is operating.

Capacity Building of Local Officials

One of the goals of the government's decentralization program is to create mechanisms for inclusive and sustainable citizen participation in local decision-making and governance, and to strengthen the accountability and transparency of service delivery by making local leaders directly accountable to the communities they serve. Based on this, the contractor shall propose activities that:

- Build the capacity of permanent district commissions to seek public input from and engage in policy discussions with civil society actors on topics related to the commission's mandate;

- Build the capacity of local officials, particularly at the district and sector levels, but also below where possible, to design, organize, and facilitate inclusive and effective public participation processes around issues that are of concern to their constituents, such as service delivery, planning, budgeting, policy, and implementation;
- Sensitize citizens and local CSOs (in close coordination with the MINALOC and relevant local government officials) on what to expect from public participation processes, how to participate effectively and constructively, when to participate for any given issue, and how to find out what has resulted;
- Increase the opportunities for public input and where possible improve the quality of existing mechanisms and opportunities for public input, such as district commissions, meetings with appropriate local officials, Joint Action Development Forums, *Umudugudu*, *Umuganda*, *Imihigo*, and *Ubudehe*; and
- Sensitize district commission councilors, district officials, sector officials, and other appropriate local officials and local government staff on effective methods of social inquiry, public communication, and other relevant topics as necessary, such as budget analysis and tracking, ethics, and leadership.

Support and technical assistance may also be provided as necessary to enable: 1) district commissions to conduct special studies and regional fact-finding missions and to prepare professional reports for the district council; and 2) local government officials to sponsor public forums or provide other mechanisms through which citizens provide input, voice concerns, and discuss issues with government. When appropriate and cost-effective, the contractor shall coordinate these activities with other donors providing similar technical assistance.

Under a grants program, funding will be provided to each district in which the project operates for the purpose of putting new skills and knowledge into practice and also in order to ensure that there are resources around which a civic participation activity or activities can be organized. The grants shall be used to address district priorities already identified in the district's District Development Plan. The contractor must budget \$1,500,000 for grant assistance to local governments over the life of the project.

The purpose of the grants to districts is to:

- encourage participation of district officials and local citizens;
- practice new skills and concepts; and
- address a critical need or needs identified through a local government-led public consultation process that actively solicits the input of citizens and civil society and takes advantage of local assets.

Subject to USAID regulations, the contractor shall propose a methodology and process for awarding and overseeing grants to districts. It should be noted that local governments will likely require assistance in the financial management of grants and reporting on results.

In working with local governments, the contractor shall ensure that women and youth representatives are included in trainings or other capacity building activities or, where necessary, targeted capacity building activities are designed specifically for them to enhance their knowledge and skills in leadership, governance, and accountability.

As described above, the GOR recently conducted district-level needs assessments and developed capacity-building plans focusing on major obstacles to the implementation of the EDPRS and that strengthen the decentralization process that has followed the public service

reforms introduced in 2006. A mapping exercise was also initiated to determine the existing funding gap for district capacity building.[§]

Capacity Building of Local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

In addition to supporting local government officials, the contractor shall also support local-level CSO capacity building. The contractor shall provide assistance to local-level CSOs so that, for example, they can carry out effective monitoring and evaluation of GOR performance on decentralization, with a specific focus on local government-managed service delivery. This will improve the quality of information and analysis that CSOs use in their interaction with local officials, citizens, the media, and the private sector. The contractor shall also provide assistance to strengthen the internal business capacities and processes of local CSOs in areas such as strategic planning, budgeting, management, advocacy, research and analysis, public relations, membership development, and internal monitoring and evaluation.

The contractor shall propose a plan to increase local CSO's capacity to participate in and contribute to policy making and development planning. For example, local CSO leaders, including CSO members of the Joint Action Development Forums (JADF) at the district and sector levels, could be given training on: newly decentralized government structures; opportunities for input and feedback to local officials; and their role in participatory forums, as well as how to make the best use of these opportunities.

As mentioned above, the contractor shall award grants to local CSOs in each district where the project operates for the purpose of putting the CSO's new skills and knowledge into practice. Projects should be coordinated with and relevant to the district's District Development Plan. The Recipient must budget \$900,000 for this grants activity.

The purpose of the grants to local CSOs is to:

- encourage participation of local citizens in local planning and implementation;
- practice new skills and methodologies; and
- identify and address local development challenges through a civil society-led public consultation process (in coordination with local government) that actively solicits the input of citizens and takes advantage of their assets.

