



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

No.: AID-660-RFI-17-000001

Issuance Date: September 26, 2017

Submission Due Date: October 31, 2017; 17:00PM Kinshasa, DRC, local time

Subject: Input into USAID/DRC's Responsible Minerals Program Planning

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to collect written information about the capabilities and interest of all public and private parties in participating in a co-creation process¹ to identify innovative solutions for the promotion of a responsible mineral trade (RMT) in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The information will be used to help make planning decisions and influence activity design to improve future development outcomes and is published in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 10 and FAR 15.201(e).

This is an RFI, not a Request for Proposals (RFP), and is not to be construed as a commitment by the U.S. Government to issue any solicitation or ultimately award an agreement on the basis of this RFI, nor to pay for any information submitted as a result of this request, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of any comments.

Any funding proposals submitted in response to this request will not be considered. Responses to this notice must be received by no later than the due date and time stated below in this notice. All information provided will become the property of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), will not be returned, and will not be released publicly. USAID reserves the right to use information provided by respondents for USAID's own purposes. Proprietary information must not be sent.

Background

The DRC is home to over 1,100 mineral substances and has a potential mineral wealth of \$24 trillion. The vast majority of tin, tantalum, tungsten (3Ts) and gold mining occurs in eastern DRC, specifically North and South Kivu provinces. The resource quantity is staggering and the quality and concentration of minerals make them extremely profitable. International policy makers, regional governments, and users throughout the value chain are very aware of the role that minerals originating from the high-risk conflict

¹ Co-creation is defined by USAID as a collaborative process that brings together people in a workshop session to create solutions to specific development challenges. When using co-creation, USAID teams work alongside partners, stakeholders, potential implementers, and end users to collaboratively define the problem, identify new and existing solutions, build consensus around areas for action, and/ or refine plans to move forward with programs and projects. As its name implies, co-creation relies on collaboration with a diverse set of actors, allowing for a more equitable distribution of both the responsibility and ownership of outputs across all partners.

zones in the DRC can play in benefitting armed groups, fueling conflict and human rights abuses and threatening the integrity of their supply chain.

USAID/DRC's RMT activities support Transition Objective (TO) 3: *"Foundation for durable peace strengthened in eastern DRC* which feeds into the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). Future RMT activities will strive to meet the TO3 goals of finding solutions to the drivers of conflict as well as achieving sustainable peace and improving the quality of life for communities around extractives zones.

Conflict-free and clean mineral supply chains have the potential to generate needed revenue to transform the region's mineral wealth into economic growth and development, and promote peace and security in eastern DRC, benefitting thousands of artisanal miners and communities surrounding extractive zones. Hundreds of certified and validated, conflict-free mine sites now exist across eastern DRC, providing and increased incomes for local communities and demonstrating the potential for progress in this domain.

To date, donors have played an outsized role in establishing the infrastructure, technical capacity, and due diligence systems needed to ensure that conflict free minerals are purchased, sold, and exported in a transparent manner to the downstream end user. Despite this, there exists an appetite for broad partnerships in RMT. From 2011-2017, Phase I of the Public-Private-Alliance Memorandum of Understanding (PPA MOU) existed as a platform for bolstering progress on responsible sourcing from the Great Lakes Region of Africa. Since its inception, this coalition of companies, civil society organizations, and governments has promoted conflict-free-supply-chains, alignment of due diligence practices, and local government and civil society capacity building. Phase II of the PPA MOU, was signed in September 2017 for a five-year period and offers a broader scope for public-private partnerships.

Since 2010 USAID/DRC has focused on supporting legal and policy reforms to enhance regional harmonization and a conflict-free artisanal mineral trade; strengthen private sector confidence in the region's minerals trade; and improve the awareness and capacity of stakeholders to support and implement due diligence, traceability, and certification systems. Building on past success and looking to the future, USAID DRC is in the process of designing its next phase of activities in the DRC related to RMT. It is anticipated that these activities will be implemented over a period of approximately five years from 2018-2023. USAID seeks to incorporate feedback from a wide range of sources in order to improve the program design of new RMT activities for the greatest impact in the following areas (not listed in order of importance):

Potential Areas for Programming

- Enhanced livelihoods for artisanal miners
- Mine site validation
- Supply chain due diligence and traceability
- Increased clean exports (3Ts, gold and other relevant minerals)
- Tax harmonization (local, national, and regional)
- Increased tax revenues for development
- Fiscal transparency and reporting

- Civic engagement
- Decreased smuggling
- Reduced conflict financing of armed groups
- Reduction in child labor

Throughout these program areas, USAID is seeking new ways of thinking that could complement and/or replace development modalities in RMT - ones which offer the promise of new innovations in technology, processes, techniques, and partnerships to modernize RMT programming in the DRC and maximize impact and the return-on-investment of the U.S. government development dollars. Specifically, USAID is looking for systematic ways to use research as well as scientific and technical knowledge in the design, development, testing, or evaluation of a potential new product or service (or of an improvement in an existing product or service)² to meet specific RMT performance requirements or objectives. Consequently, USAID would also like to identify, support, and develop cutting-edge methods of intervention through stronger private sector investment/ participation in conflict-free supply chains in DRC with the goal of reducing the sector's overall donor dependence and subsidization.

Submission Instructions

Individuals and Organizations that wish to provide input to USAID must utilize the attached template developed for this purpose. Interested parties who consider themselves qualified to address the above-listed task areas are invited to submit a response to this RFI in the form of the attached template no later than **October 31, 2017; 17:00PM Kinshasa, DRC, local time**. All responses under this RFI must be emailed to Amy McQuade, Contracting Officer for USAID/DRC Office of Acquisition & Assistance at amcquade@usaid.gov with a copy to Dany Kopo at dkopo@usaid.gov.

The issuance of this request will not restrict the Government's ultimate approach, if any. Respondents are advised that USAID is under no obligation to acknowledge receipt of the information, answer questions or provide feedback to respondents with respect to any information submitted. Any information submitted in response to this notice is voluntary. Not responding to this request does not preclude participation in any future solicitation, if any is issued.

² Research is defined in the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) 2.101 as: "**Basic research**" means that research directed toward increasing knowledge in science. The primary aim of basic research is a fuller knowledge or understanding of the subject under study, rather than any practical application of that knowledge. And in FAR 35.001: "**Applied research**" means that effort which (1) normally follows basic research, but may not be severable from the related basic research, (2) attempts to determine and exploit the potential of scientific discoveries or improvements in technology, materials, processes, methods, devices, or techniques, and (3) attempts to advance the state of the art. Applied research does not include efforts whose principal aim is design, development, or test of specific items or services to be considered for sale; these efforts are within the definition of the term "development," defined in this subsection. FAR 35.001: "**Development**" as used in this part, means the systematic use of scientific and technical knowledge in the design, development, testing, or evaluation of a potential new product or service (or of an improvement in an existing product or service) to meet specific performance requirements or objectives. It includes the functions of design engineering, prototyping, and engineering testing; it excludes subcontracted technical effort that is for the sole purpose of developing an additional source for an existing product.