The contractor shall propose the criteria, methodology, and process for awarding and overseeing grants to local CSOs. At a minimum, these CSOs must be officially registered at the district level, have a demonstrated capacity for implementation, and have appropriate internal governance and accountability mechanisms in place for holding leaders and officers accountable to their members and boards. Because most local-level CSOs tend to be small and have limited capacity, the total grant amount per district assumes that total grant amounts to CSOs will likely be somewhere in the range of \$2,000 to \$10,000. Offerors shall propose a range for local CSO grant assistance and the approximate number of grants anticipated over the life of the project. It should be noted that local CSOs are likely to require assistance in the financial management of grants and reporting on results.

Citizen Report/Community Score Cards

[§] Daniel Kagina and Emmanuel Rubanzabigiwi, "Mapping of Ongoing and Planned District Capacity Building Activities in Rwanda," Draft Report, Ministry of Local Government, September 2008 and "District Capacity Needs Assessment and Planning: Findings and Recommendations," Ministry of Local Government and Good Governance, *Ministère de la Fonction et du Travail*, Department of International Development, Adam Smith International, March 2008.

As mentioned above, the GOR has begun to implement a system of citizen report cards and community score cards to improve the transparency and accountability of public institutions and to strengthen civic participation in development planning and policy. The report/score card system is expected to increase government effectiveness and provide for greater citizen voice, resulting in better governance. The GOR envisions the district council taking a leading role in the development and rollout of the report/score card system.

The contractor shall support the development of a report/score card system in several pilot districts that more actively engages local citizens and/or communities in the process and provides more direct feedback to local officials and leaders on issues of governance and service delivery. The councils in each pilot district will be expected to help in implementing the project through a special commission formed for this purpose. The project will provide training and technical assistance for a group of councilors and/or other local officials and civil society representatives who will jointly manage the report/score card system in their districts. Specific activities may include:

- Support training and technical assistance for a group of councilors and other local officials, civil servants and civil society representatives who will jointly manage the report card system in their districts;
- Develop or refine an existing system to be used by districts;
- Sensitize participating communities on the purpose and role of the report card system;
- Work with local CSOs and local officials to use the report/score cards to analyze and improve service delivery; and
- Support events in which report cards are released and civil society actors, including journalists, can engage in discussion with district councilors and other officials about results.

Translation and Dissemination of the National Budget

In order to assure that budget information is accessible and made available to civil society for the purpose of public debate and discussion, this project will provide support to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning for two years and build its capacity to: translate the national budget into Kinyarwanda; develop pamphlets summarizing the budget document, making the information available to citizens in districts served by the project, including donors and civil society organizations; and carry out workshops and other sensitization activities to ensure that citizens and civil society actors understand and participate in the budget planning process.

Project Sustainability

In working with local governments, the contractor shall promote sustainability by ensuring that all activities are embedded, to the extent possible, within Rwanda's donor/government decentralization framework and become part of the government's decentralization strategy to the extent possible. Therefore, as new participatory processes and practices are developed and rolled out under the Rwanda Threshold Program, they will be incorporated into the government's decentralization process. The decentralization strategy and its implementation are overseen by a Steering Committee composed of government and donor representatives. Several donors, including the United Kingdom, Belgium, Netherlands, and European Union, are contributing to the Common Development Fund (CDF) that provides basket funding to local governments and, like the GOR, these donors are keen to see that citizens and civil

society organizations participate in the setting of local government priorities, the monitoring of local budgets, and service delivery implementation.

The support of sustainable local government capacity building efforts will involve, where appropriate and replicable, training of trainers for local government officials. The contractor shall also identify and target government, non-governmental, and/or private sector institutions that currently provide this kind of training for capacity building so that the training and curricula supported by the Rwanda Threshold Program can be institutionalized. Alternately or in addition, the contractor may propose other methods of ensuring long-term sustainability of activities and/or results.

The project will require capacity building and technical assistance to MINALOC in support of the project's overall goals and sustainability. In addition, given the demands on local government officials' time and resources, capacity building and/or technical assistance in broader areas of decentralization will be required in order to successfully address the goal and objectives of this project.

In addition, the contractor shall work closely with MINALOC in designing and rolling out its activities and may be asked to serve on the MINALOC Decentralization Programme Steering Committee comprised of donors, government, and implementing partners which provides input and feedback on the progress of Rwanda's decentralization efforts.